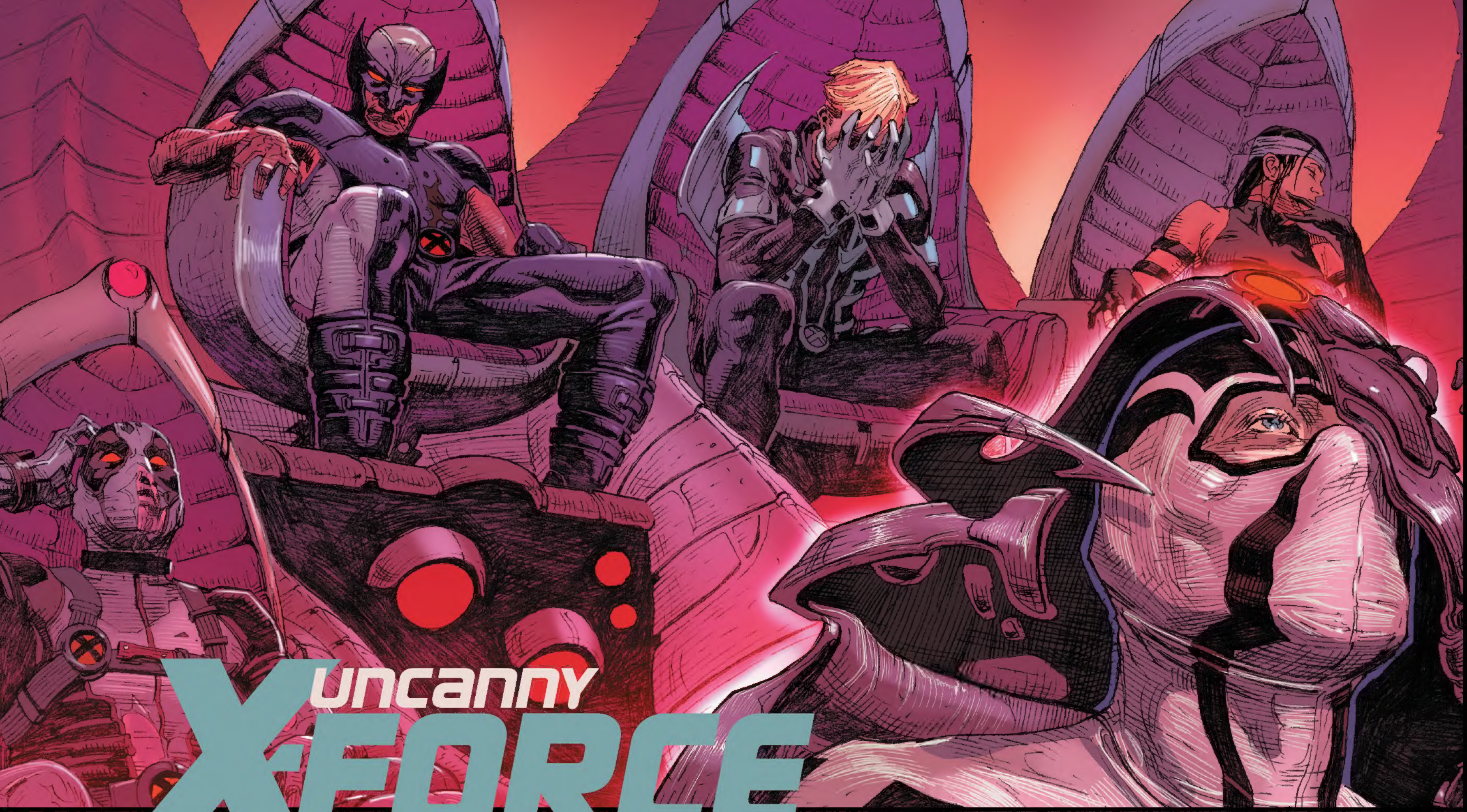
"An instant classic." - *ComicBookResources.com*

UNCANNY X-FORCE

REMENDER OPEÑA RIBIĆ NOTO
TAN BROOKS TOCCHINI

UNCANNY X-FORCE



UNCANNY X-FORCE

written by RICK REMENDER

"THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE"

artist **LEONARDO MANCO** color artist **CHRIS SOTOMAYOR**
letterer **VC's CLAYTON COWLES** cover art **MICO SUAYAN**
assistant editor **JODY LeHEUP** editor **JEANINE SCHAEFER**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #1-5 & #14-18

artists **JEROME OPEÑA** with **ESAD RIBIĆ (#18)**
color artists **DEAN WHITE** with **JOSÉ VILLARRUBIA (#17) & CHRIS SOTOMAYOR (#17)**
cover art **ESAD RIBIĆ**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #5.1

artist **RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE** color artist **DEAN WHITE**
cover art **SIMONE BIANCHI & SIMONE PERUZZI**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #5-7

penciler **ESAD RIBIĆ** inker **JOHN LUCAS**
color artist **MATTHEW WILSON** cover art **ESAD RIBIĆ**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #8-10

artists **BILLY TAN** with **RICH ELSON (#10)**
color artists **DEAN WHITE (#8-9) & PAUL MOUNTS (#10)**
cover art **ESAD RIBIĆ**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #11-13

pencilers **MARK BROOKS** with **SCOT EATON (#13)**
inkers **ANDREW CURRIE, MARK BROOKS & ANDREW HENNESSY**
color artist **DEAN WHITE** cover art **ESAD RIBIĆ**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #19

artist **ROBBI RODRIGUEZ**
color artists **DEAN WHITE** with **JIM CAMPBELL**
cover art **RAFAEL GRAMPA**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #19.1

artist **BILLY TAN** color artist **JOSÉ VILLARRUBIA**
cover art **MIKE DEODATO JR. & DEAN WHITE**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #20-23

artist **GREG TOCCHINI**
color artists **DEAN WHITE** with **GREG TOCCHINI (#23)**
cover art **LEINIL FRANCIS YU** with **DEAN WHITE,
PETER STEIGERWALD & JASON KEITH**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #24, #26-27 & #31-35

artist **PHIL NOTO** color artists **PHIL NOTO (#24),
DEAN WHITE (#26-27) & FRANK MARTIN JR. (#31-35)**
with **RACHELLE ROSENBERG (#32-33)**
cover art **PHIL NOTO (#24), JEROME OPEÑA**
with **JUSTIN PONSOR & DEAN WHITE (#26-27 & #31-32)**
and **JULIAN TOTINO TEDESCO (#33-35)**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #25

artist **MIKE McKONE** color artist **DEAN WHITE**
cover art **JEROME OPEÑA** with **RACHELLE ROSENBERG & DEAN WHITE**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #28-29

artist **JULIAN TOTINO TEDESCO**
interlude inks **(#29) JOHN LUCAS** color artist **DEAN WHITE**
cover art **JEROME OPEÑA** with **RACHELLE ROSENBERG & DEAN WHITE**

UNCANNY X-FORCE #30

artist **DAVE WILLIAMS** color artist **DEAN WHITE**
cover art **JEROME OPEÑA & DEAN WHITE**

letterers VC's **CORY PETIT (#1-9 & #11-13) & CLAYTON COWLES (#10)** cover art **ESAD RIBIĆ**
assistant editors **SEBASTIAN GIRNER & JORDAN D. WHITE** editors **AXEL ALONSO, JODY LeHEUP & NICK LOWE**

"PURITY" & "APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION"

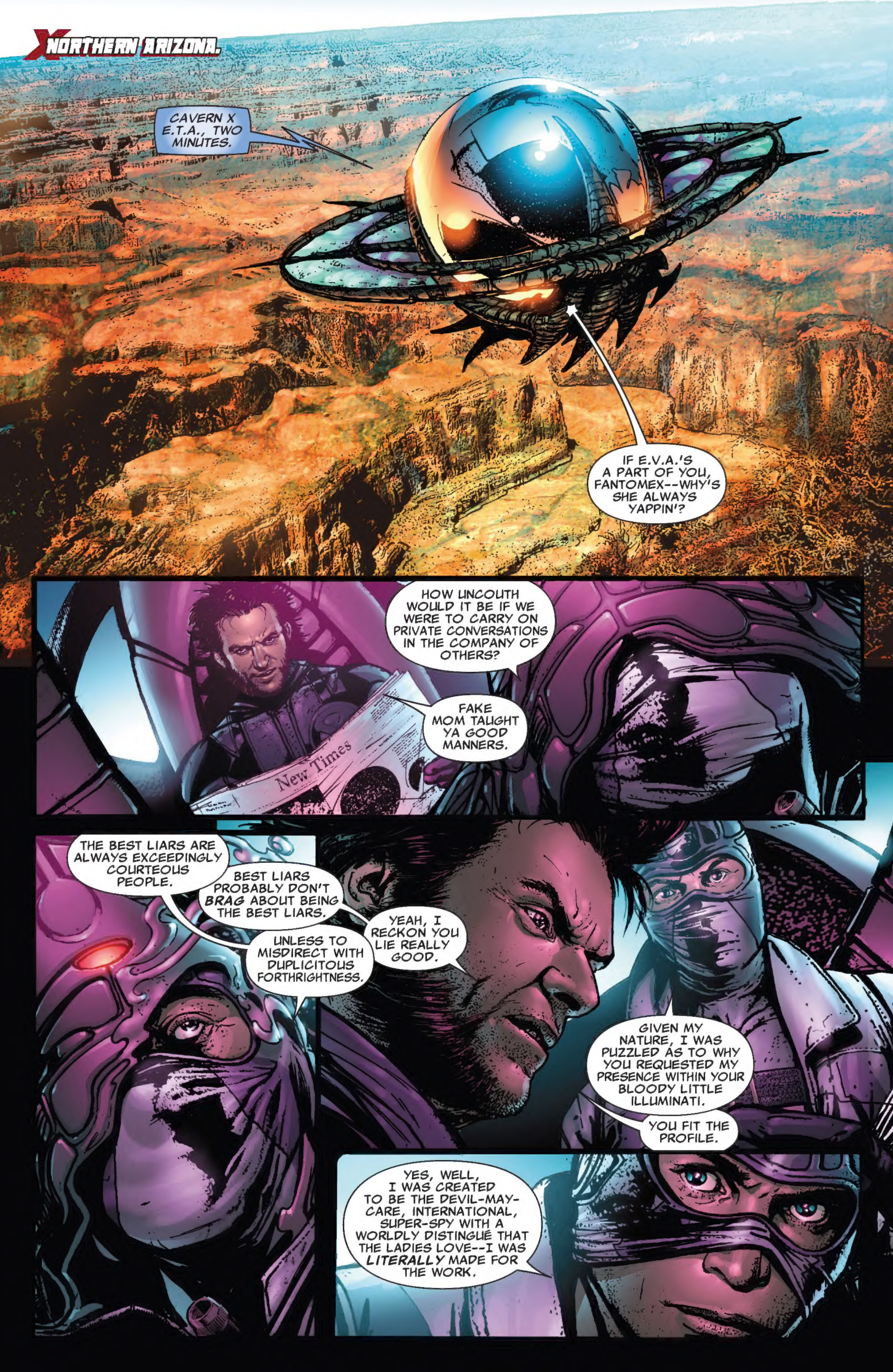
artist **JEROME OPEÑA**
colorists **MICHELLE MADSEN ("PURITY") & EDGAR DELGADO ("APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION")**
letterers **BLAMBOT'S NATE PIEKOS ("PURITY") & JEFF ECKLEBERRY ("APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION")**
assistant editor **SEBASTIAN GIRNER** editors **AUBREY SITTERSON & AXEL ALONSO**

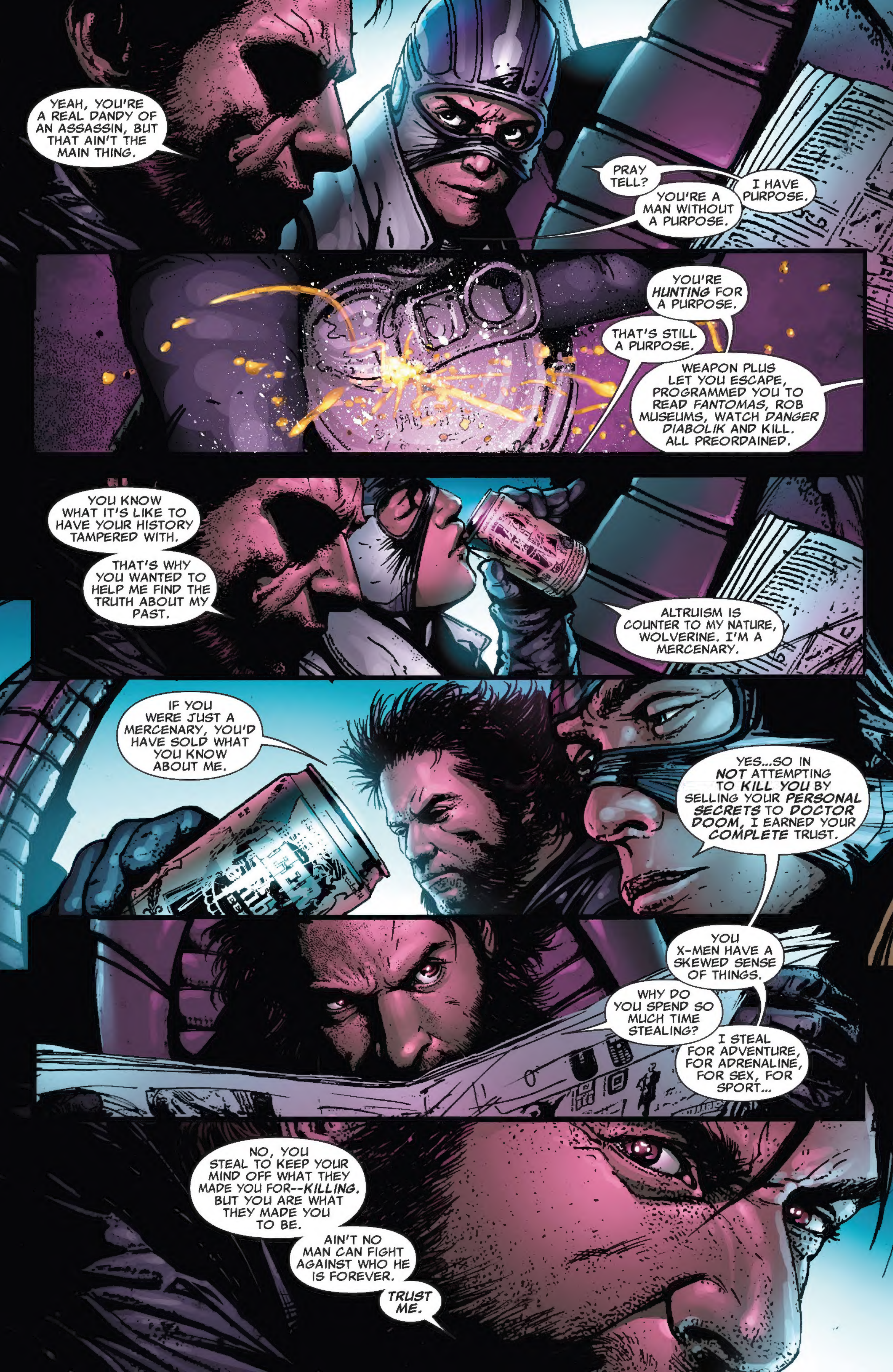
collection editor: **JENNIFER GRÜNWALD**
assistant editor: **DANIEL KIRCHHOFFER**
associate manager, talent relations: **LISA MONTALBANO**
book design: **JARED K. FLETCHER**
vp production & special projects: **JEFF YOUNGQUIST**

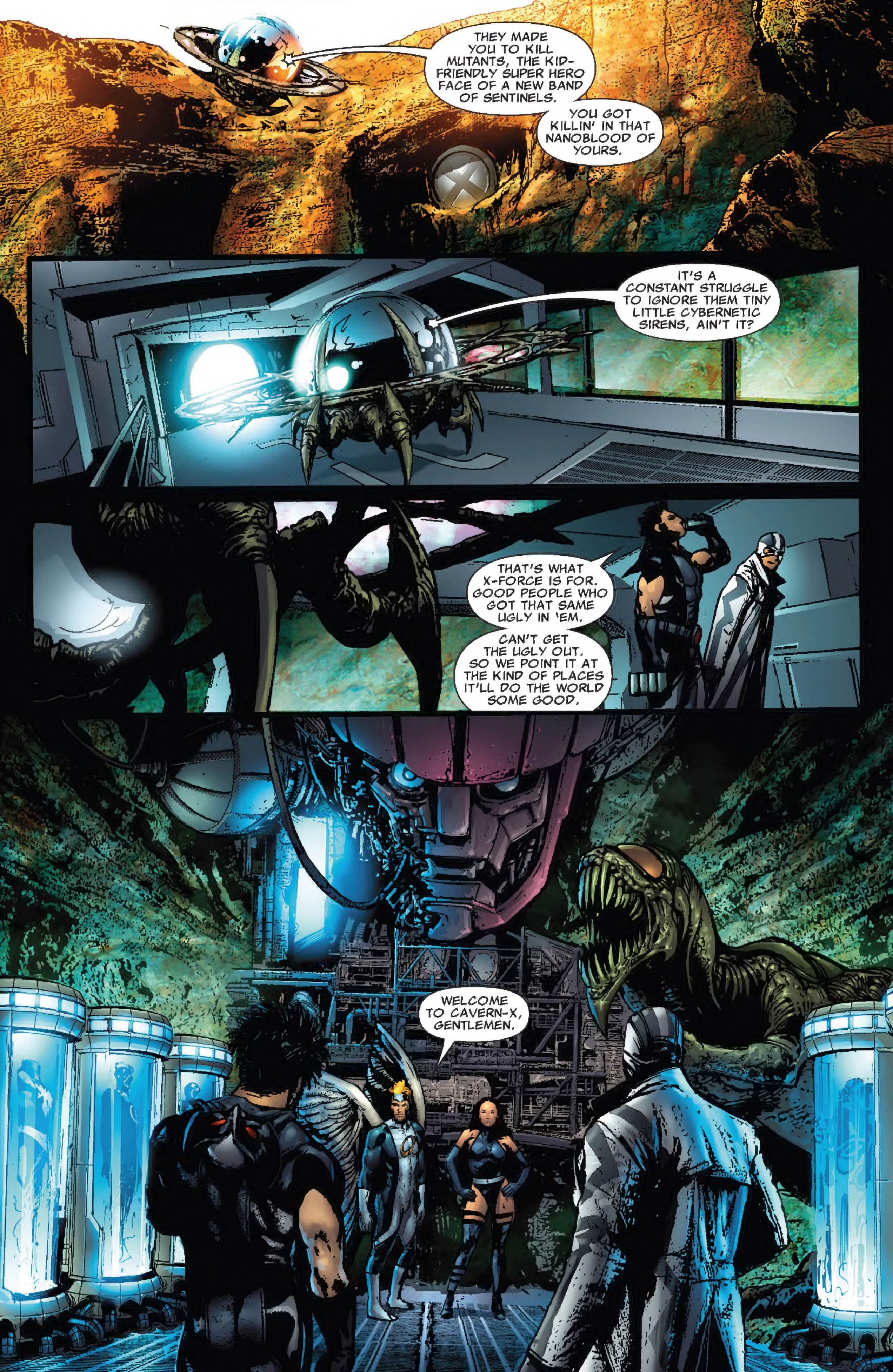
svp print, sales & marketing: **DAVID GABRIEL**
sr. manager, digital: **TIM SMITH 3**
digital production: **MEGHAN O'LEARY**
editor in chief: **C.B. CEBULSKI**

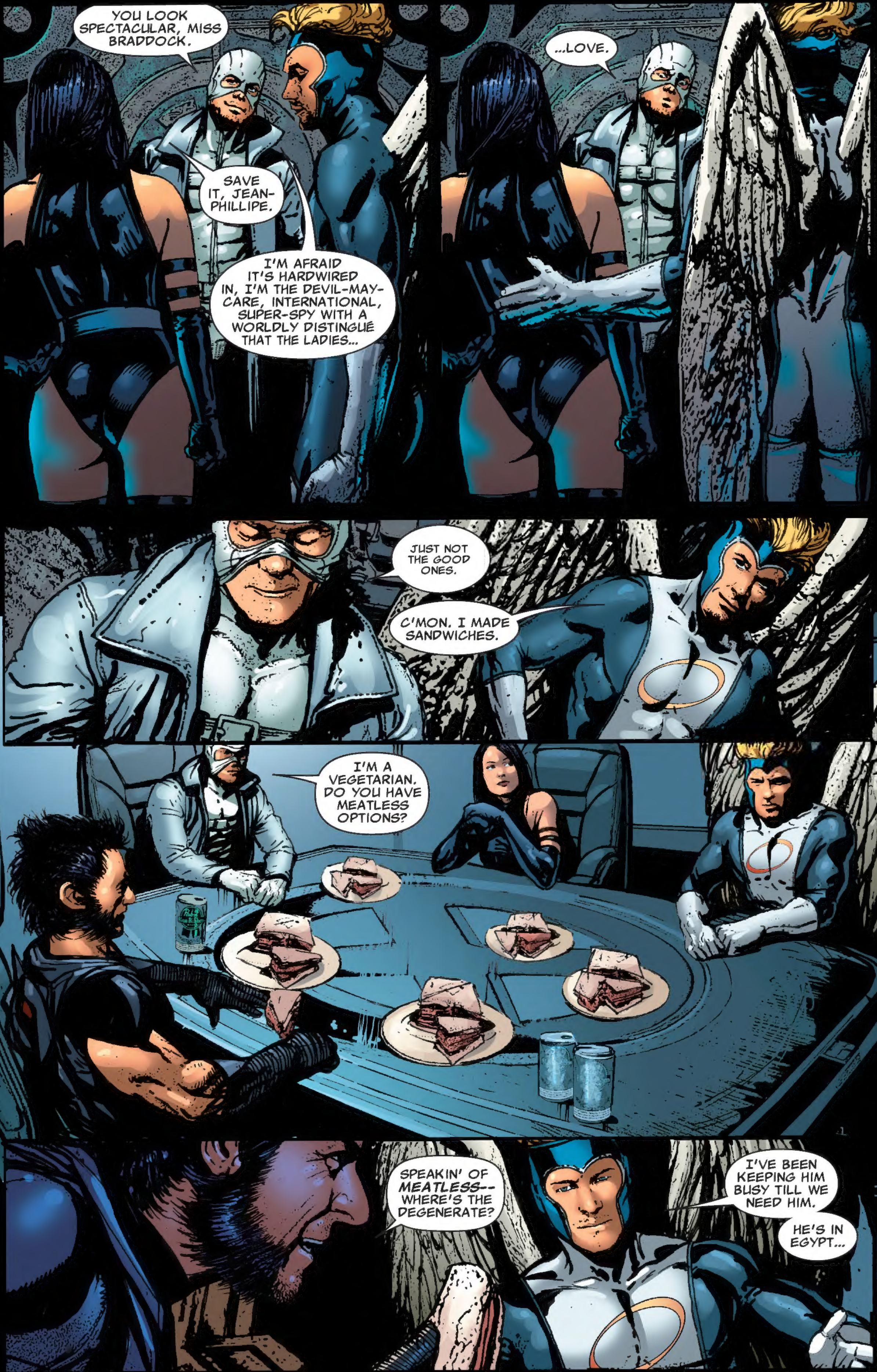
© 2024 MARVEL. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.

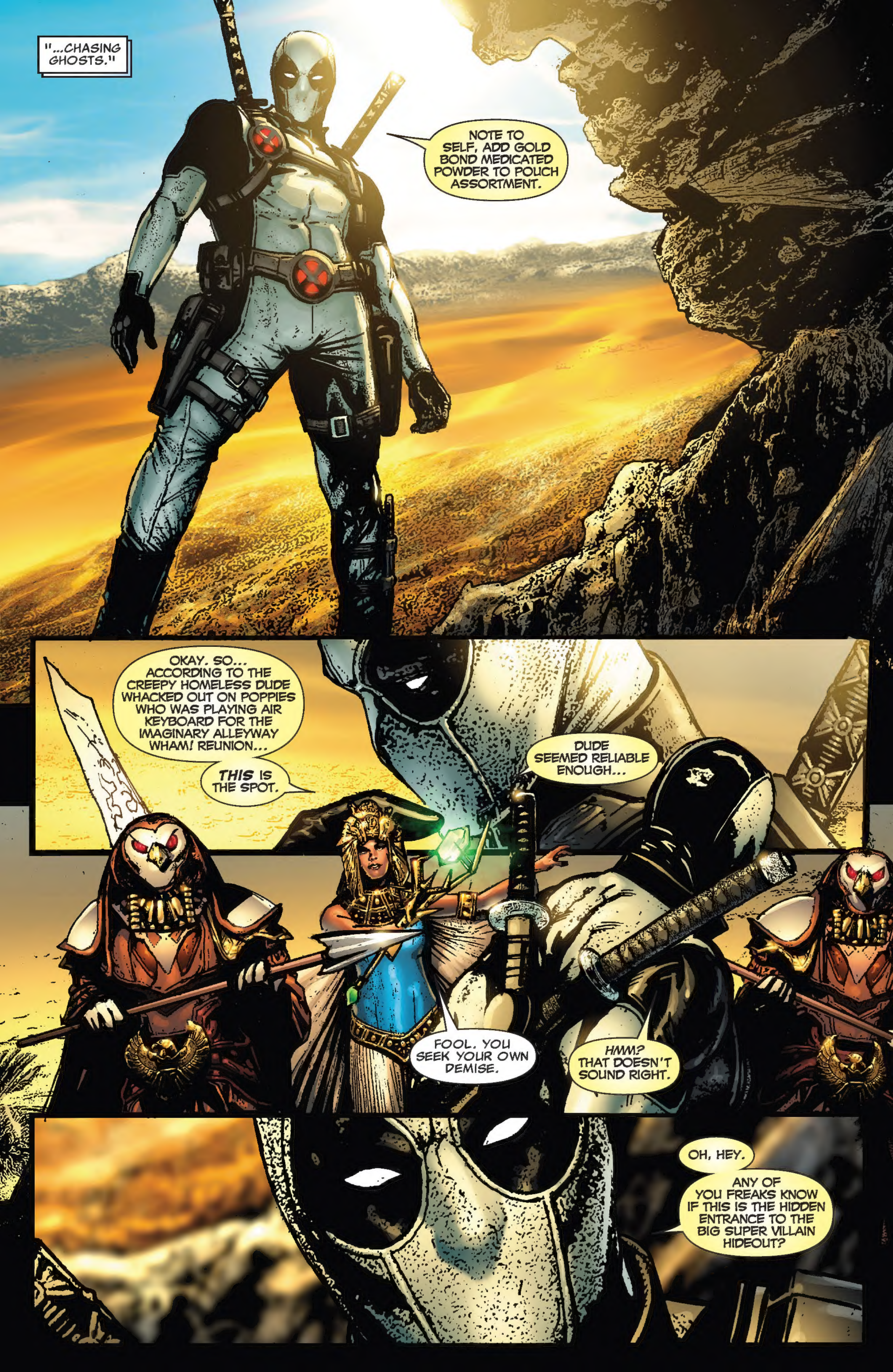
“THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE”

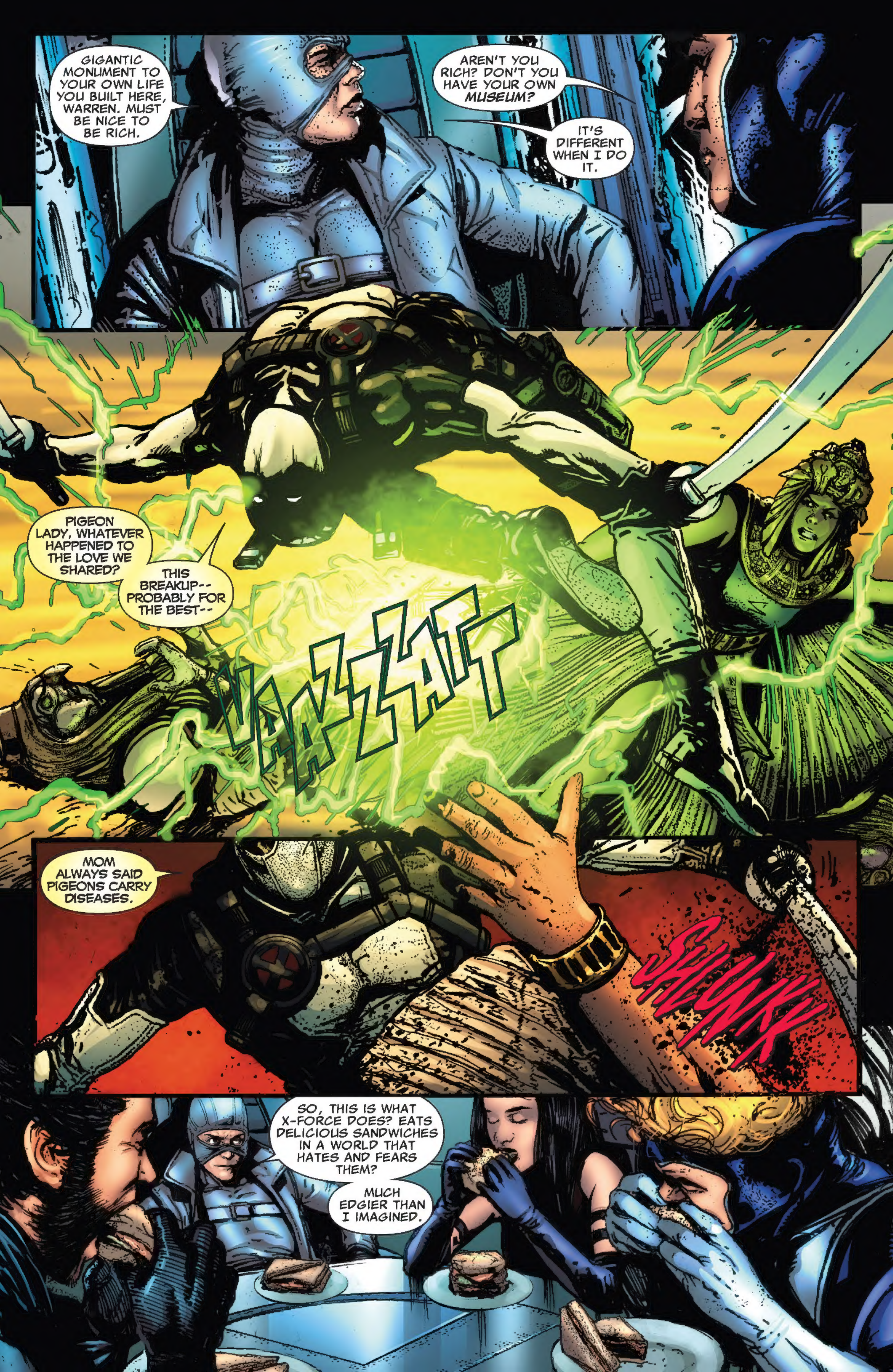

NORTHERN ARIZONA.
CAVERN X E.T.A., TWO MINUTES.
IF E.V.A.'S A PART OF YOU, FANTOMEX--WHY'S SHE ALWAYS YAPPIN'?
HOW UNCOUTH WOULD IT BE IF WE WERE TO CARRY ON PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS IN THE COMPANY OF OTHERS?
FAKE MOM TAUGHT YA GOOD MANNERS.
New Times
THE BEST LIARS ARE ALWAYS EXCEEDINGLY COURTEOUS PEOPLE.
BEST LIARS PROBABLY DON'T BRAG ABOUT BEING THE BEST LIARS.
UNLESS TO MISDIRECT WITH DUPLICITOUS FORTHRIGHTNESS.
YEAH, I RECKON YOU LIE REALLY GOOD.
GIVEN MY NATURE, I WAS PUZZLED AS TO WHY YOU REQUESTED MY PRESENCE WITHIN YOUR BLOODY LITTLE ILLUMINATI.
YOU FIT THE PROFILE.
YES, WELL, I WAS CREATED TO BE THE DEVIL-MAY-CARE, INTERNATIONAL, SUPER-SPY WITH A WORLDLY DISTINGUÉ THAT THE LADIES LOVE--I WAS LITERALLY MADE FOR THE WORK.

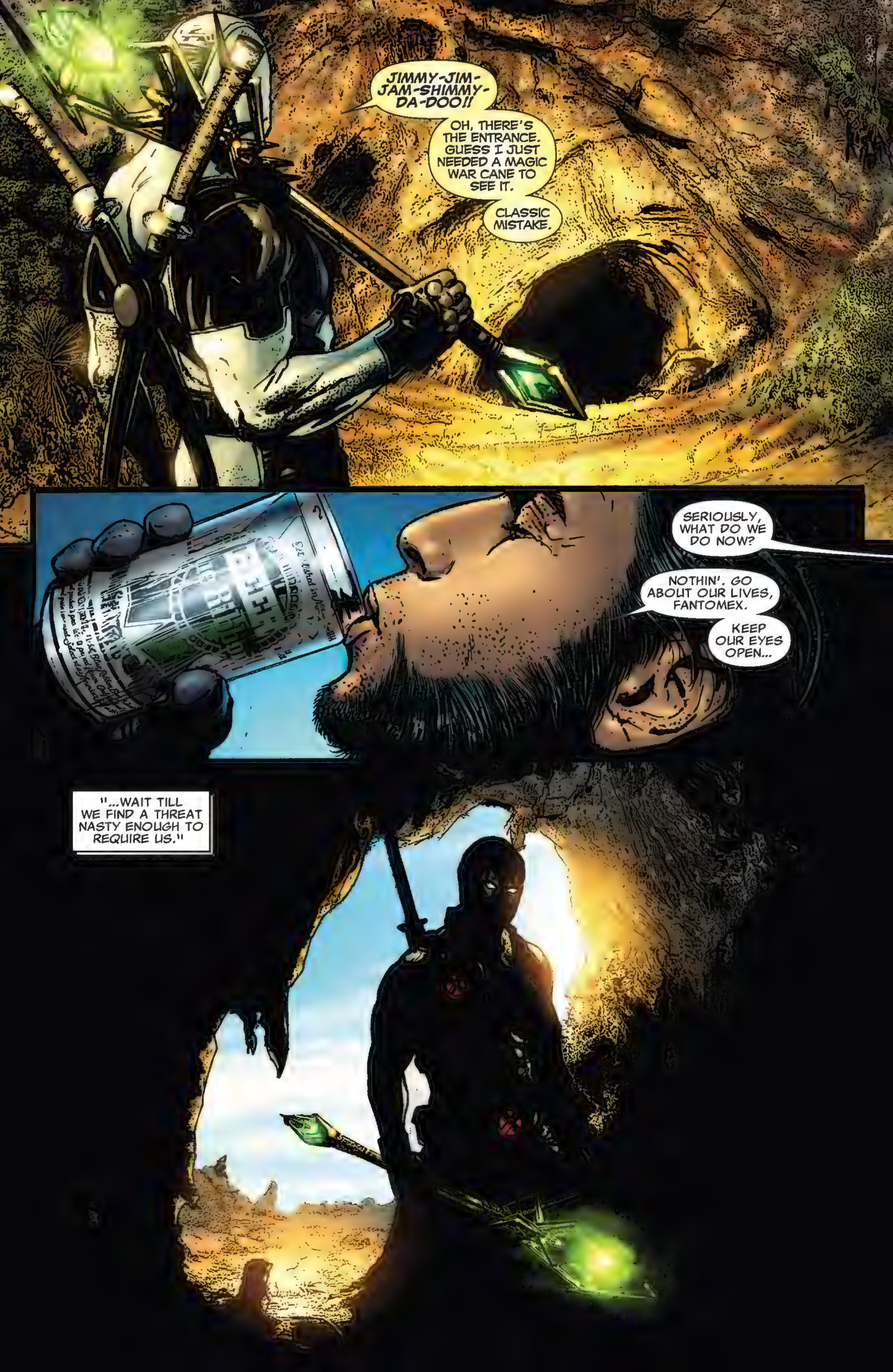

YEAH, YOU'RE A REAL DANDY OF AN ASSASSIN, BUT THAT AIN'T THE MAIN THING.
PRAY TELL?
I HAVE PURPOSE.
YOU'RE A MAN WITHOUT A PURPOSE.
YOU'RE *HUNTING* FOR A PURPOSE.
THAT'S STILL A PURPOSE.
WEAPON PLUS LET YOU ESCAPE, PROGRAMMED YOU TO READ *FANTOMAS*, ROB MUSEUMS, WATCH *DANGER DIABOLIK* AND KILL. ALL PREORDAINED.
YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE YOUR HISTORY TAMPERED WITH.
THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED TO HELP ME FIND THE TRUTH ABOUT MY PAST.
ALTRUISM IS COUNTER TO MY NATURE, WOLVERINE. I'M A MERCENARY.
IF YOU WERE JUST A MERCENARY, YOU'D HAVE SOLD WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT ME.
YES...SO IN ***NOT*** ATTEMPTING TO ***KILL YOU*** BY SELLING YOUR ***PERSONAL SECRETS*** TO ***DOCTOR DOOM***, I EARNED YOUR ***COMPLETE*** TRUST.
YOU X-MEN HAVE A SKEWED SENSE OF THINGS.
WHY DO YOU SPEND SO MUCH TIME STEALING?
I STEAL FOR ADVENTURE, FOR ADRENALINE, FOR SEX, FOR SPORT...
NO, YOU STEAL TO KEEP YOUR MIND OFF WHAT THEY MADE YOU FOR--***KILLING.*** BUT YOU ARE WHAT THEY MADE YOU TO BE.
AIN'T NO MAN CAN FIGHT AGAINST WHO HE IS FOREVER.
TRUST ME.


THEY MADE YOU TO KILL MUTANTS, THE KID-FRIENDLY SUPER HERO FACE OF A NEW BAND OF SENTINELS.
YOU GOT KILLIN' IN THAT NANOBLOOD OF YOURS.
IT'S A CONSTANT STRUGGLE TO IGNORE THEM TINY LITTLE CYBERNETIC SIRENS, AIN'T IT?
THAT'S WHAT X-FORCE IS FOR. GOOD PEOPLE WHO GOT THAT SAME UGLY IN 'EM.
CAN'T GET THE UGLY OUT. SO WE POINT IT AT THE KIND OF PLACES IT'LL DO THE WORLD SOME GOOD.
WELCOME TO CAVERN-X, GENTLEMEN.


YOU LOOK SPECTACULAR, MISS BRADDOCK.
SAVE IT, JEAN-PHILLIPE.
I'M AFRAID IT'S HARDWIRED IN, I'M THE DEVIL-MAY-CARE, INTERNATIONAL, SUPER-SPY WITH A WORLDLY DISTINGUÉ THAT THE LADIES...
...LOVE.
JUST NOT THE GOOD ONES.
C'MON. I MADE SANDWICHES.
I'M A VEGETARIAN. DO YOU HAVE MEATLESS OPTIONS?
SPEAKIN' OF *MEATLESS*-- WHERE'S THE DEGENERATE?
I'VE BEEN KEEPING HIM BUSY TILL WE NEED HIM.
HE'S IN EGYPT...

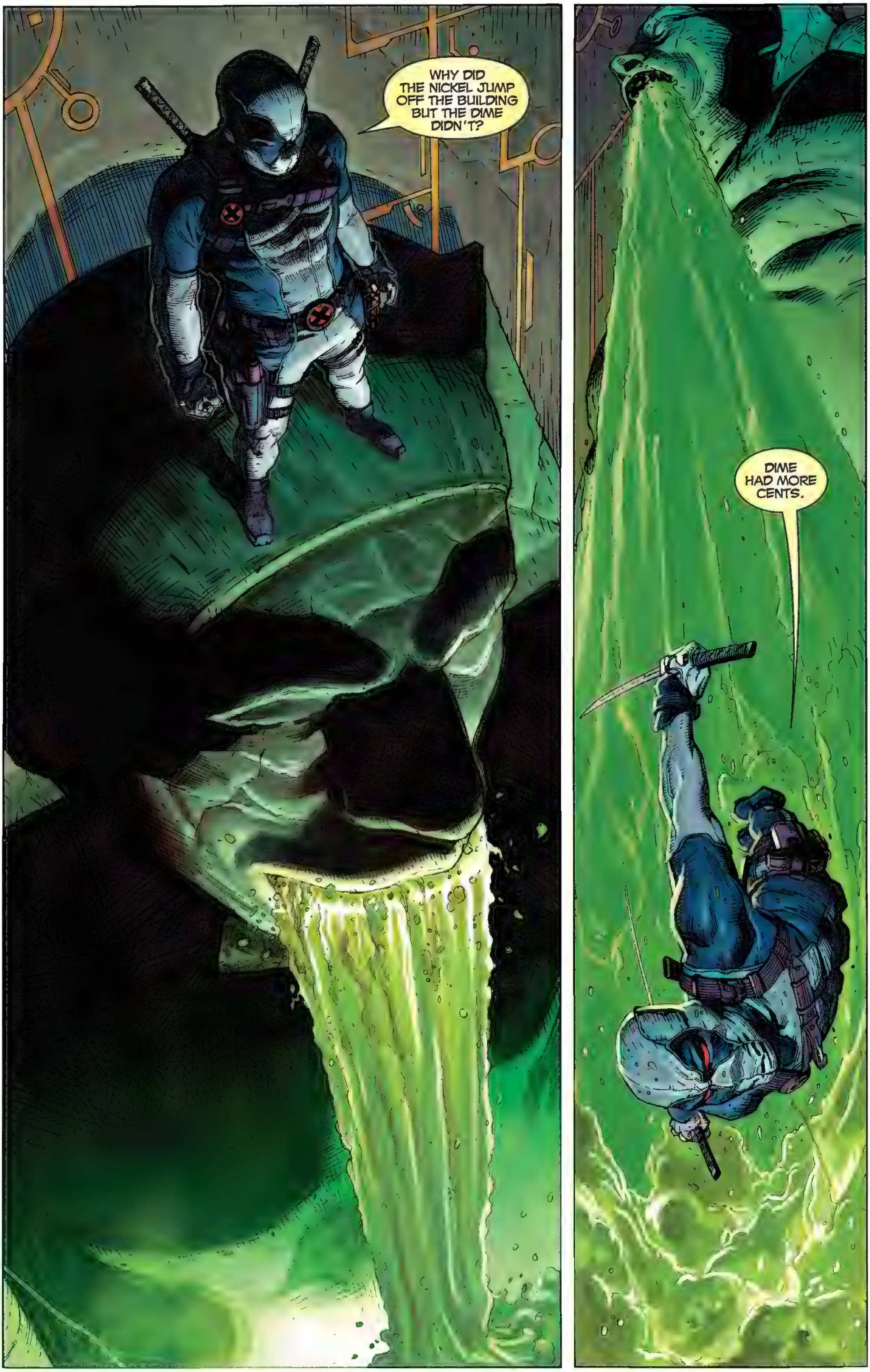

"...CHASING GHOSTS."
NOTE TO SELF, ADD GOLD BOND MEDICATED POWDER TO POUCH ASSORTMENT.
OKAY. SO... ACCORDING TO THE CREEPY HOMELESS DUDE WHACKED OUT ON POPPIES WHO WAS PLAYING AIR KEYBOARD FOR THE IMAGINARY ALLEYWAY WHAM! REUNION...
THIS IS THE SPOT.
DUDE SEEMED RELIABLE ENOUGH...
FOOL. YOU SEEK YOUR OWN DEMISE.
HMM? THAT DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT.
OH, HEY.
ANY OF YOU FREAKS KNOW IF THIS IS THE HIDDEN ENTRANCE TO THE BIG SUPER VILLAIN HIDEOUT?

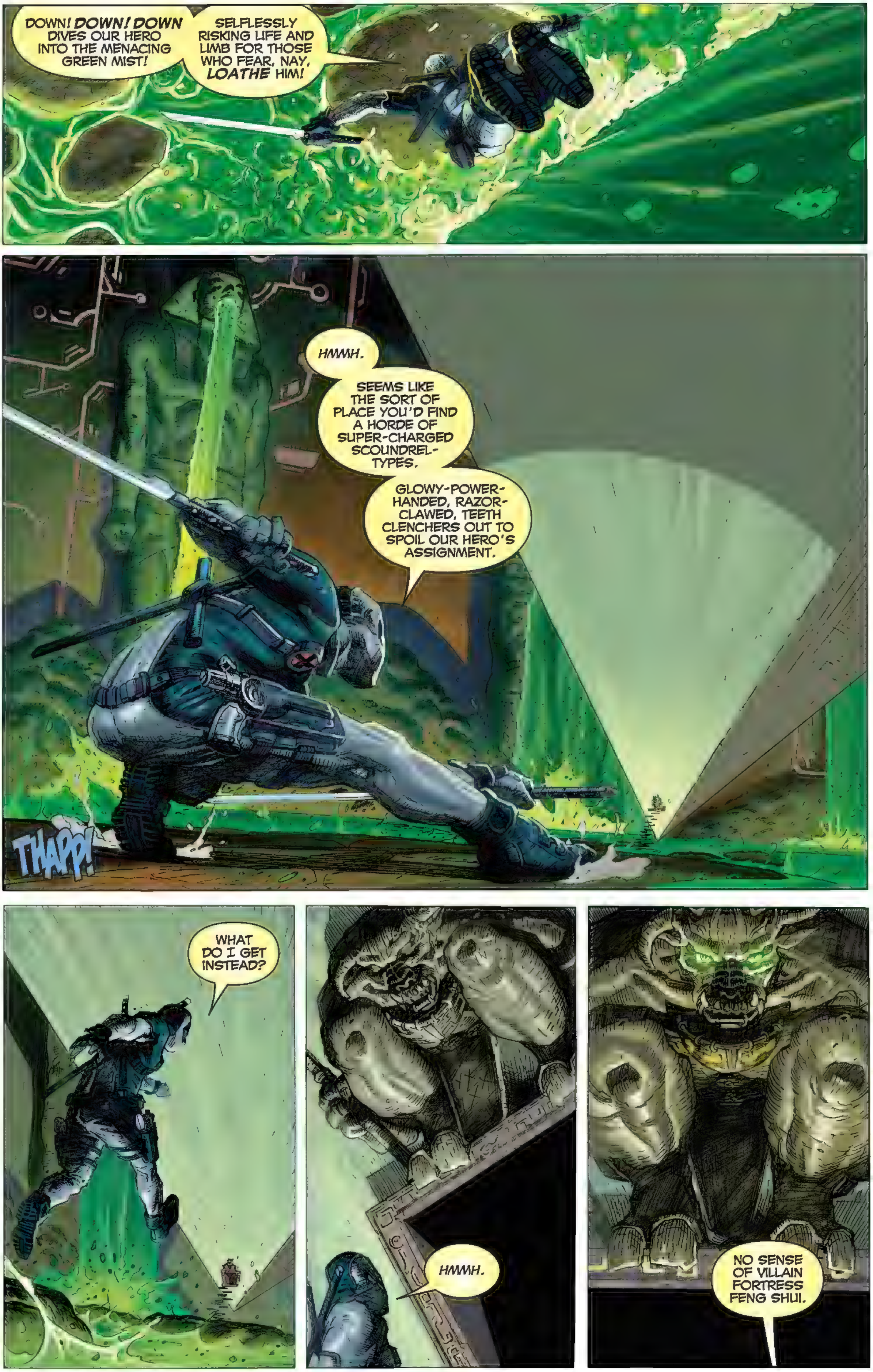

GIGANTIC MONUMENT TO YOUR OWN LIFE YOU BUILT HERE, WARREN. MUST BE NICE TO BE RICH.
AREN'T YOU RICH? DON'T YOU HAVE YOUR OWN *MUSEUM?*
IT'S DIFFERENT WHEN I DO IT.
PIGEON LADY, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE LOVE WE SHARED?
THIS BREAKUP-- PROBABLY FOR THE BEST--
VAZZAT
MOM ALWAYS SAID PIGEONS CARRY DISEASES.
SHUNKK
SO, THIS IS WHAT X-FORCE DOES? EATS DELICIOUS SANDWICHES IN A WORLD THAT HATES AND FEARS THEM?
MUCH EDGIER THAN I IMAGINED.

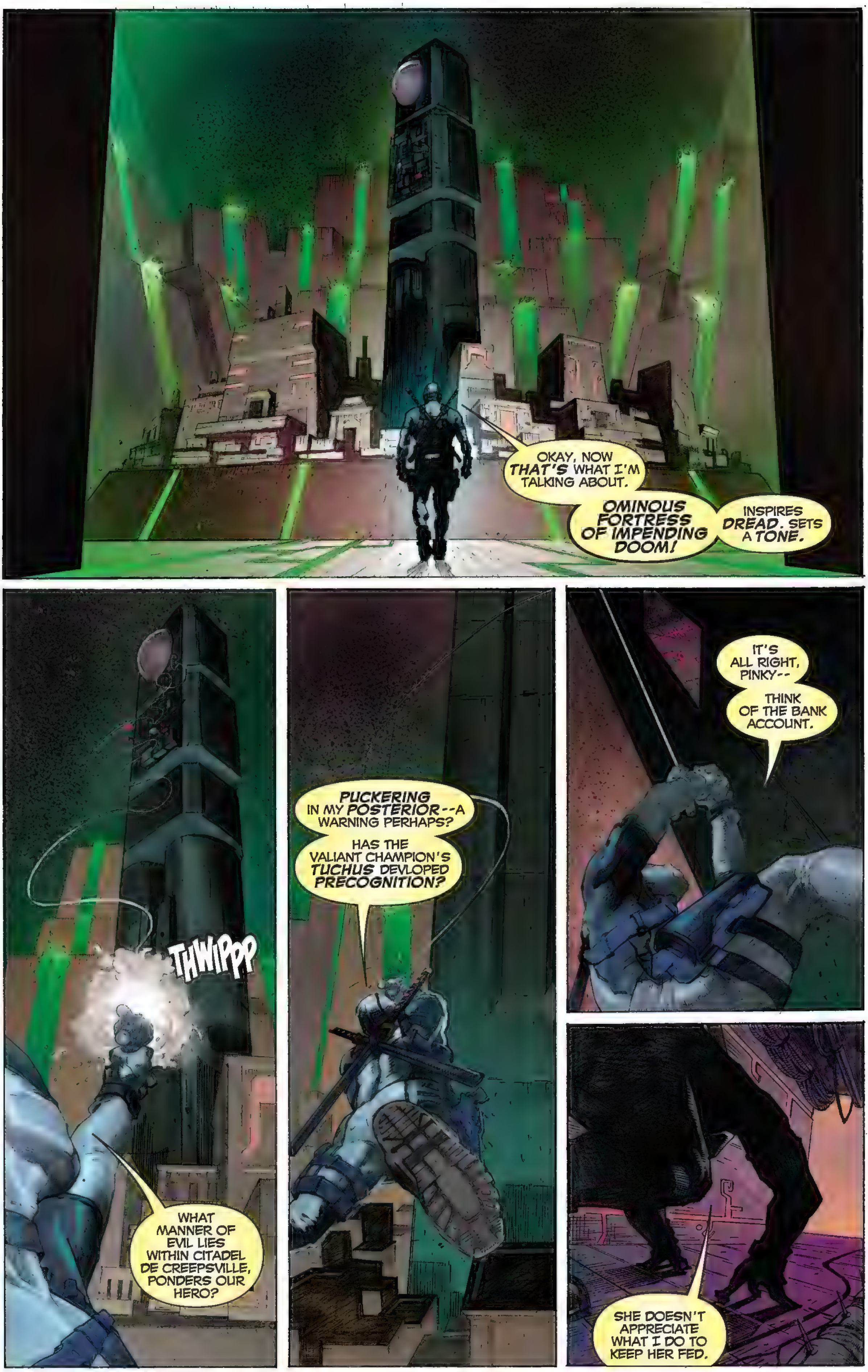

JIMMY-JIM-JAM-SHIMMY-DA-DOO!!
OH, THERE'S THE ENTRANCE. GUESS I JUST NEEDED A MAGIC WAR CANE TO SEE IT.
CLASSIC MISTAKE.
SERIOUSLY, WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
NOTHIN'. GO ABOUT OUR LIVES, FANTOMEX.
KEEP OUR EYES OPEN...
"...WAIT TILL WE FIND A THREAT NASTY ENOUGH TO REQUIRE US."

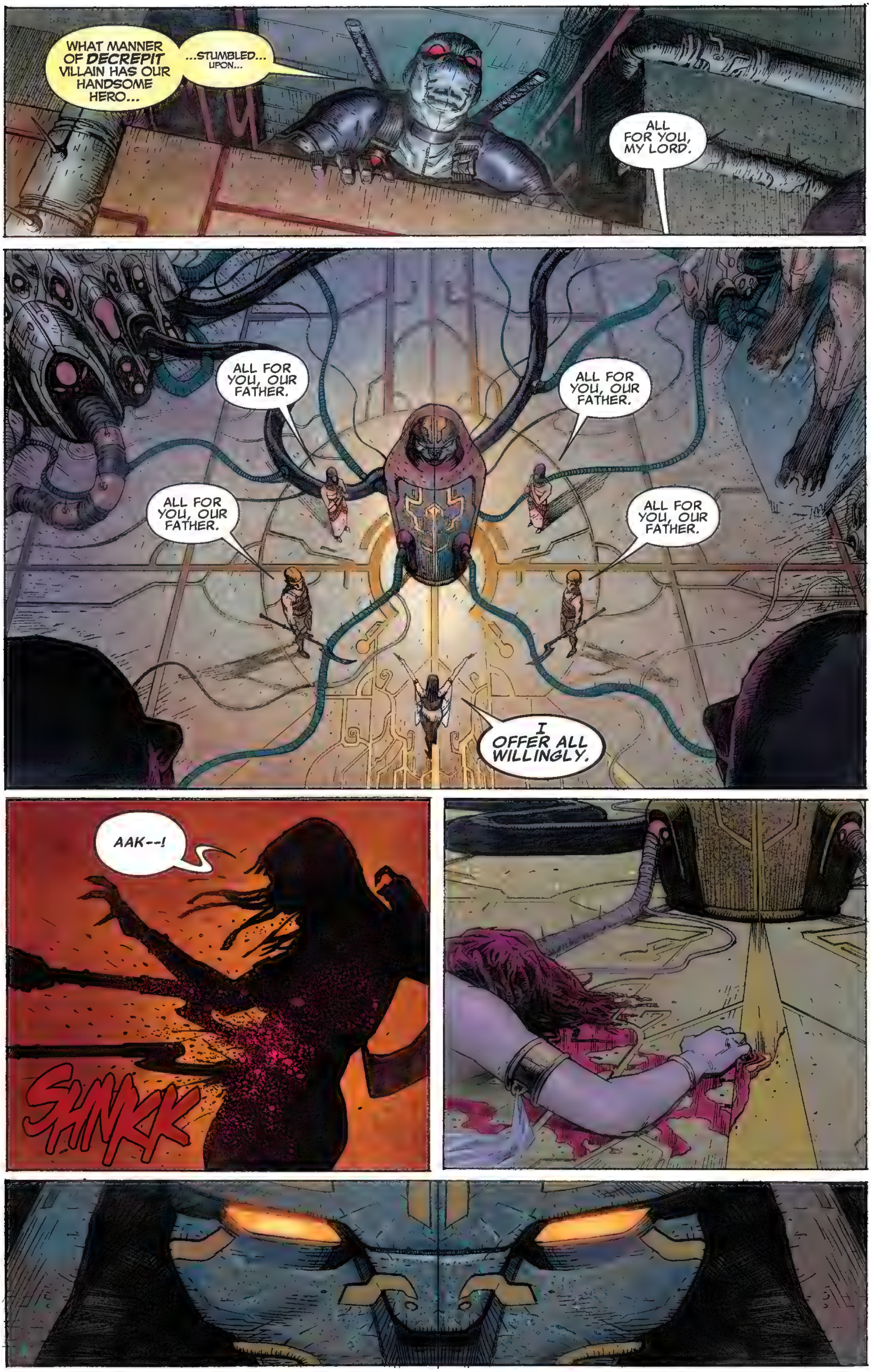
01 THE APOCALYPSE SOLUTION

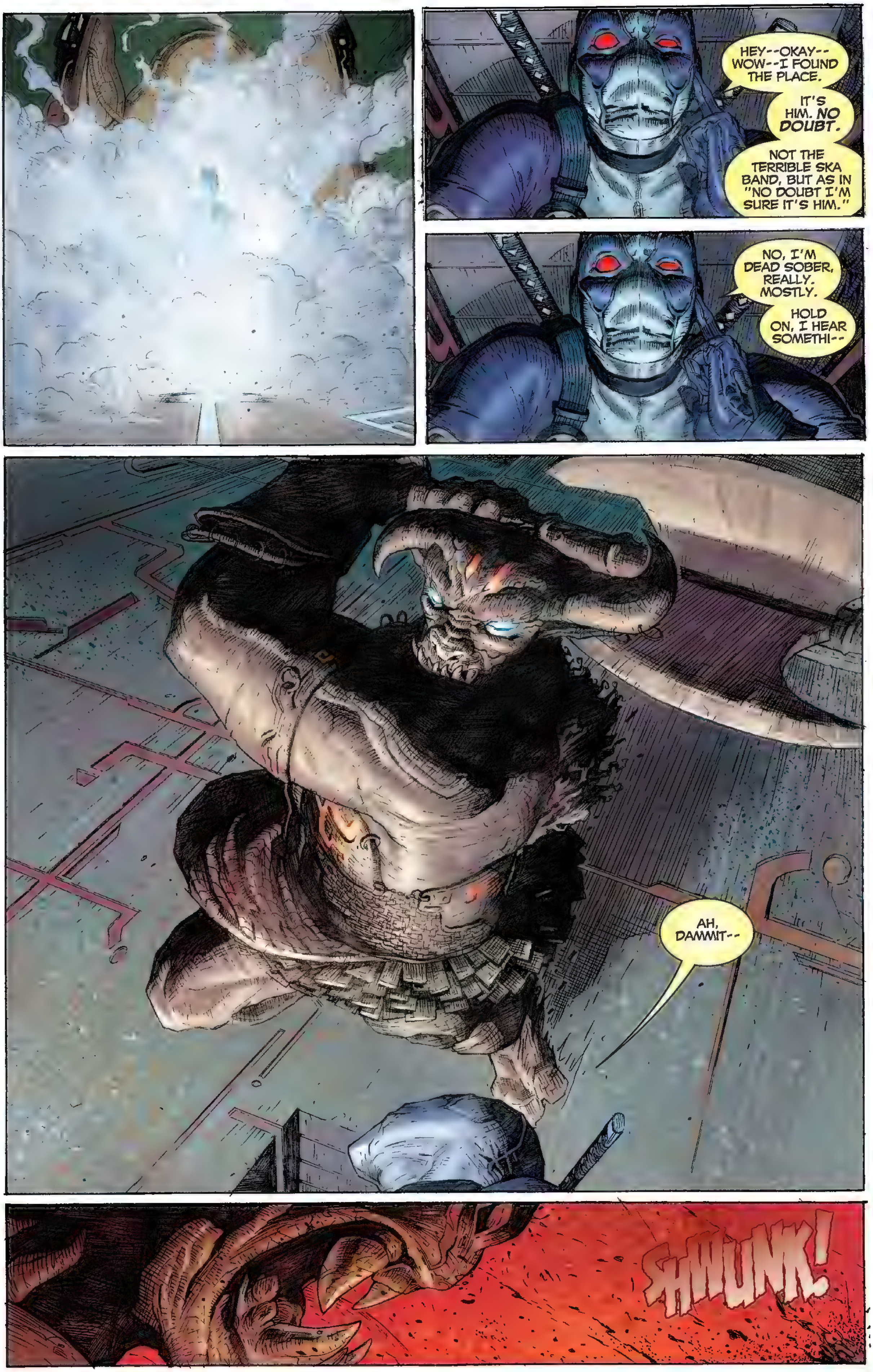
CHAPTER 1

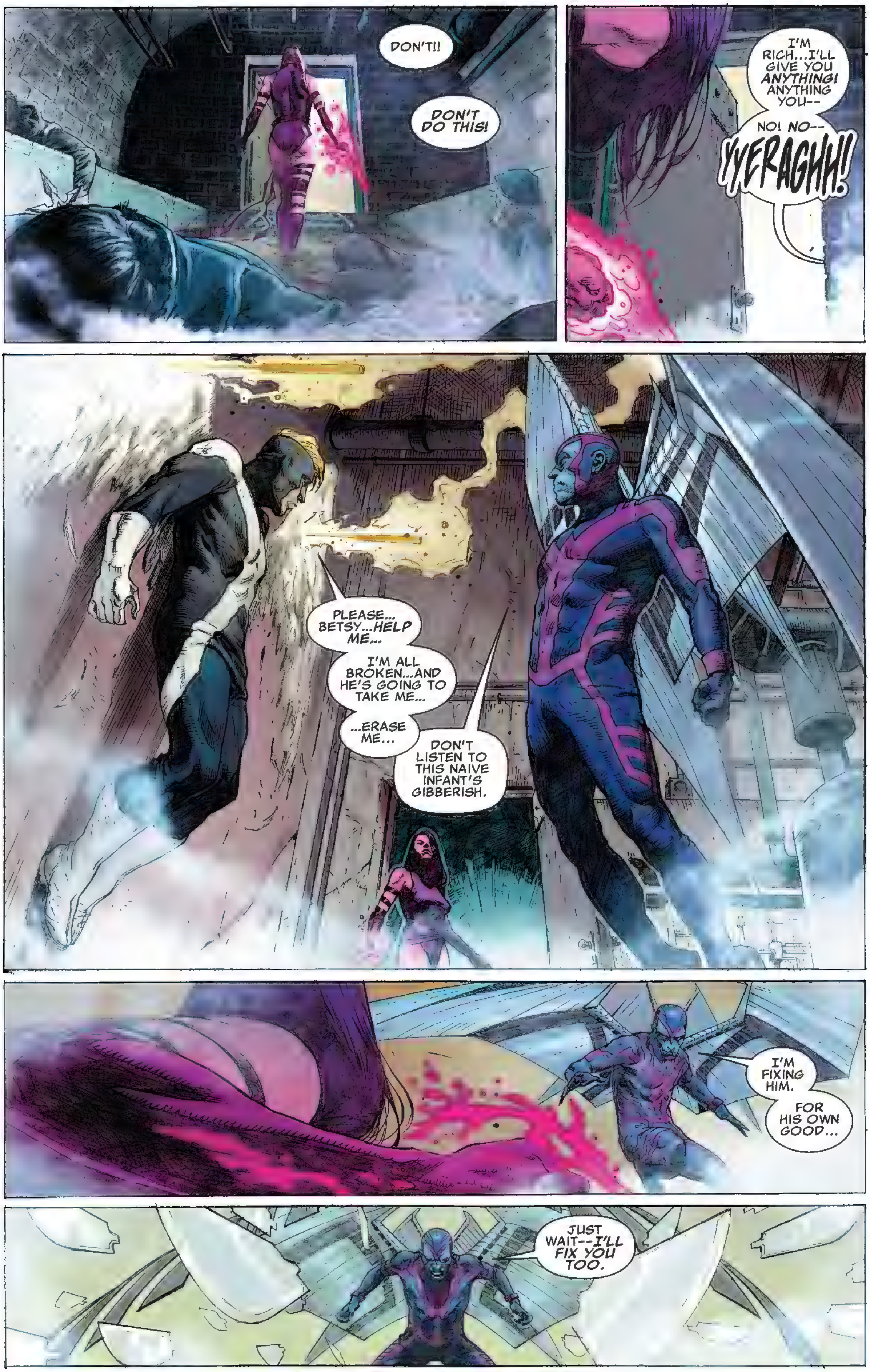

WHY DID THE NICKEL JUMP OFF THE BUILDING BUT THE DIME DIDN'T?
DIME HAD MORE CENTS.

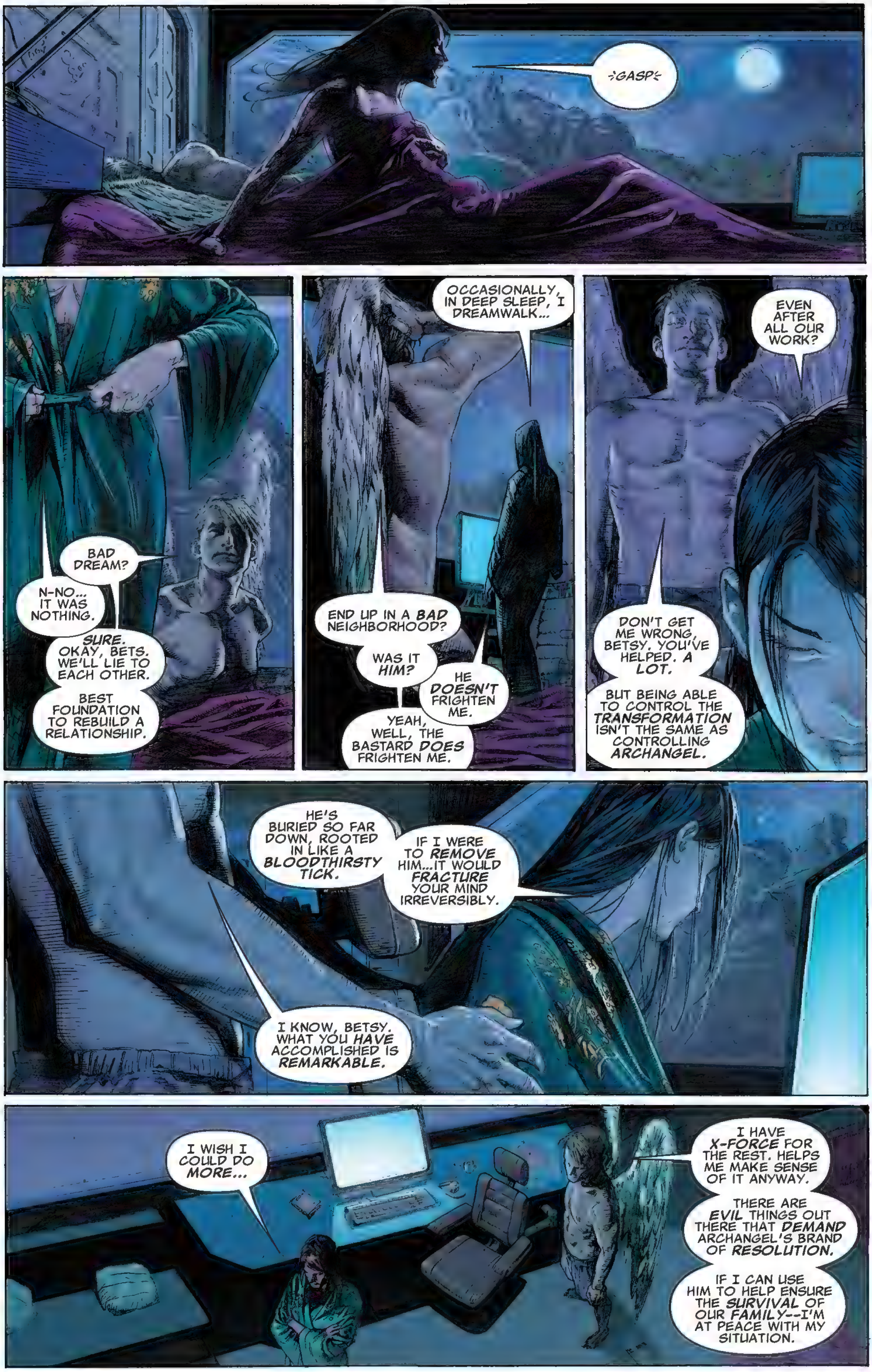

DOWN! *DOWN! DOWN* DIVES OUR HERO INTO THE MENACING GREEN MIST!
SELFLESSLY RISKING LIFE AND LIMB FOR THOSE WHO FEAR, NAY, ***LOATHE*** HIM!
HMMH.
SEEMS LIKE THE SORT OF PLACE YOU'D FIND A HORDE OF SUPER-CHARGED SCOUNDREL-TYPES.
GLOWY-POWER-HANDED, RAZOR-CLAWED, TEETH CLENCHERS OUT TO SPOIL OUR HERO'S ASSIGNMENT.
THAPP!
WHAT DO I GET INSTEAD?
HMMH.
NO SENSE OF VILLAIN FORTRESS FENG SHUI.

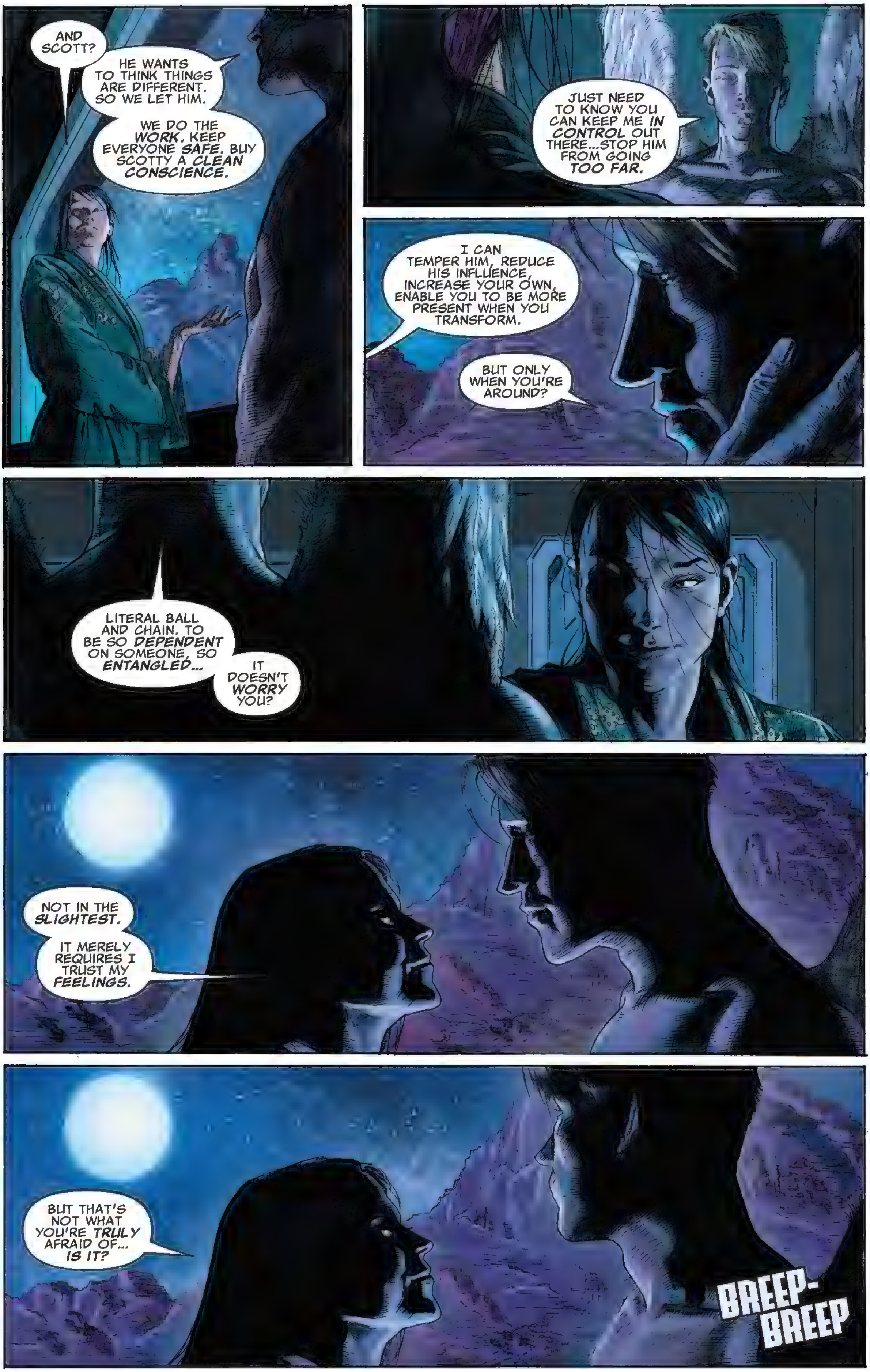

OKAY, NOW *THAT'S* WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.
OMINOUS FORTRESS OF IMPENDING DOOM!
INSPIRES *DREAD*. SETS A *TONE*.
THWIPPP
WHAT MANNER OF EVIL LIES WITHIN CITADEL DE CREEPSVILLE, PONDERS OUR HERO?
PUCKERING IN MY *POSTERIOR*--A WARNING PERHAPS?
HAS THE VALIANT CHAMPION'S *TUCHUS* DEVLOPED *PRECOGNITION?*
IT'S ALL RIGHT, PINKY--
THINK OF THE BANK ACCOUNT.
SHE DOESN'T APPRECIATE WHAT I DO TO KEEP HER FED.

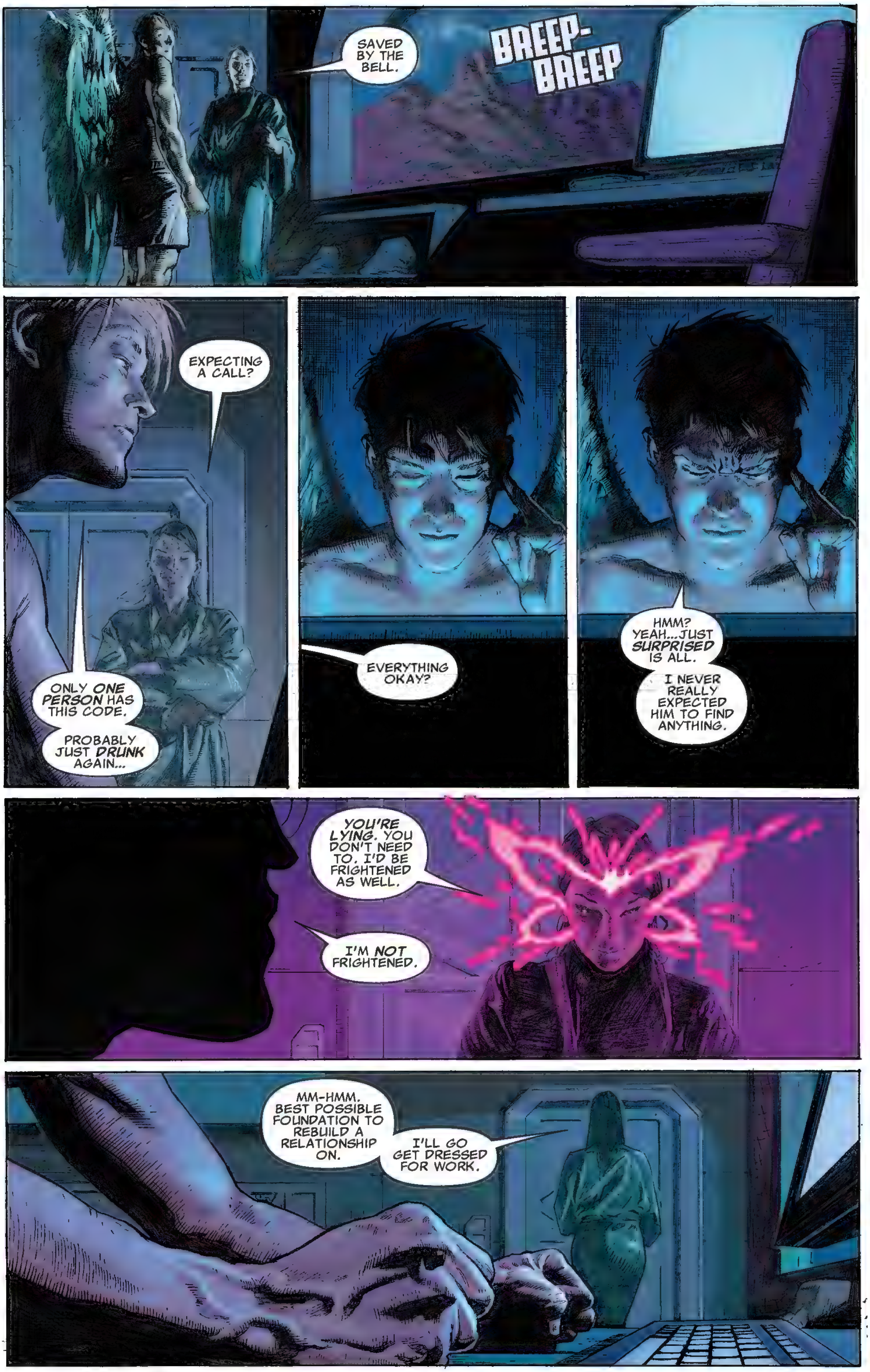

WHAT MANNER OF *DECREPIT* VILLAIN HAS OUR HANDSOME HERO...
...STUMBLED... UPON...
ALL FOR YOU, MY LORD.
ALL FOR YOU, OUR FATHER.
ALL FOR YOU, OUR FATHER.
ALL FOR YOU, OUR FATHER.
ALL FOR YOU, OUR FATHER.
I OFFER ALL WILLINGLY.
AAK--!
SHNKK

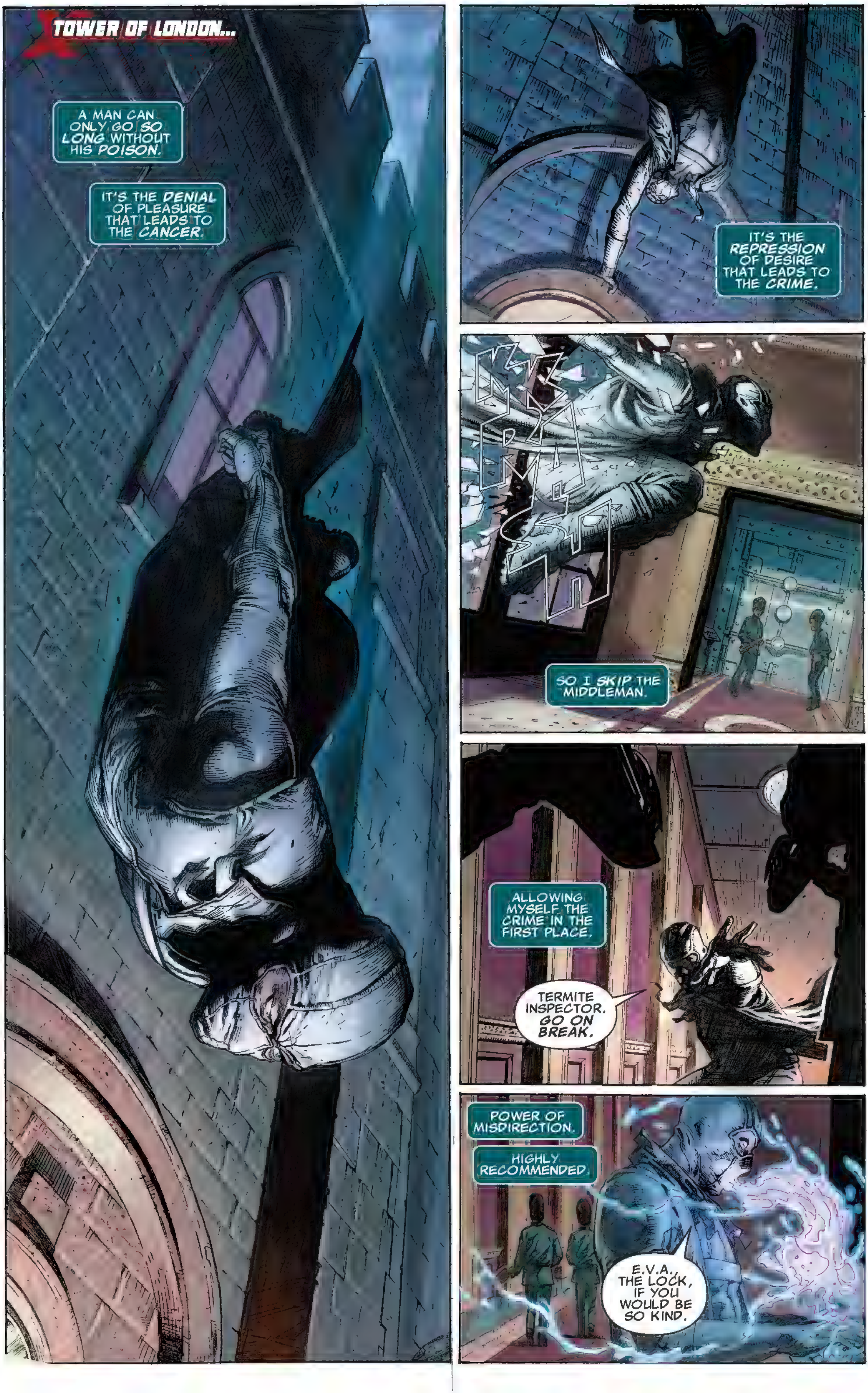

HEY--OKAY--WOW--I FOUND THE PLACE.
IT'S HIM. *NO DOUBT*.
NOT THE TERRIBLE SKA BAND, BUT AS IN "NO DOUBT I'M SURE IT'S HIM."
NO, I'M DEAD SOBER, REALLY. MOSTLY.
HOLD ON, I HEAR SOMETHI--
AH, DAMMIT--
SHWUNK!

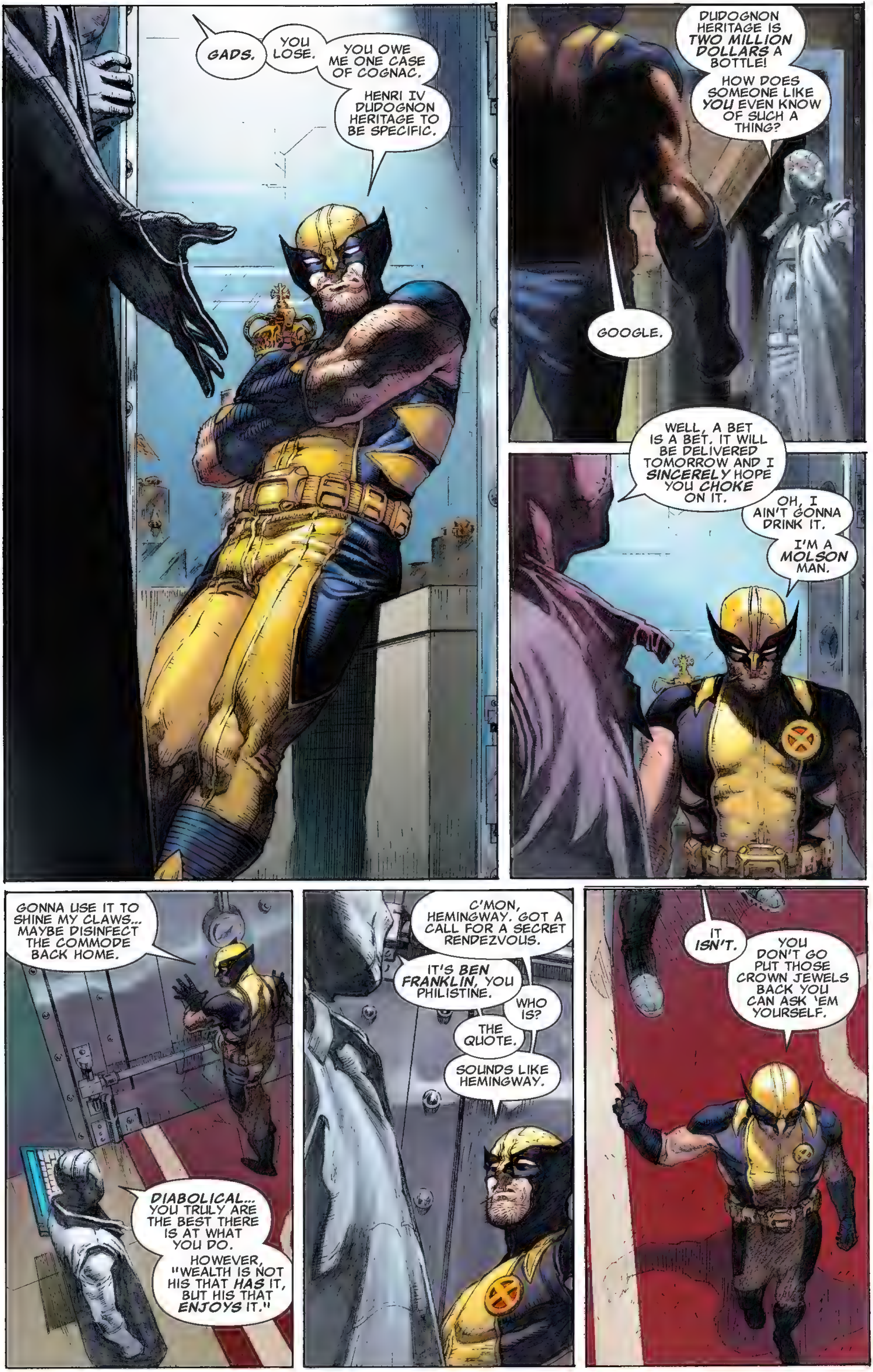

DON'T!!
DON'T DO THIS!
I'M RICH...I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING! ANYTHING YOU--
NO! NO--
YYERAGHH!
PLEASE... BETSY...HELP ME...
I'M ALL BROKEN...AND HE'S GOING TO TAKE ME...
...ERASE ME...
DON'T LISTEN TO THIS NAIVE INFANT'S GIBBERISH.
I'M FIXING HIM.
FOR HIS OWN GOOD...
JUST WAIT--I'LL FIX YOU TOO.

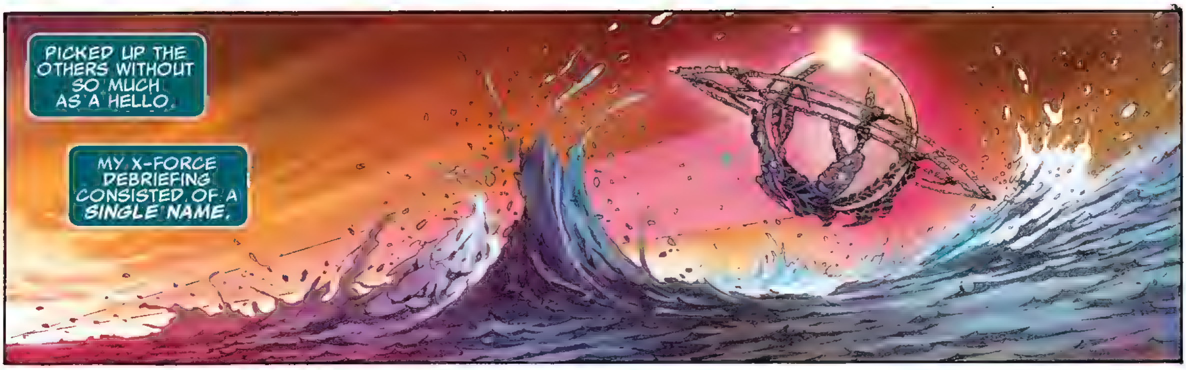

GASP
BAD DREAM?
N-NO... IT WAS NOTHING.
SURE. OKAY, BETS. WE'LL LIE TO EACH OTHER.
BEST FOUNDATION TO REBUILD A RELATIONSHIP.
OCCASIONALLY, IN DEEP SLEEP, I DREAMWALK...
END UP IN A *BAD* NEIGHBORHOOD?
WAS IT *HIM?*
HE *DOESN'T* FRIGHTEN ME.
YEAH, WELL, THE BASTARD *DOES* FRIGHTEN ME.
EVEN AFTER ALL OUR WORK?
DON'T GET ME WRONG, BETSY. YOU'VE HELPED. *A LOT.*
BUT BEING ABLE TO CONTROL THE *TRANSFORMATION* ISN'T THE SAME AS CONTROLLING *ARCHANGEL.*
HE'S BURIED SO FAR DOWN, ROOTED IN LIKE A *BLOODTHIRSTY TICK.*
IF I WERE TO *REMOVE* HIM...IT WOULD *FRACTURE* YOUR MIND IRREVERSIBLY.
I KNOW, BETSY. WHAT YOU *HAVE* ACCOMPLISHED IS *REMARKABLE.*
I WISH I COULD DO *MORE...*
I HAVE *X-FORCE* FOR THE REST. HELPS ME MAKE SENSE OF IT ANYWAY.
THERE ARE *EVIL* THINGS OUT THERE THAT *DEMAND* ARCHANGEL'S BRAND OF *RESOLUTION.*
IF I CAN USE HIM TO HELP ENSURE THE *SURVIVAL* OF OUR *FAMILY*--I'M AT PEACE WITH MY SITUATION.

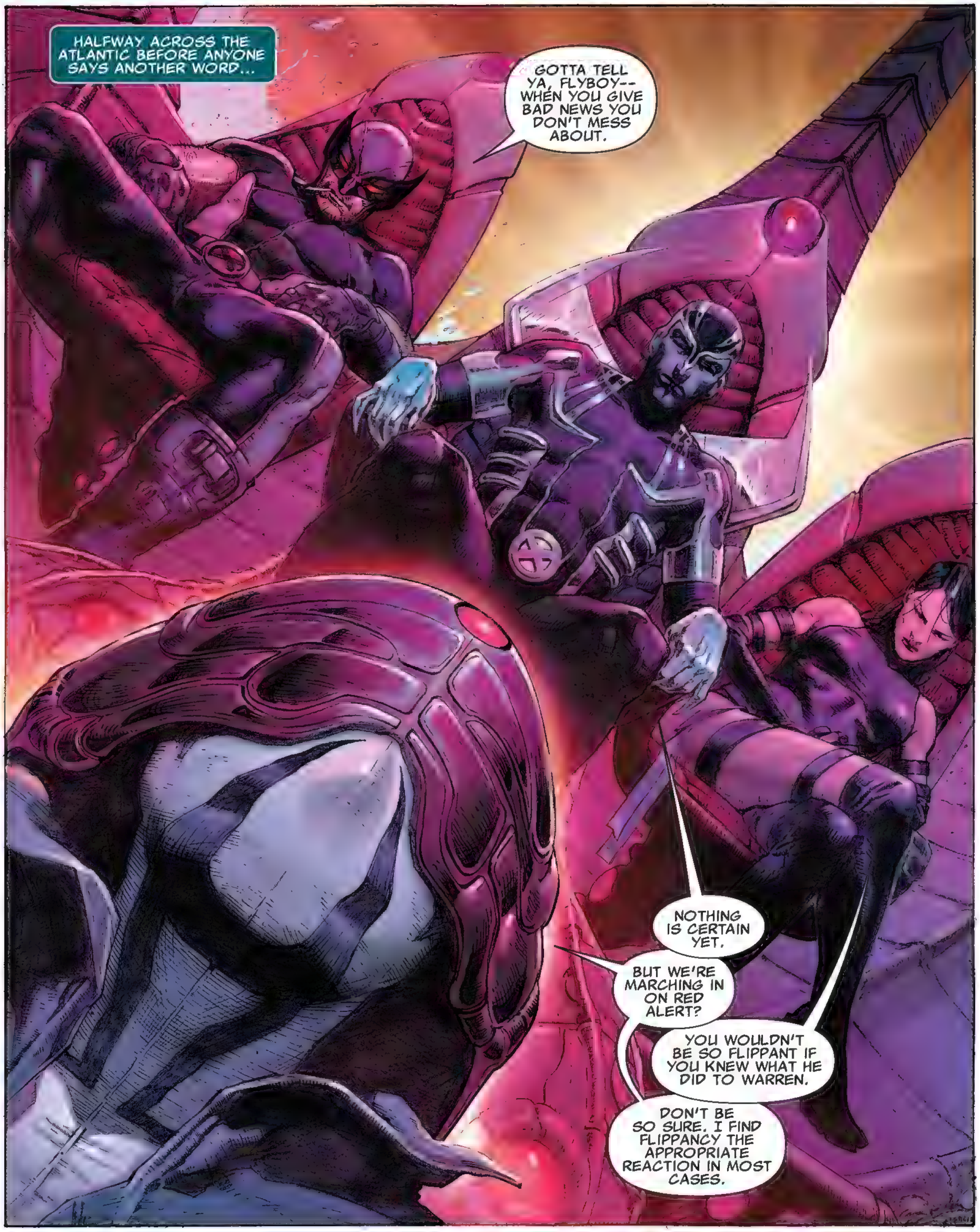

AND SCOTT?
HE WANTS TO THINK THINGS ARE DIFFERENT. SO WE LET HIM.
WE DO THE WORK. KEEP EVERYONE SAFE. BUY SCOTTY A CLEAN CONSCIENCE.
JUST NEED TO KNOW YOU CAN KEEP ME IN CONTROL OUT THERE...STOP HIM FROM GOING TOO FAR.
I CAN TEMPER HIM, REDUCE HIS INFLUENCE, INCREASE YOUR OWN, ENABLE YOU TO BE MORE PRESENT WHEN YOU TRANSFORM.
BUT ONLY WHEN YOU'RE AROUND?
LITERAL BALL AND CHAIN. TO BE SO DEPENDENT ON SOMEONE, SO ENTANGLED...
IT DOESN'T WORRY YOU?
NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST.
IT MERELY REQUIRES I TRUST MY FEELINGS.
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU'RE TRULY AFRAID OF... IS IT?
BREEP-BREEP

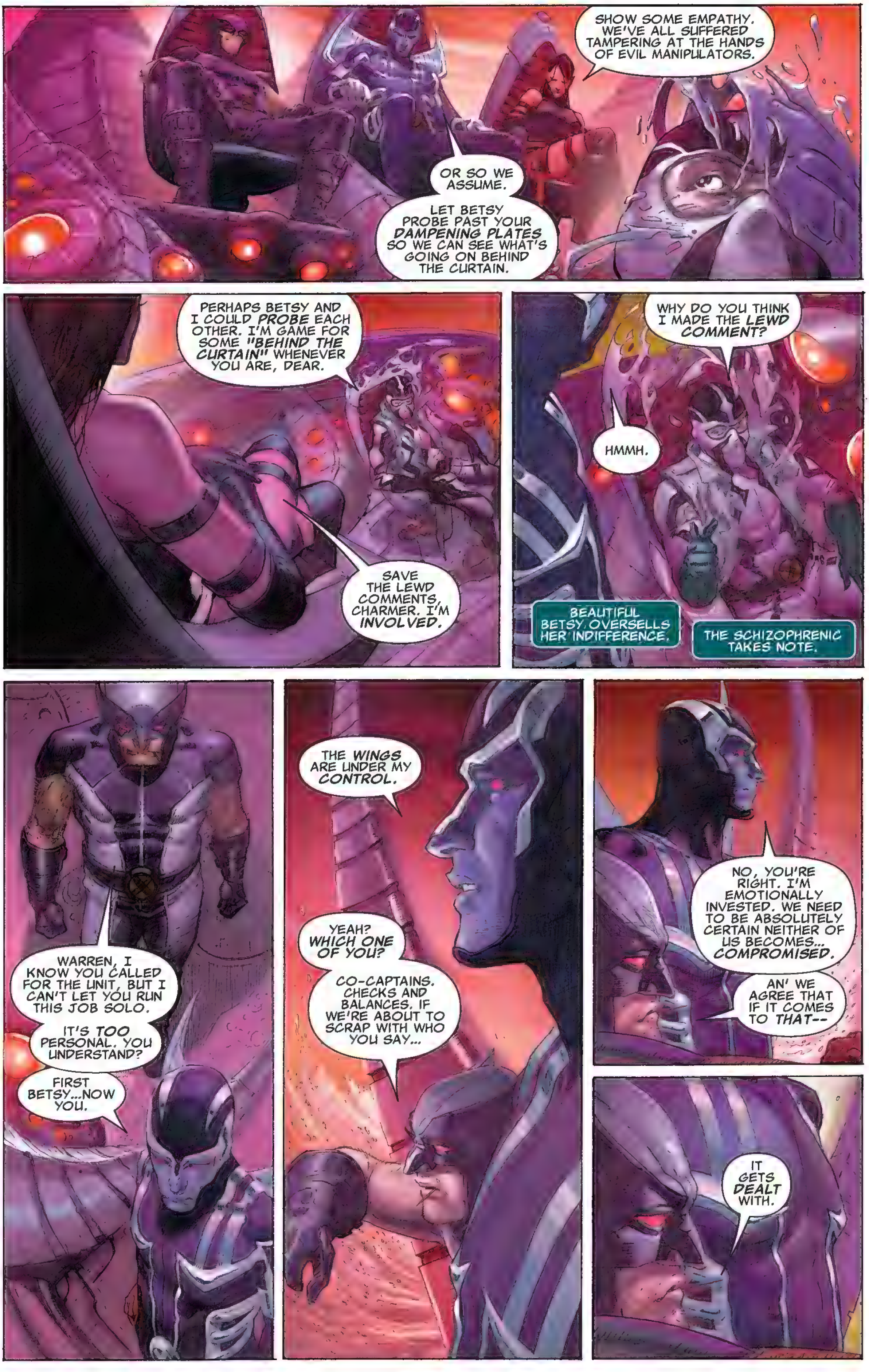

SAVED BY THE BELL.
BREEP-BREEP
EXPECTING A CALL?
ONLY *ONE PERSON* HAS THIS CODE.
PROBABLY JUST *DRUNK* AGAIN...
EVERYTHING OKAY?
HMM? YEAH...JUST *SURPRISED* IS ALL.
I NEVER REALLY EXPECTED HIM TO FIND ANYTHING.
YOU'RE LYING. YOU DON'T NEED TO. I'D BE FRIGHTENED AS WELL.
I'M *NOT* FRIGHTENED.
MM-HMM. BEST POSSIBLE FOUNDATION TO REBUILD A RELATIONSHIP ON.
I'LL GO GET DRESSED FOR WORK.

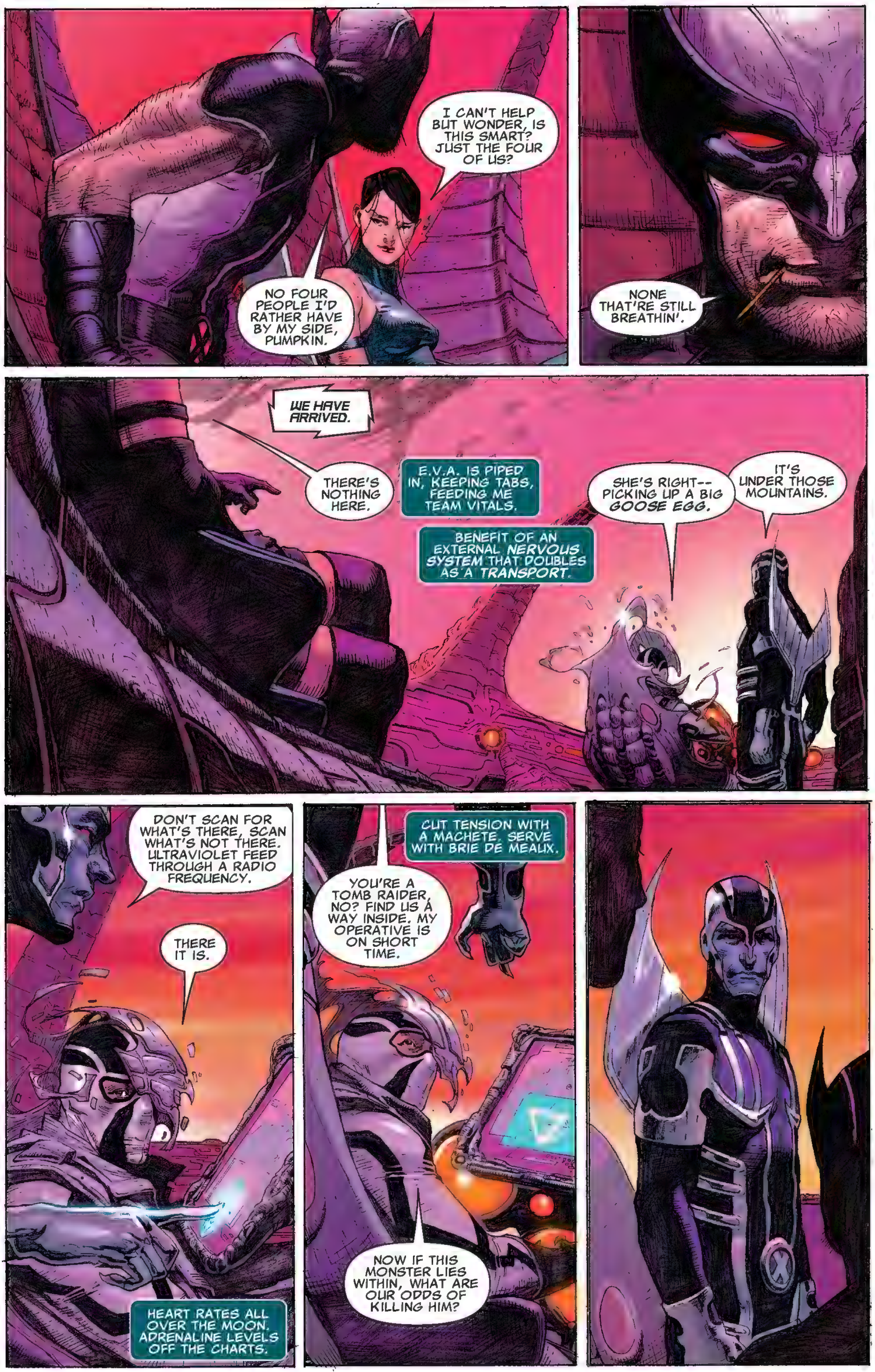

TOWER OF LONDON...
A MAN CAN ONLY GO SO LONG WITHOUT HIS POISON.
IT'S THE DENIAL OF PLEASURE THAT LEADS TO THE CANCER.
IT'S THE REPRESSION OF DESIRE THAT LEADS TO THE CRIME.
SO I SKIP THE MIDDLEMAN.
ALLOWING MYSELF THE CRIME IN THE FIRST PLACE.
TERMITE INSPECTOR. GO ON BREAK.
POWER OF MISDIRECTION.
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
E.V.A., THE LOCK, IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND.

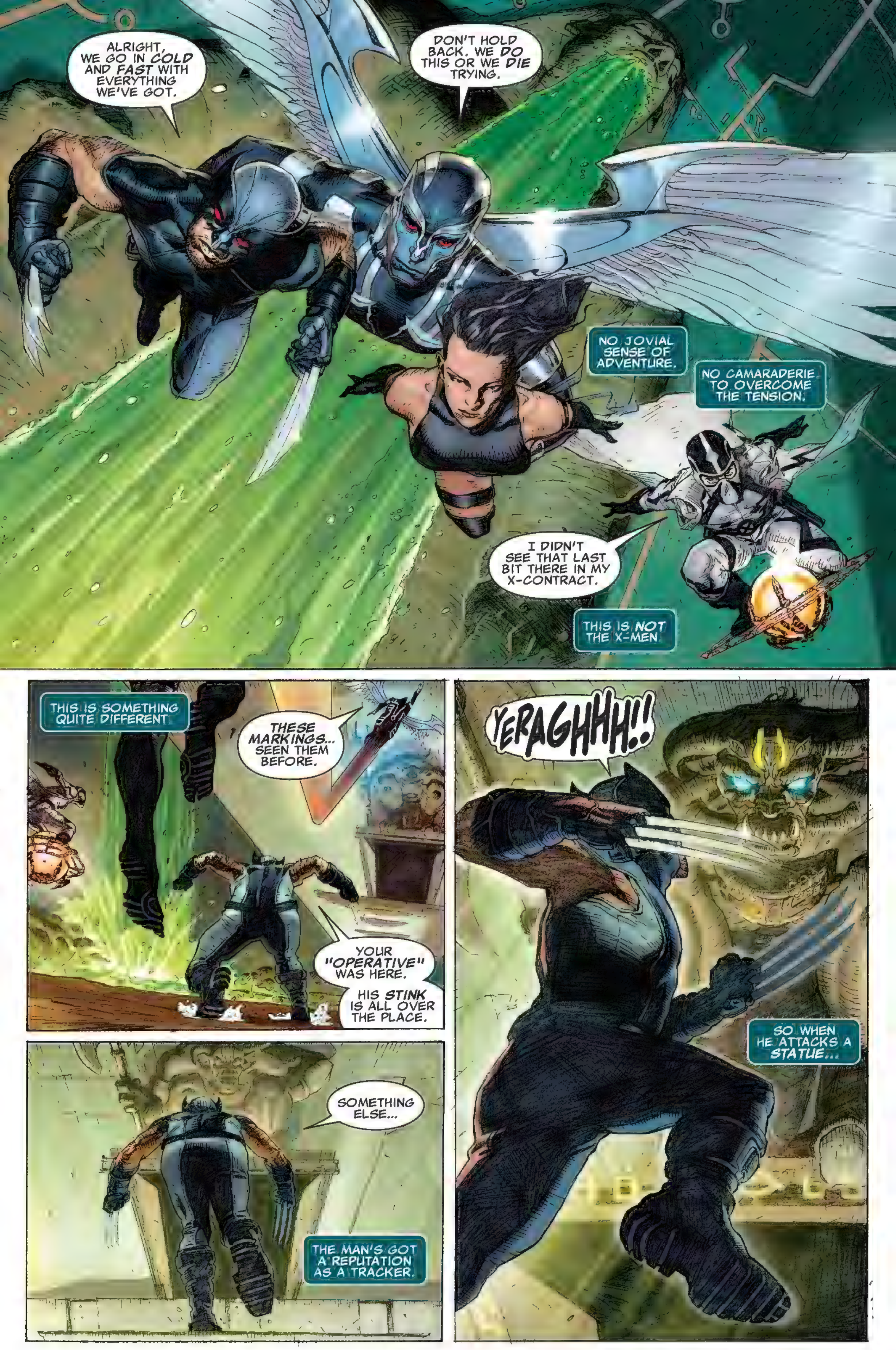

GADS.
YOU LOSE.
YOU OWE ME ONE CASE OF COGNAC.
HENRI IV DUDOGNON HERITAGE TO BE SPECIFIC.
DUDOGNON HERITAGE IS TWO MILLION DOLLARS A BOTTLE!
HOW DOES SOMEONE LIKE YOU EVEN KNOW OF SUCH A THING?
GOOGLE.
WELL, A BET IS A BET. IT WILL BE DELIVERED TOMORROW AND I SINCERELY HOPE YOU CHOKE ON IT.
OH, I AIN'T GONNA DRINK IT.
I'M A MOLSON MAN.
GONNA USE IT TO SHINE MY CLAWS... MAYBE DISINFECT THE COMMODE BACK HOME.
DIABOLICAL... YOU TRULY ARE THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT YOU DO.
HOWEVER, "WEALTH IS NOT HIS THAT HAS IT, BUT HIS THAT ENJOYS IT."
C'MON, HEMINGWAY. GOT A CALL FOR A SECRET RENDEZVOUS.
IT'S BEN FRANKLIN, YOU PHILISTINE.
WHO IS?
THE QUOTE.
SOUNDS LIKE HEMINGWAY.
IT ISN'T.
YOU DON'T GO PUT THOSE CROWN JEWELS BACK YOU CAN ASK 'EM YOURSELF.

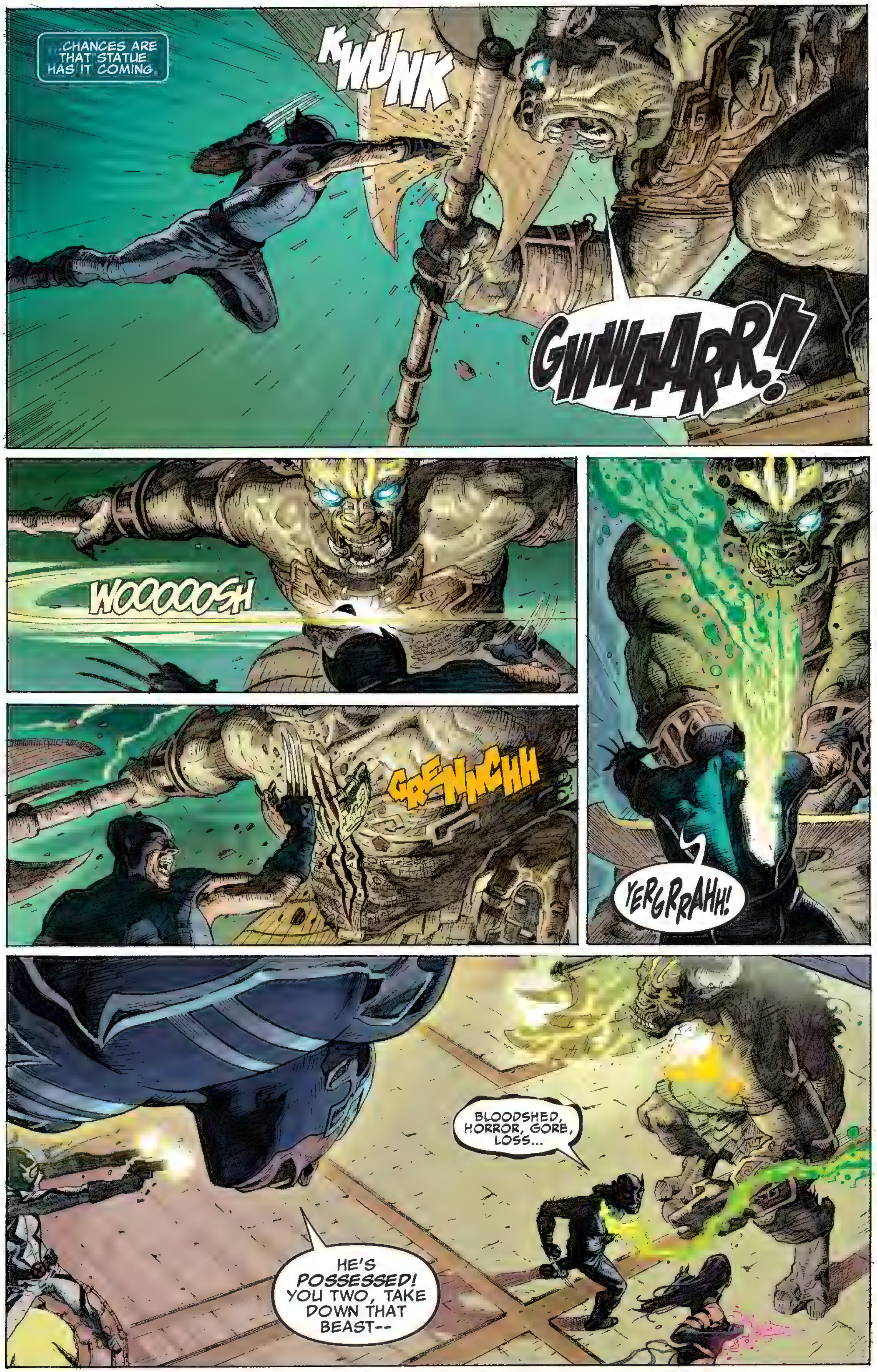

PICKED UP THE OTHERS WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A HELLO.
MY X-FORCE DEBRIEFING CONSISTED OF A SINGLE NAME.

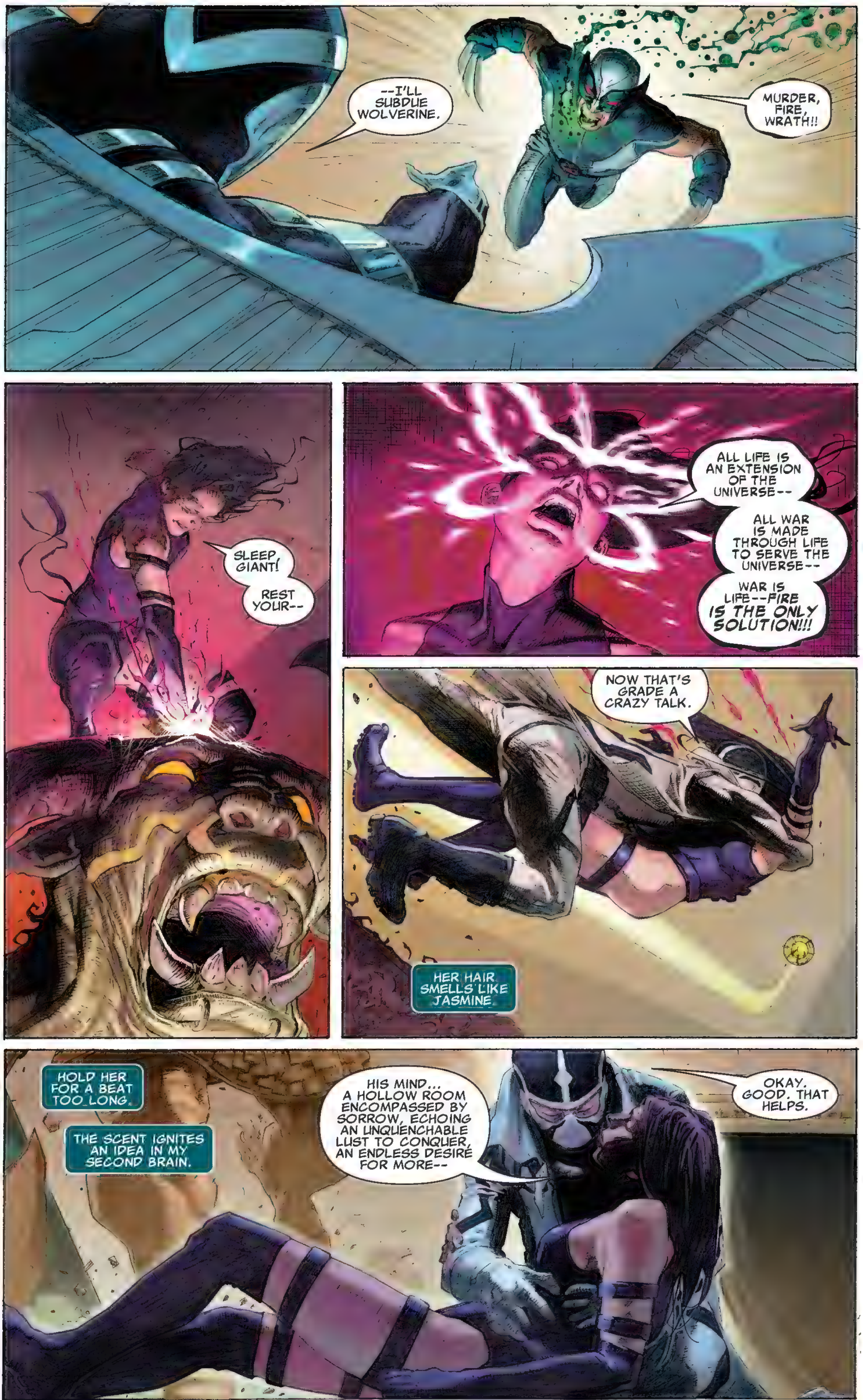

HALFWAY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC BEFORE ANYONE SAYS ANOTHER WORD...
GOTTA TELL YA, FLYBOY-- WHEN YOU GIVE BAD NEWS YOU DON'T MESS ABOUT.
NOTHING IS CERTAIN YET.
BUT WE'RE MARCHING IN ON RED ALERT?
YOU WOULDN'T BE SO FLIPPANT IF YOU KNEW WHAT HE DID TO WARREN.
DON'T BE SO SURE. I FIND FLIPPANCY THE APPROPRIATE REACTION IN MOST CASES.

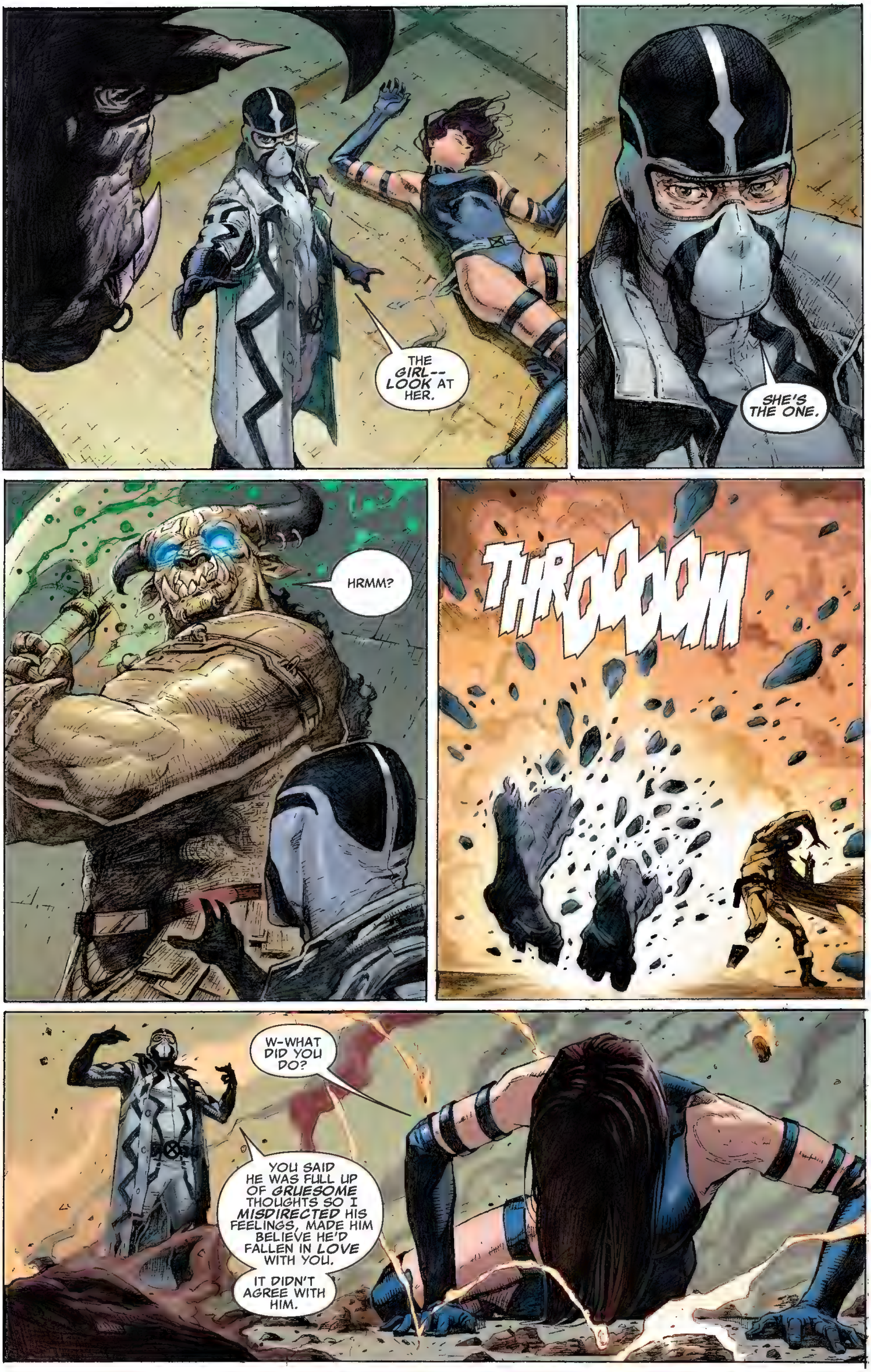

SHOW SOME EMPATHY. WE'VE ALL SUFFERED TAMPERING AT THE HANDS OF EVIL MANIPULATORS.
OR SO WE ASSUME.
LET BETSY PROBE PAST YOUR *DAMPENING PLATES* SO WE CAN SEE WHAT'S GOING ON BEHIND THE CURTAIN.
PERHAPS BETSY AND I COULD *PROBE* EACH OTHER. I'M GAME FOR SOME *"BEHIND THE CURTAIN"* WHENEVER YOU ARE, DEAR.
SAVE THE LEWD COMMENTS, CHARMER. I'M *INVOLVED.*
WHY DO YOU THINK I MADE THE *LEWD COMMENT?*
HMMH.
BEAUTIFUL BETSY OVERSELLS HER INDIFFERENCE.
THE SCHIZOPHRENIC TAKES NOTE.
WARREN, I KNOW YOU CALLED FOR THE UNIT, BUT I CAN'T LET YOU RUN THIS JOB SOLO.
IT'S *TOO* PERSONAL. YOU UNDERSTAND?
FIRST BETSY...NOW YOU.
THE *WINGS* ARE UNDER MY *CONTROL.*
YEAH? *WHICH ONE OF YOU?*
CO-CAPTAINS. CHECKS AND BALANCES. IF WE'RE ABOUT TO SCRAP WITH WHO YOU SAY...
NO, YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M EMOTIONALLY INVESTED. WE NEED TO BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN NEITHER OF US BECOMES... *COMPROMISED.*
AN' WE AGREE THAT IF IT COMES TO *THAT--*
IT GETS *DEALT* WITH.

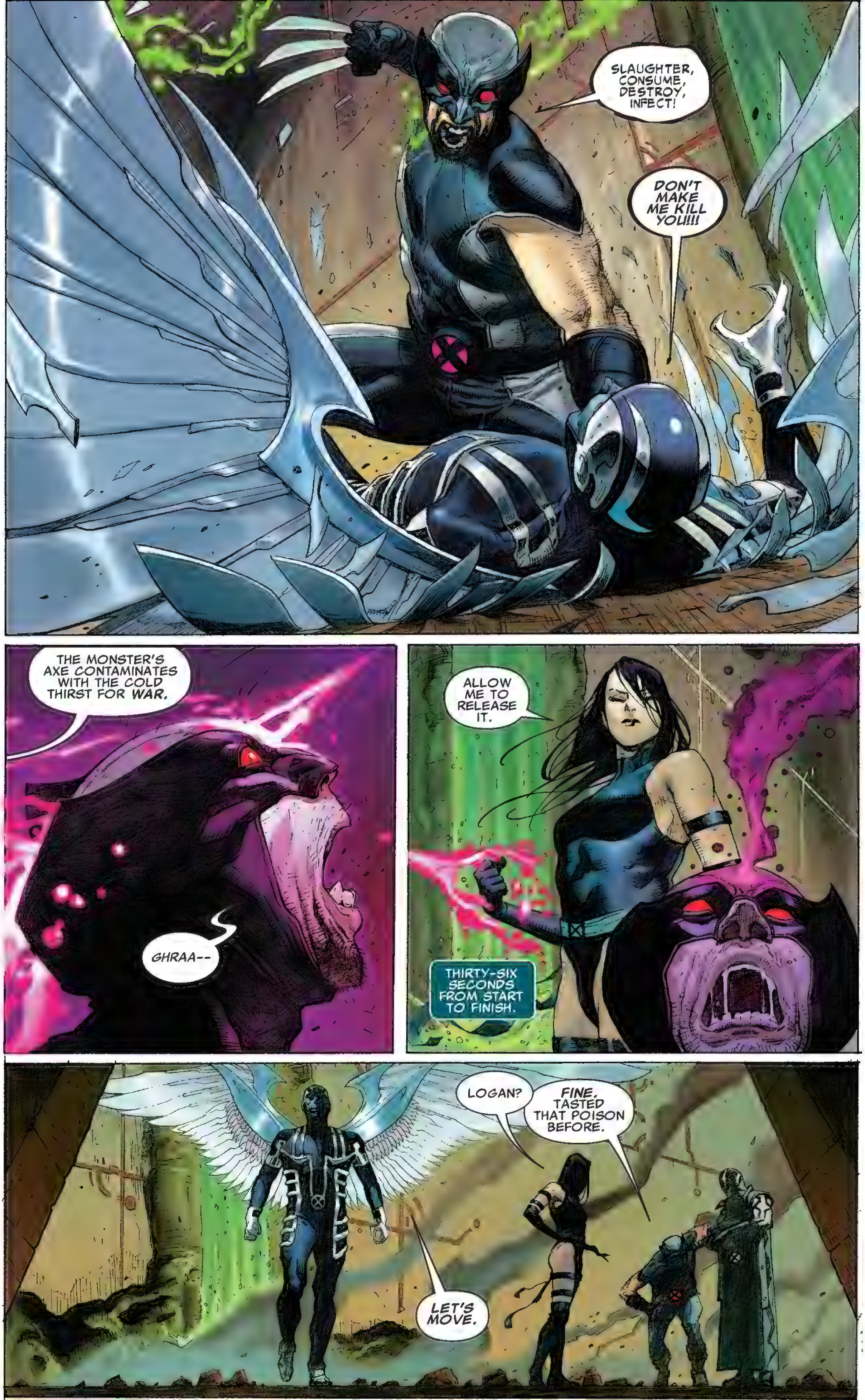

I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER, IS THIS SMART? JUST THE FOUR OF US?
NO FOUR PEOPLE I'D RATHER HAVE BY MY SIDE, PUMPKIN.
NONE THAT'RE STILL BREATHIN'.
WE HAVE ARRIVED.
THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
E.V.A. IS PIPED IN, KEEPING TABS, FEEDING ME TEAM VITALS.
BENEFIT OF AN EXTERNAL NERVOUS SYSTEM THAT DOUBLES AS A TRANSPORT.
SHE'S RIGHT-- PICKING UP A BIG GOOSE EGG.
IT'S UNDER THOSE MOUNTAINS.
DON'T SCAN FOR WHAT'S THERE, SCAN WHAT'S NOT THERE. ULTRAVIOLET FEED THROUGH A RADIO FREQUENCY.
THERE IT IS.
HEART RATES ALL OVER THE MOON. ADRENALINE LEVELS OFF THE CHARTS.
CUT TENSION WITH A MACHETE. SERVE WITH BRIE DE MEAUX.
YOU'RE A TOMB RAIDER, NO? FIND US A WAY INSIDE. MY OPERATIVE IS ON SHORT TIME.
NOW IF THIS MONSTER LIES WITHIN, WHAT ARE OUR ODDS OF KILLING HIM?

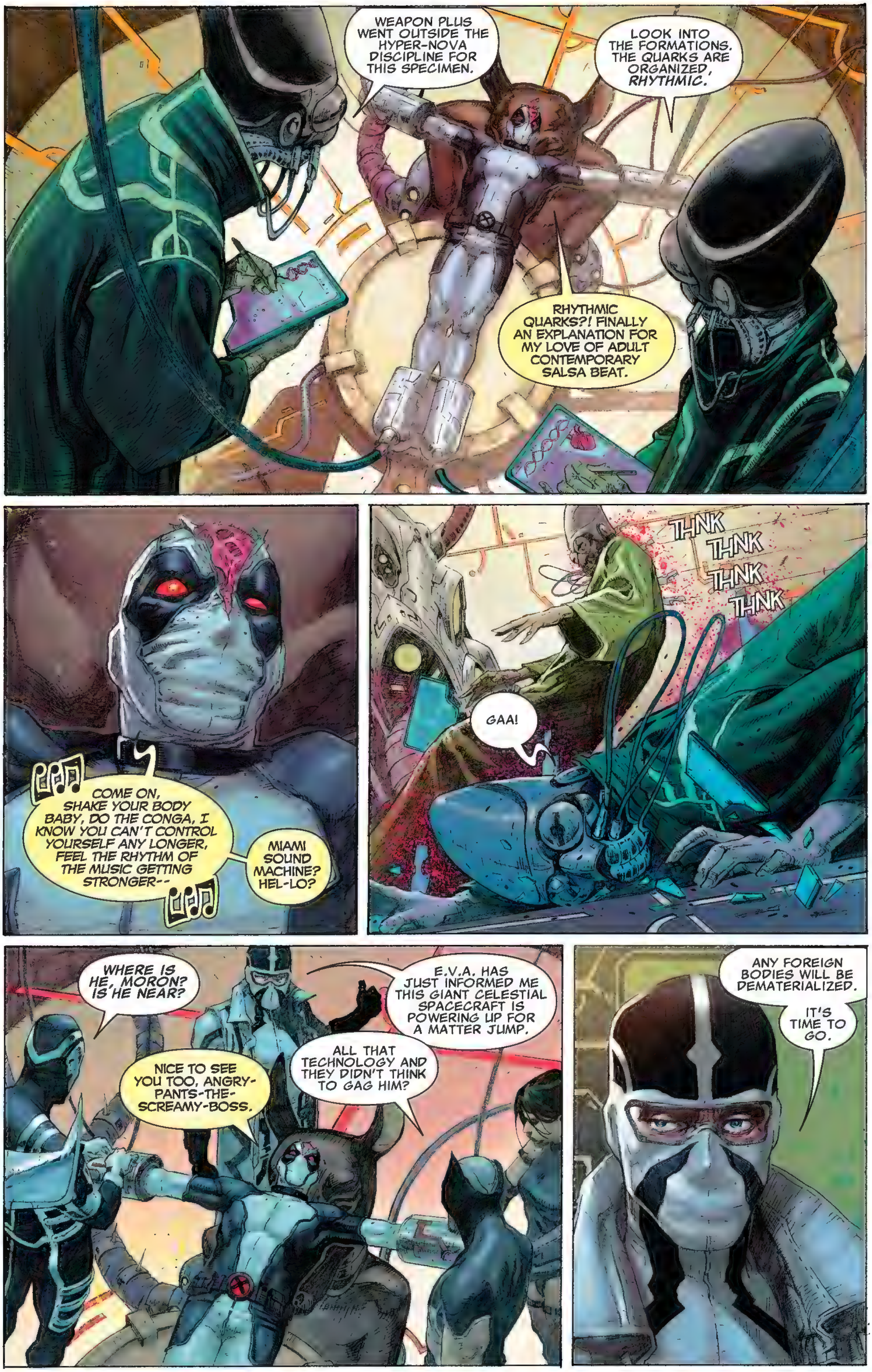

ALRIGHT, WE GO IN *COLD* AND *FAST* WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT.
DON'T HOLD BACK. WE *DO* THIS OR WE *DIE* TRYING.
NO JOVIAL SENSE OF ADVENTURE.
NO CAMARADERIE TO OVERCOME THE TENSION.
I DIDN'T SEE THAT LAST BIT THERE IN MY X-CONTRACT.
THIS IS *NOT* THE X-MEN.
THIS IS SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT.
THESE MARKINGS... SEEN THEM BEFORE.
YOUR *"OPERATIVE"* WAS HERE.
HIS *STINK* IS ALL OVER THE PLACE.
SOMETHING ELSE...
THE MAN'S GOT A REPUTATION AS A TRACKER.
YERAGHHH!!
SO WHEN HE ATTACKS A *STATUE...*

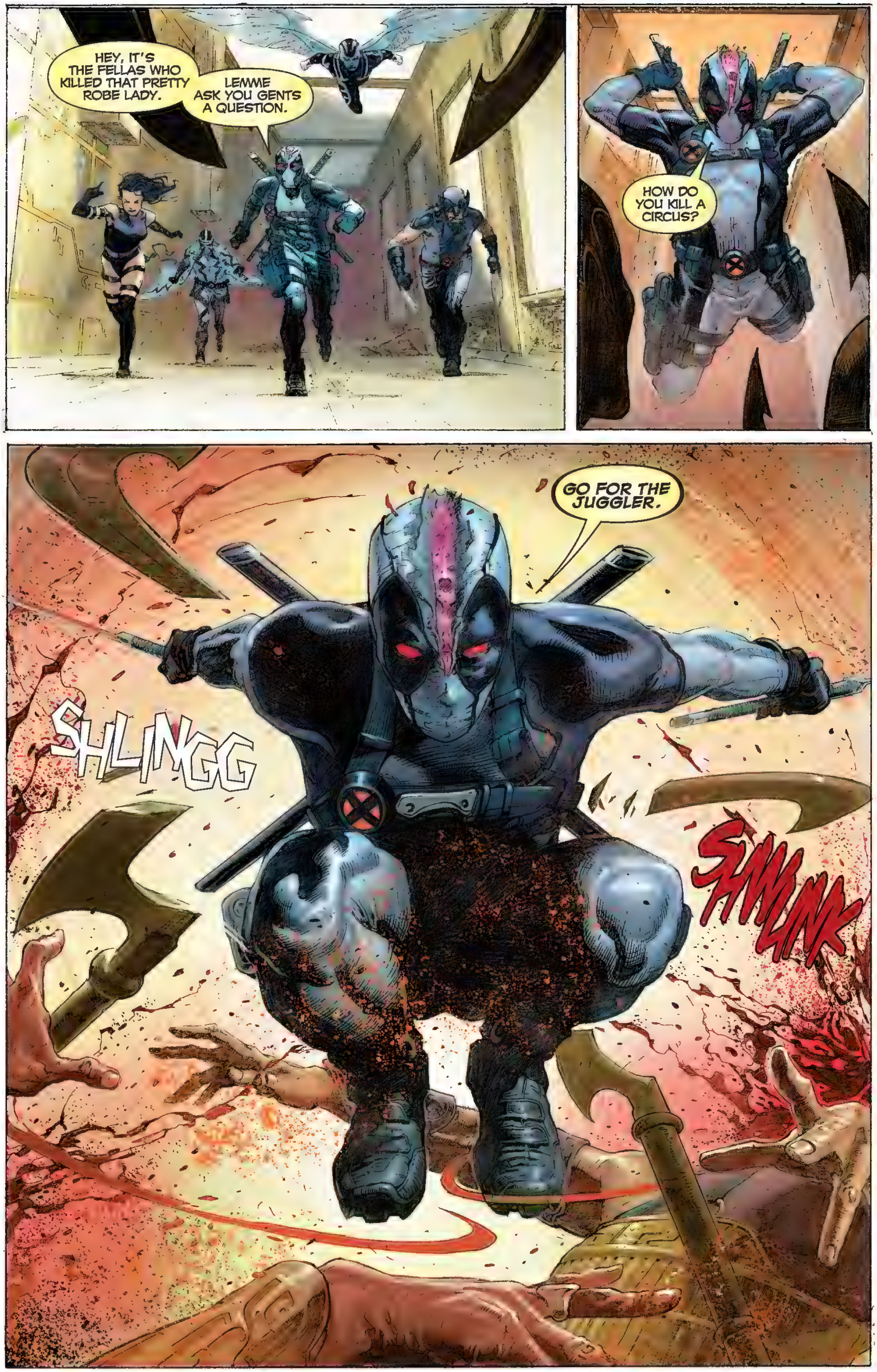

...CHANCES ARE THAT STATUE HAS IT COMING.
KWUNK
GWWAARR!!
WOOOOOSH
GRENNCHH
YERGRRAHH!
BLOODSHED, HORROR, GORE, LOSS...
HE'S *POSSESSED!* YOU TWO, TAKE DOWN THAT BEAST--

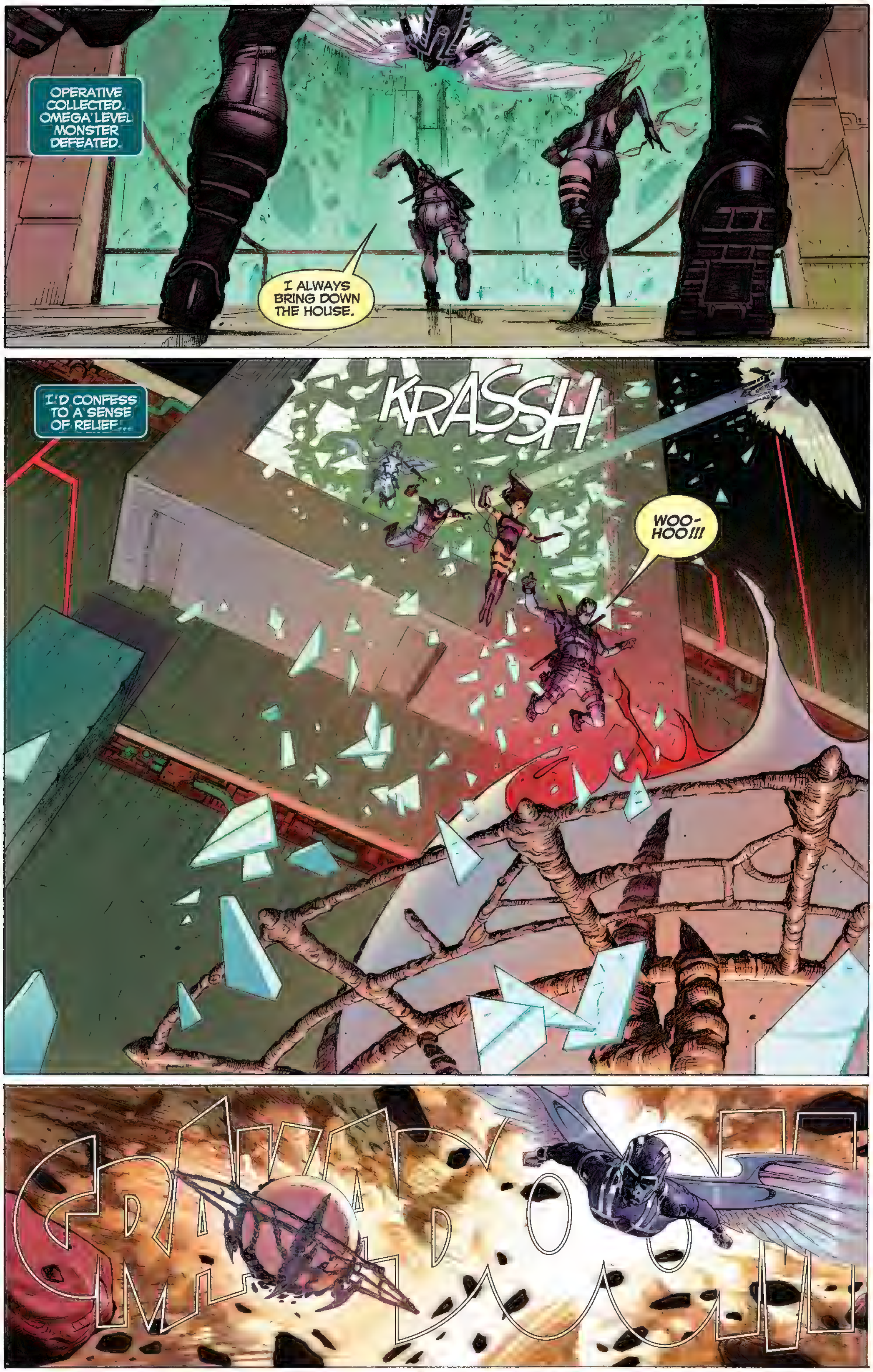

--I'LL SUBDUE WOLVERINE.
MURDER, FIRE, WRATH!!
SLEEP, GIANT!
REST YOUR--
ALL LIFE IS AN EXTENSION OF THE UNIVERSE--
ALL WAR IS MADE THROUGH LIFE TO SERVE THE UNIVERSE--
WAR IS LIFE--FIRE *IS THE ONLY SOLUTION!!!*
NOW THAT'S GRADE A CRAZY TALK.
HER HAIR SMELLS LIKE JASMINE.
HOLD HER FOR A BEAT TOO LONG.
THE SCENT IGNITES AN IDEA IN MY SECOND BRAIN.
HIS MIND... A HOLLOW ROOM ENCOMPASSED BY SORROW, ECHOING AN UNQUENCHABLE LUST TO CONQUER, AN ENDLESS DESIRE FOR MORE--
OKAY. GOOD. THAT HELPS.

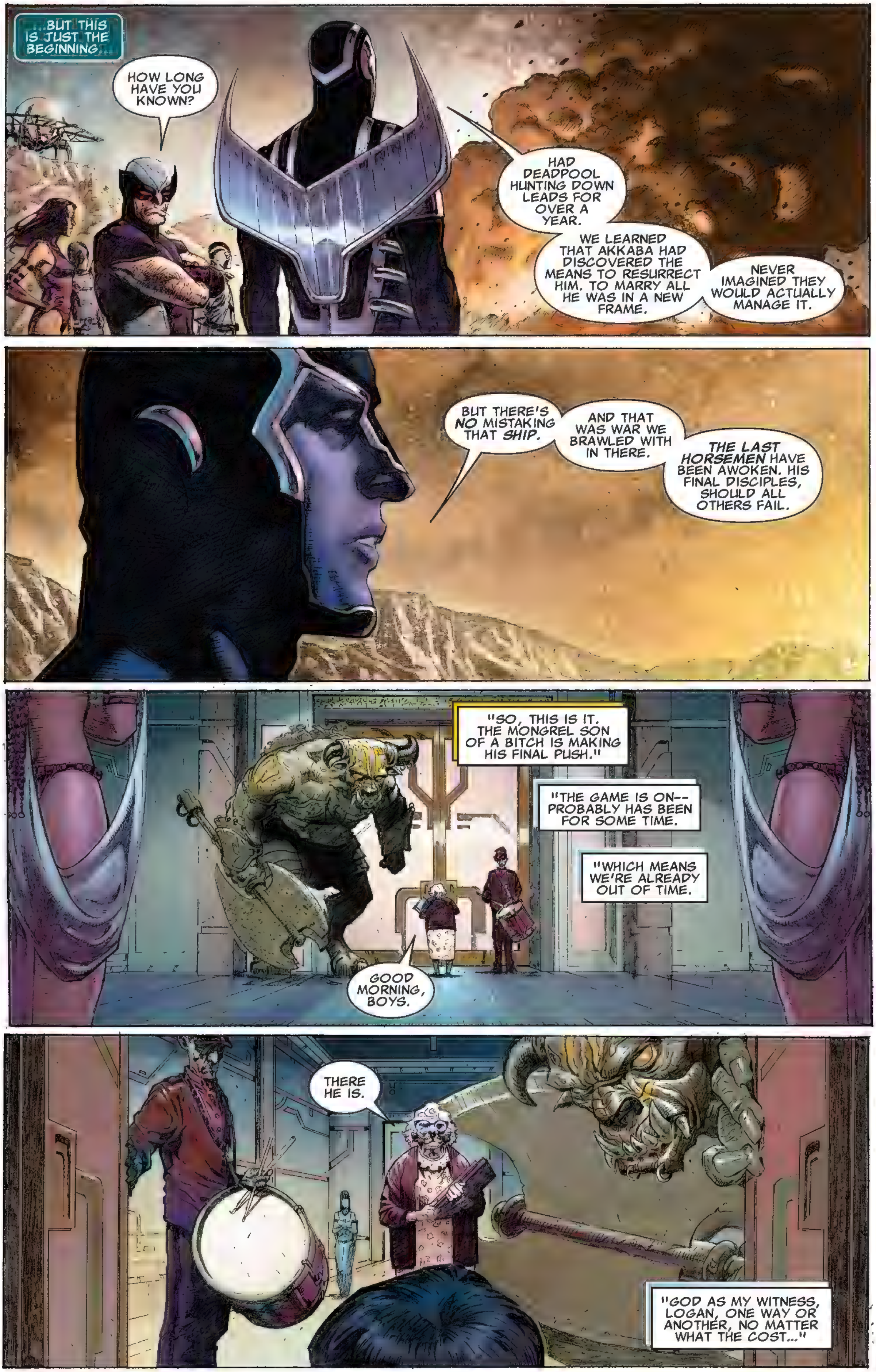

THE GIRL-- LOOK AT HER.
SHE'S THE ONE.
HRMM?
THROOOOM
W-WHAT DID YOU DO?
YOU SAID HE WAS FULL UP OF GRUESOME THOUGHTS SO I MISDIRECTED HIS FEELINGS, MADE HIM BELIEVE HE'D FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YOU.
IT DIDN'T AGREE WITH HIM.

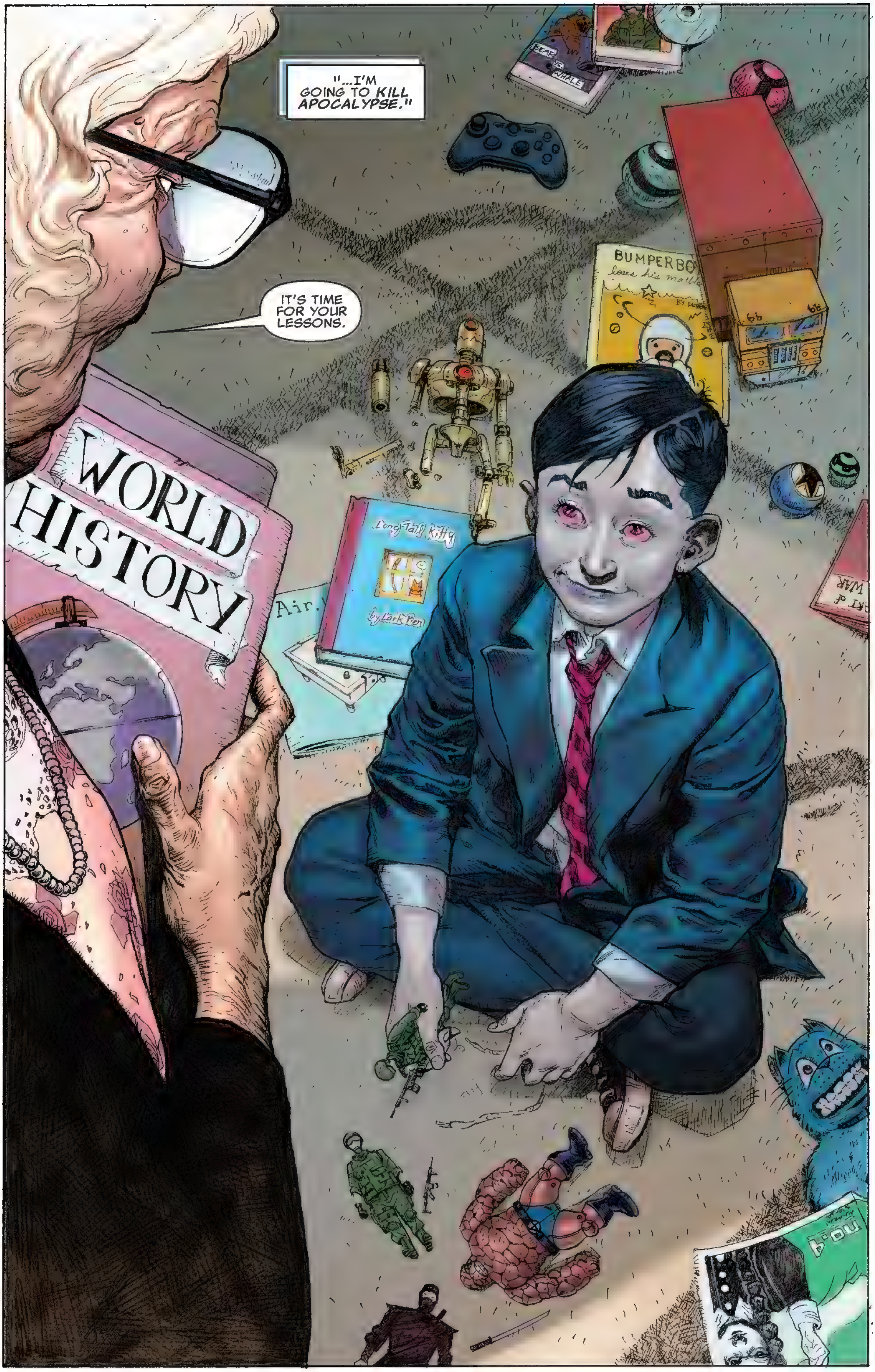

SLAUGHTER, CONSUME, DESTROY, INFECT!
DON'T MAKE ME KILL YOU!!!
THE MONSTER'S AXE CONTAMINATES WITH THE COLD THIRST FOR WAR.
GHRAA--
ALLOW ME TO RELEASE IT.
THIRTY-SIX SECONDS FROM START TO FINISH.
LOGAN?
FINE. TASTED THAT POISON BEFORE.
LET'S MOVE.

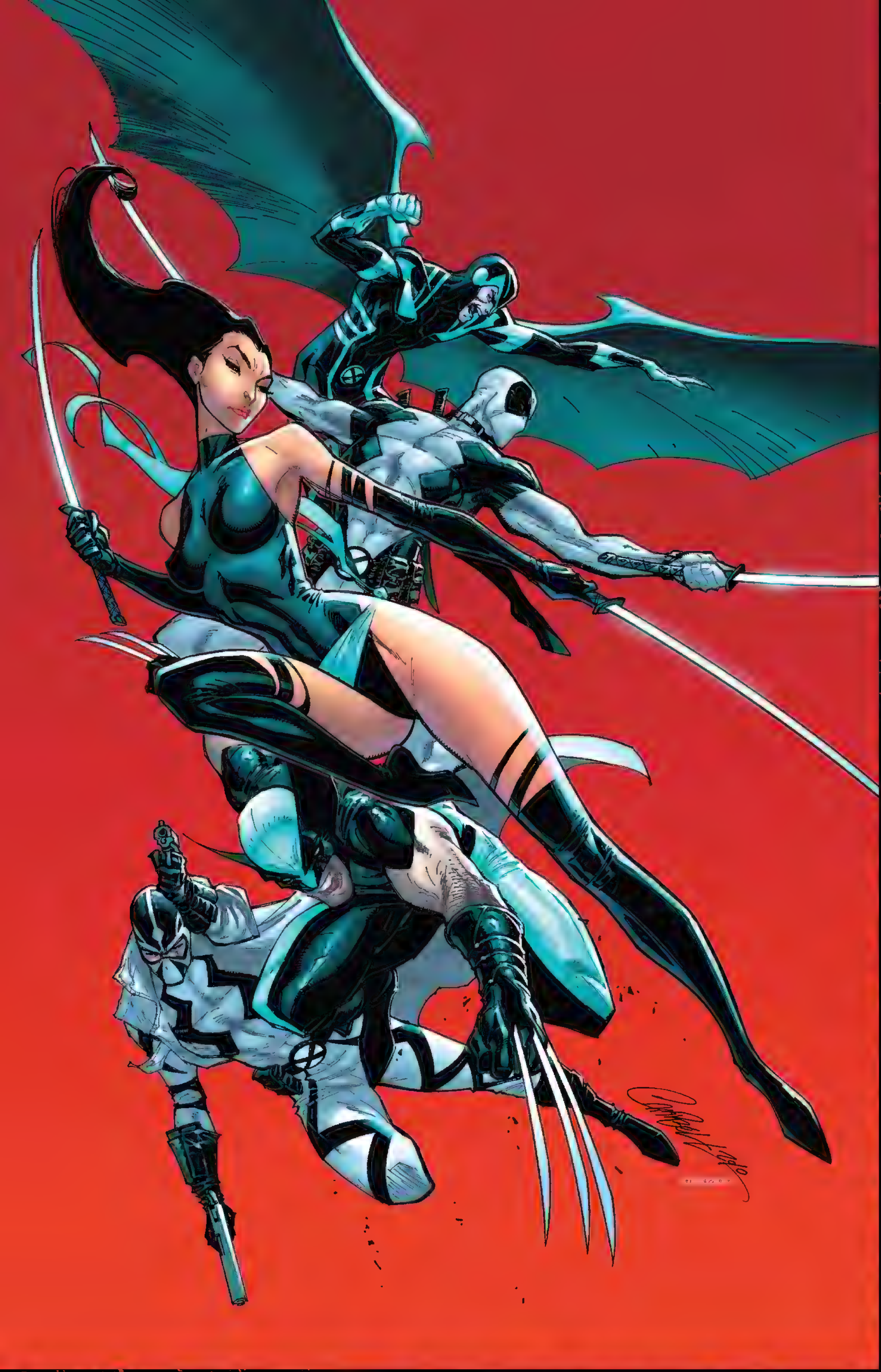

WEAPON PLUS WENT OUTSIDE THE HYPER-NOVA DISCIPLINE FOR THIS SPECIMEN.
LOOK INTO THE FORMATIONS. THE QUARKS ARE ORGANIZED, *RHYTHMIC.*
RHYTHMIC QUARKS?! FINALLY AN EXPLANATION FOR MY LOVE OF ADULT CONTEMPORARY SALSA BEAT.
COME ON, SHAKE YOUR BODY BABY, DO THE CONGA, I KNOW YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOURSELF ANY LONGER, FEEL THE RHYTHM OF THE MUSIC GETTING STRONGER--
MIAMI SOUND MACHINE? HEL-LO?
THNK THNK THNK THNK
GAA!
WHERE IS HE, MORON? IS HE NEAR?
E.V.A. HAS JUST INFORMED ME THIS GIANT CELESTIAL SPACECRAFT IS POWERING UP FOR A MATTER JUMP.
NICE TO SEE YOU TOO, ANGRY-PANTS-THE-SCREAMY-BOSS.
ALL THAT TECHNOLOGY AND THEY DIDN'T THINK TO GAG HIM?
ANY FOREIGN BODIES WILL BE DEMATERIALIZED.
IT'S TIME TO GO.


HEY, IT'S THE FELLAS WHO KILLED THAT PRETTY ROBE LADY.
LEMME ASK YOU GENTS A QUESTION.
HOW DO YOU KILL A CIRCUS?
GO FOR THE JUGGLER.
SHLINGG
SHUNK


OPERATIVE COLLECTED. OMEGA LEVEL MONSTER DEFEATED.
I ALWAYS BRING DOWN THE HOUSE.
I'D CONFESS TO A SENSE OF RELIEF...
KRASSH
WOO-HOO!!!
GRAKADOOM


...BUT THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING...
HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN?
HAD DEADPOOL HUNTING DOWN LEADS FOR OVER A YEAR.
WE LEARNED THAT AKKABA HAD DISCOVERED THE MEANS TO RESURRECT HIM. TO MARRY ALL HE WAS IN A NEW FRAME.
NEVER IMAGINED THEY WOULD ACTUALLY MANAGE IT.
BUT THERE'S *NO* MISTAKING THAT *SHIP*.
AND THAT WAS WAR WE BRAWLED WITH IN THERE.
THE LAST HORSEMEN HAVE BEEN AWOKEN. HIS FINAL DISCIPLES, SHOULD ALL OTHERS FAIL.
"SO, THIS IS IT. THE MONGREL SON OF A BITCH IS MAKING HIS FINAL PUSH."
"THE GAME IS ON--PROBABLY HAS BEEN FOR SOME TIME.
"WHICH MEANS WE'RE ALREADY OUT OF TIME.
GOOD MORNING, BOYS.
THERE HE IS.
"GOD AS MY WITNESS, LOGAN, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, NO MATTER WHAT THE COST..."


"...I'M GOING TO KILL APOCALYPSE."
IT'S TIME FOR YOUR LESSONS.
BEAR VS. WHALE
BUMPERBO
loves his ma
BY
WORLD HISTORY
Long Tail Kitty
by Lark Pien
Air.
WAR
no. 4

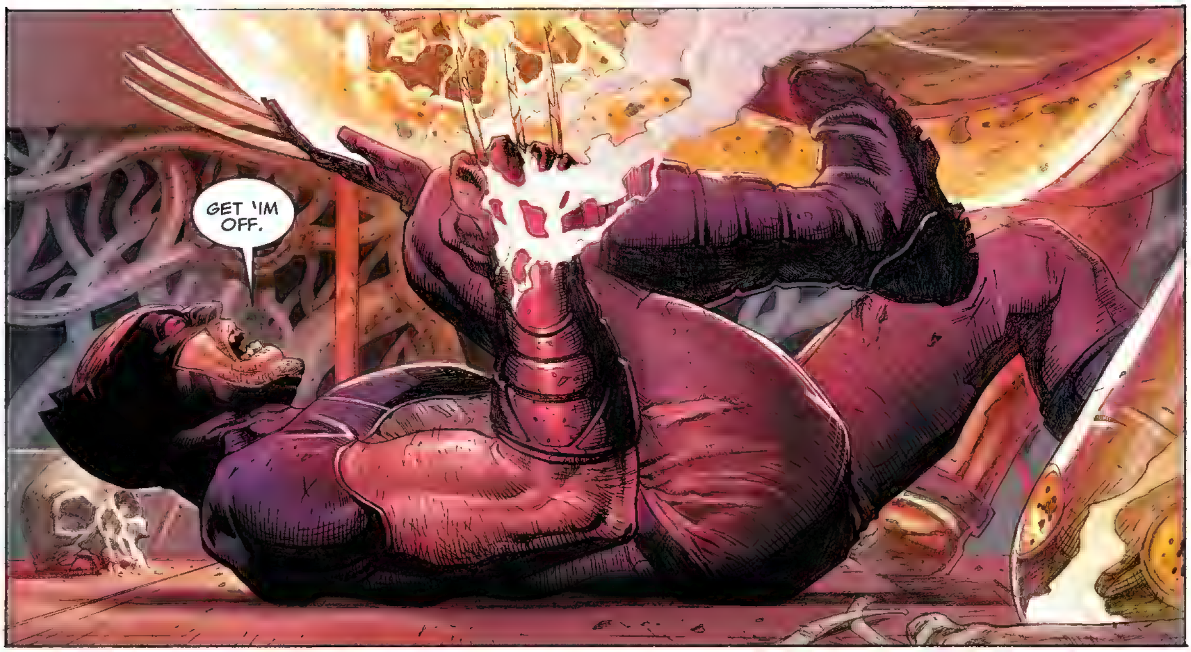


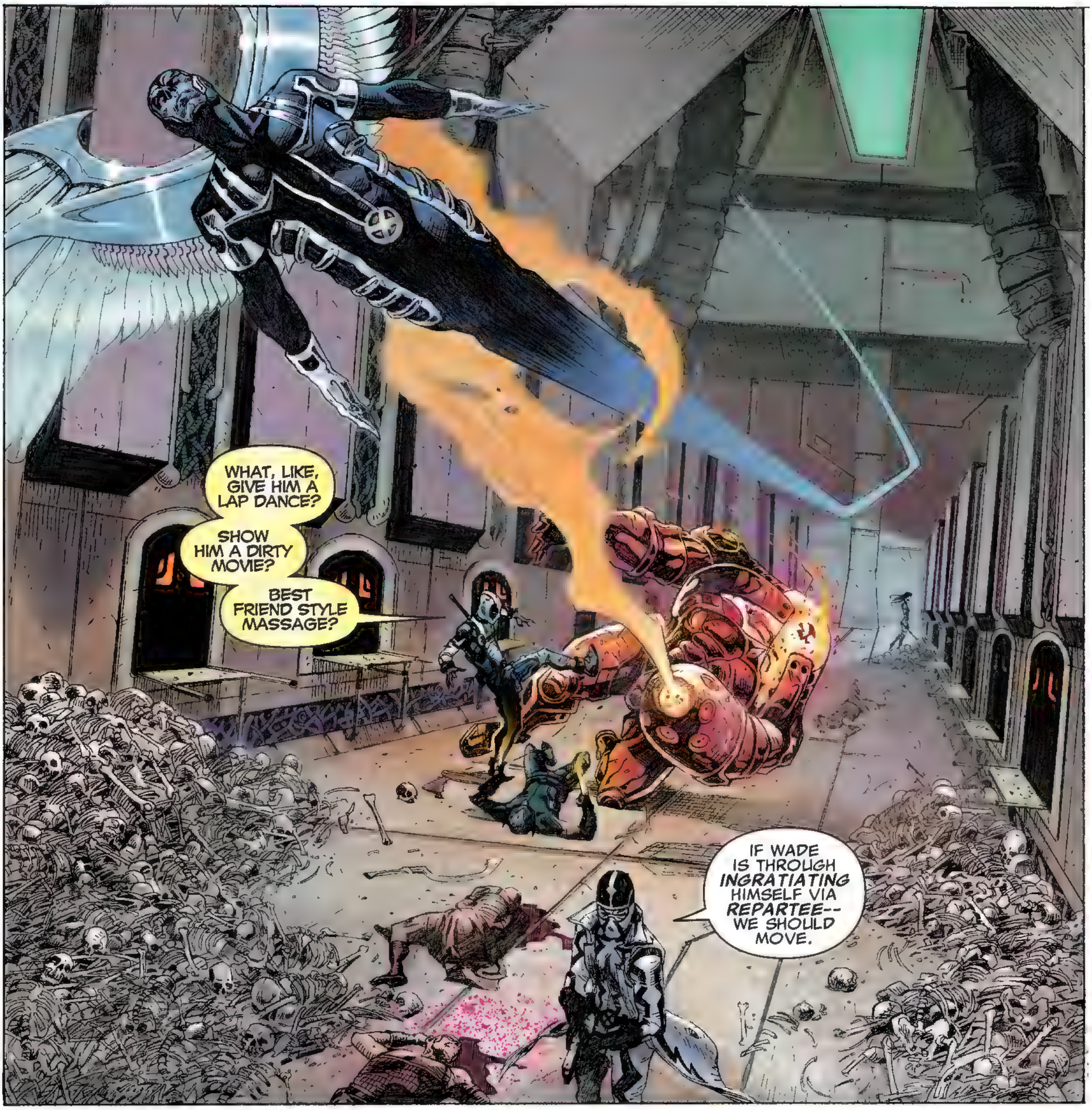
UNCANNY X-FORCE 01 VARIANT

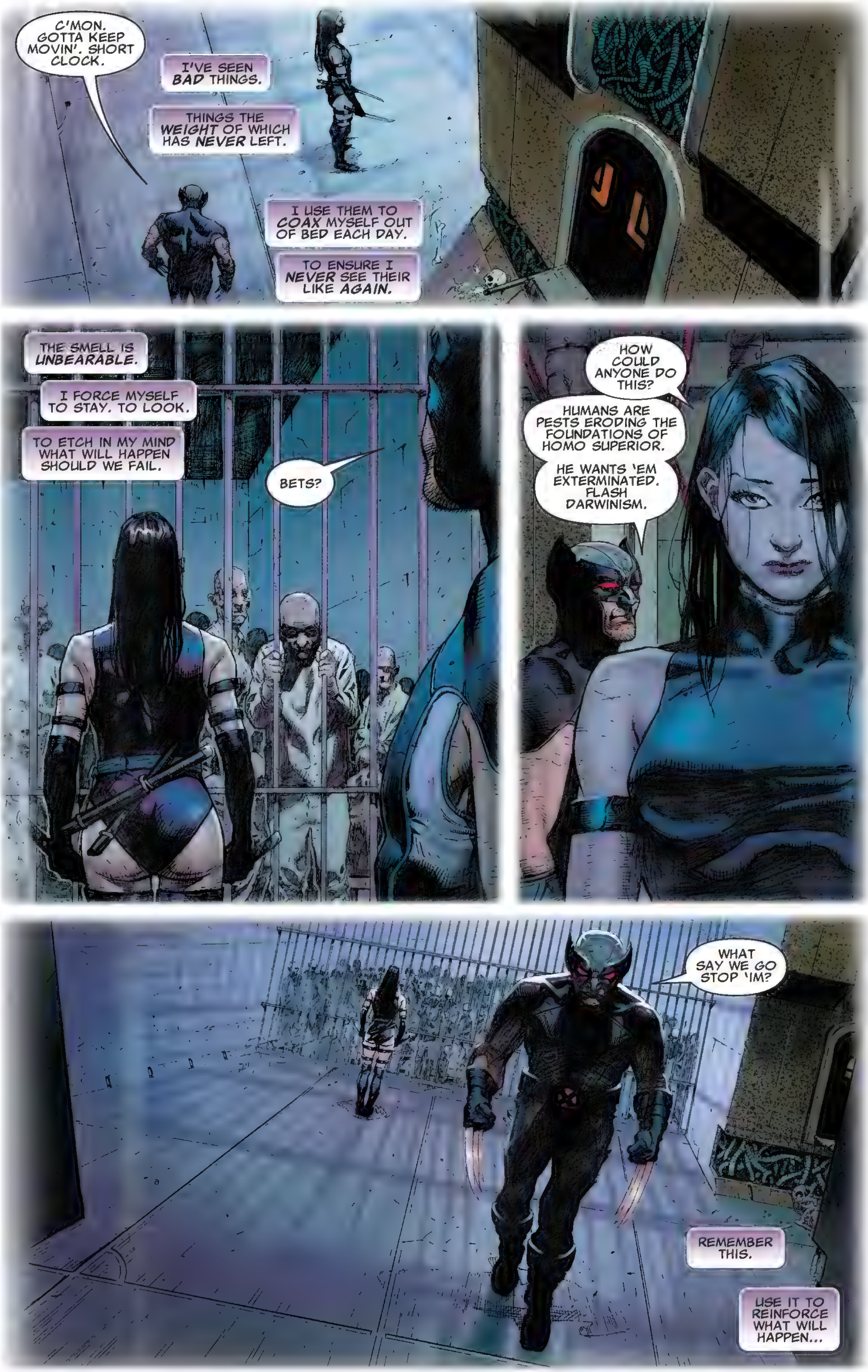
ART BY J. SCOTT CAMPBELL & EDGAR DELGADO

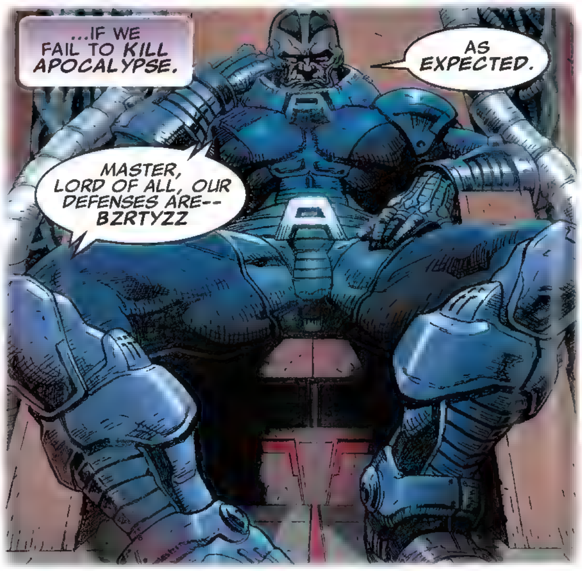
02 THE APOCALYPSE SOLUTION

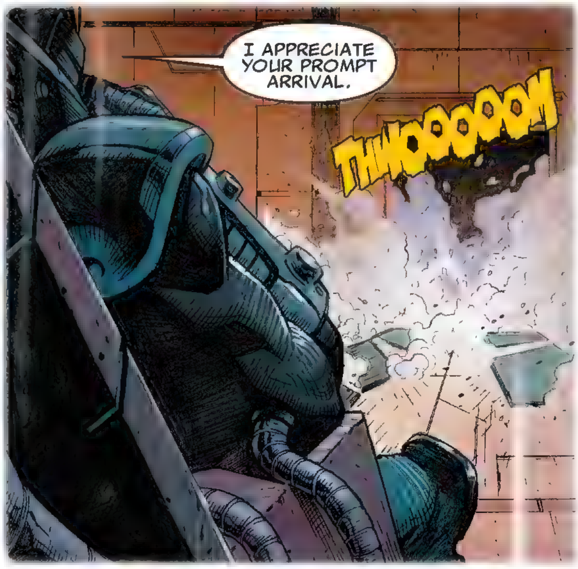
CHAPTER 2

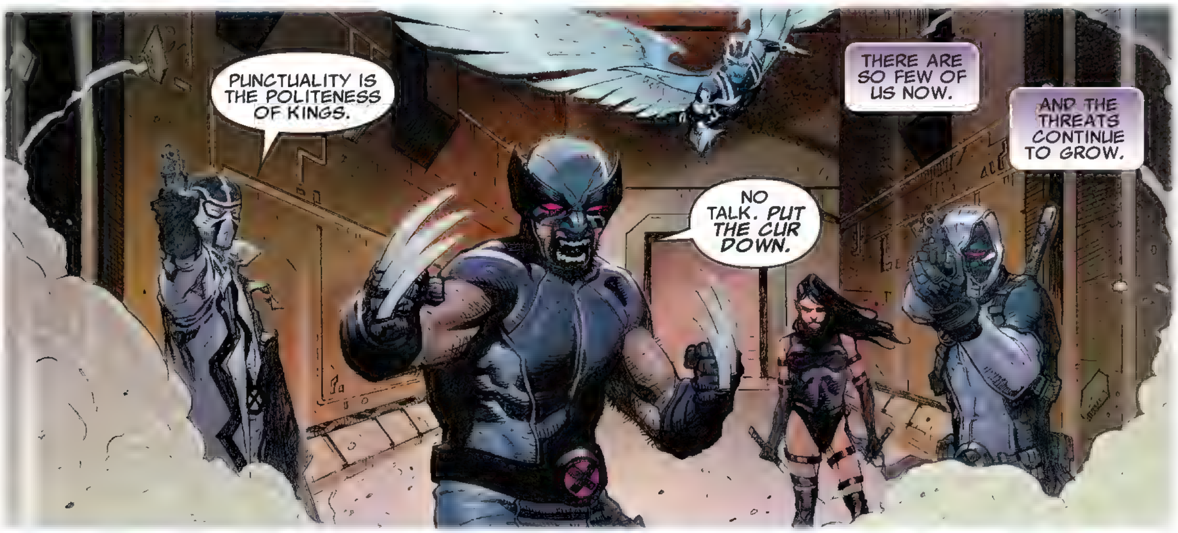

GET 'IM OFF.

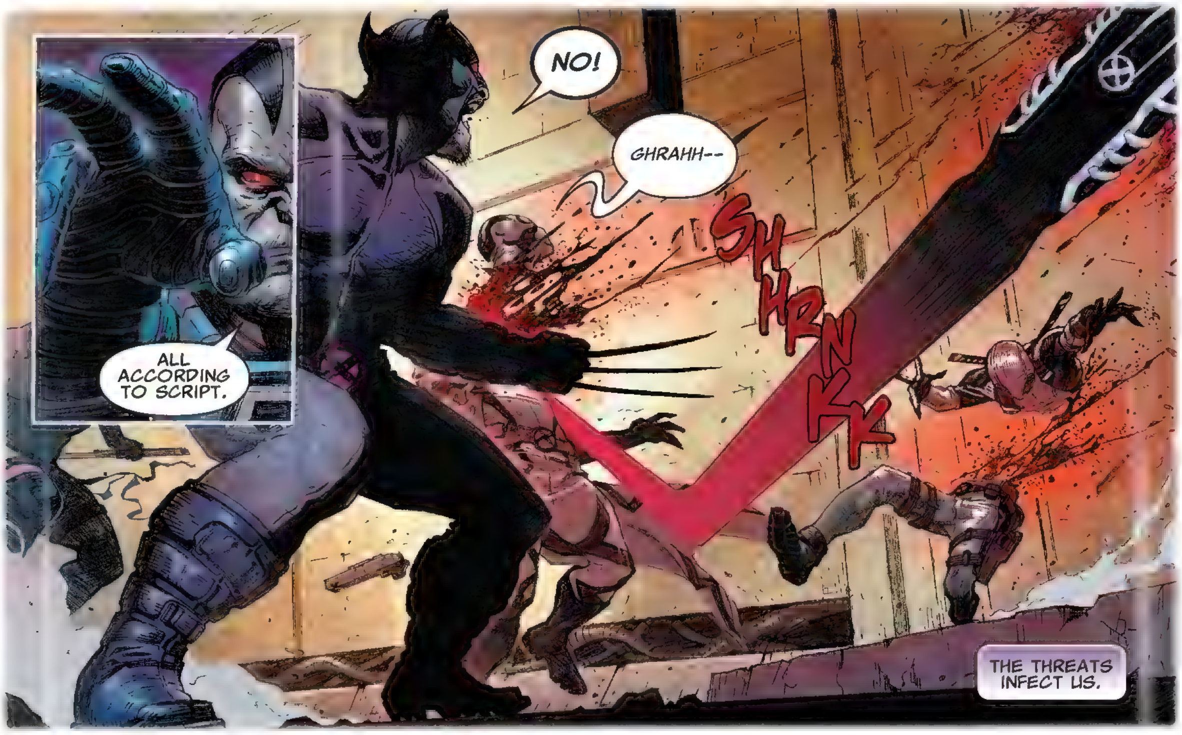

WHAT, LIKE, GIVE HIM A LAP DANCE?
SHOW HIM A DIRTY MOVIE?
BEST FRIEND STYLE MASSAGE?
IF WADE IS THROUGH *INGRATIATING* HIMSELF VIA *REPARTEE*-- WE SHOULD MOVE.

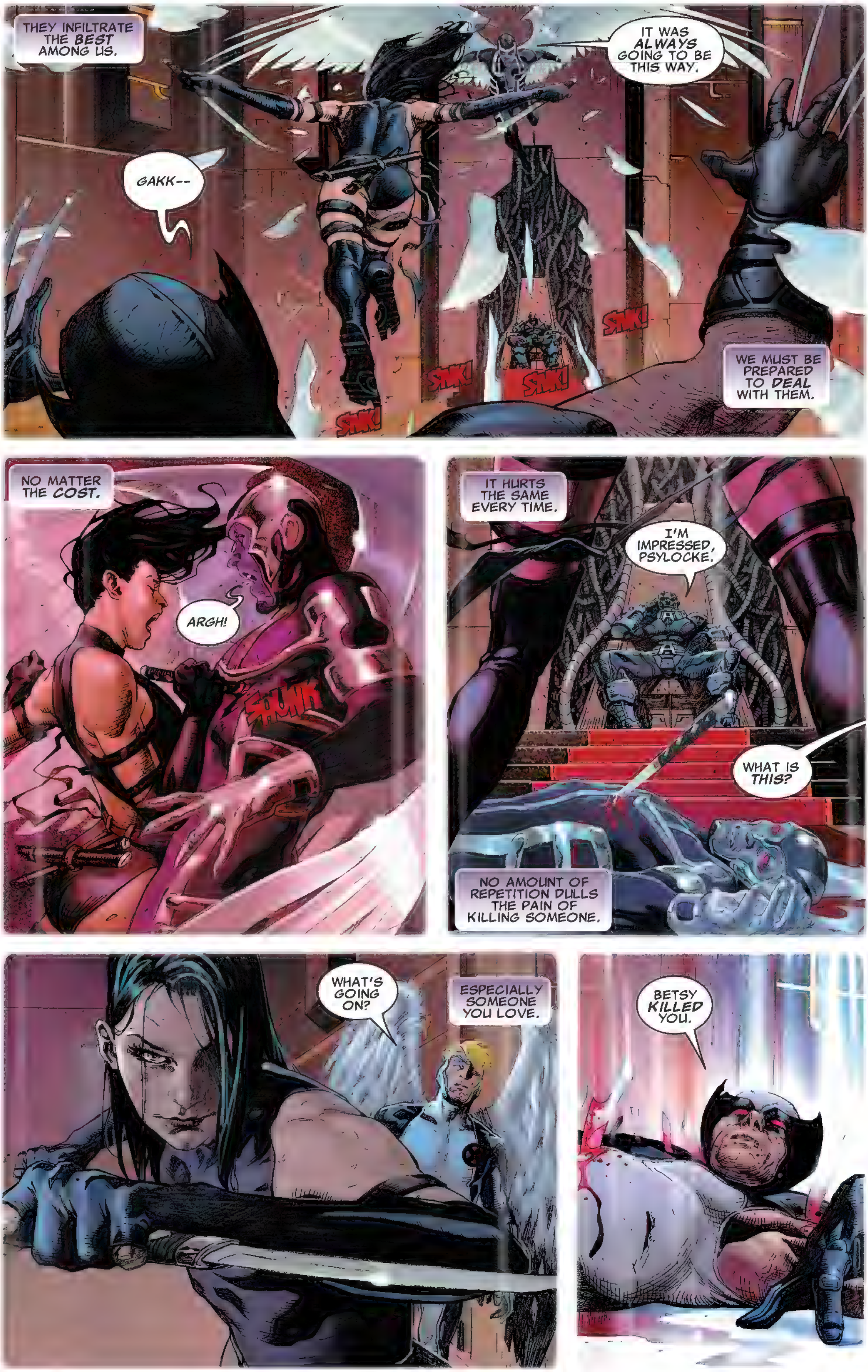

C'MON. GOTTA KEEP MOVIN'. SHORT CLOCK.
I'VE SEEN BAD THINGS.
THINGS THE WEIGHT OF WHICH HAS NEVER LEFT.
I USE THEM TO COAX MYSELF OUT OF BED EACH DAY.
TO ENSURE I NEVER SEE THEIR LIKE AGAIN.
THE SMELL IS UNBEARABLE.
I FORCE MYSELF TO STAY. TO LOOK.
TO ETCH IN MY MIND WHAT WILL HAPPEN SHOULD WE FAIL.
BETS?
HOW COULD ANYONE DO THIS?
HUMANS ARE PESTS ERODING THE FOUNDATIONS OF HOMO SUPERIOR.
HE WANTS 'EM EXTERMINATED. FLASH DARWINISM.
WHAT SAY WE GO STOP 'IM?
REMEMBER THIS.
USE IT TO REINFORCE WHAT WILL HAPPEN...

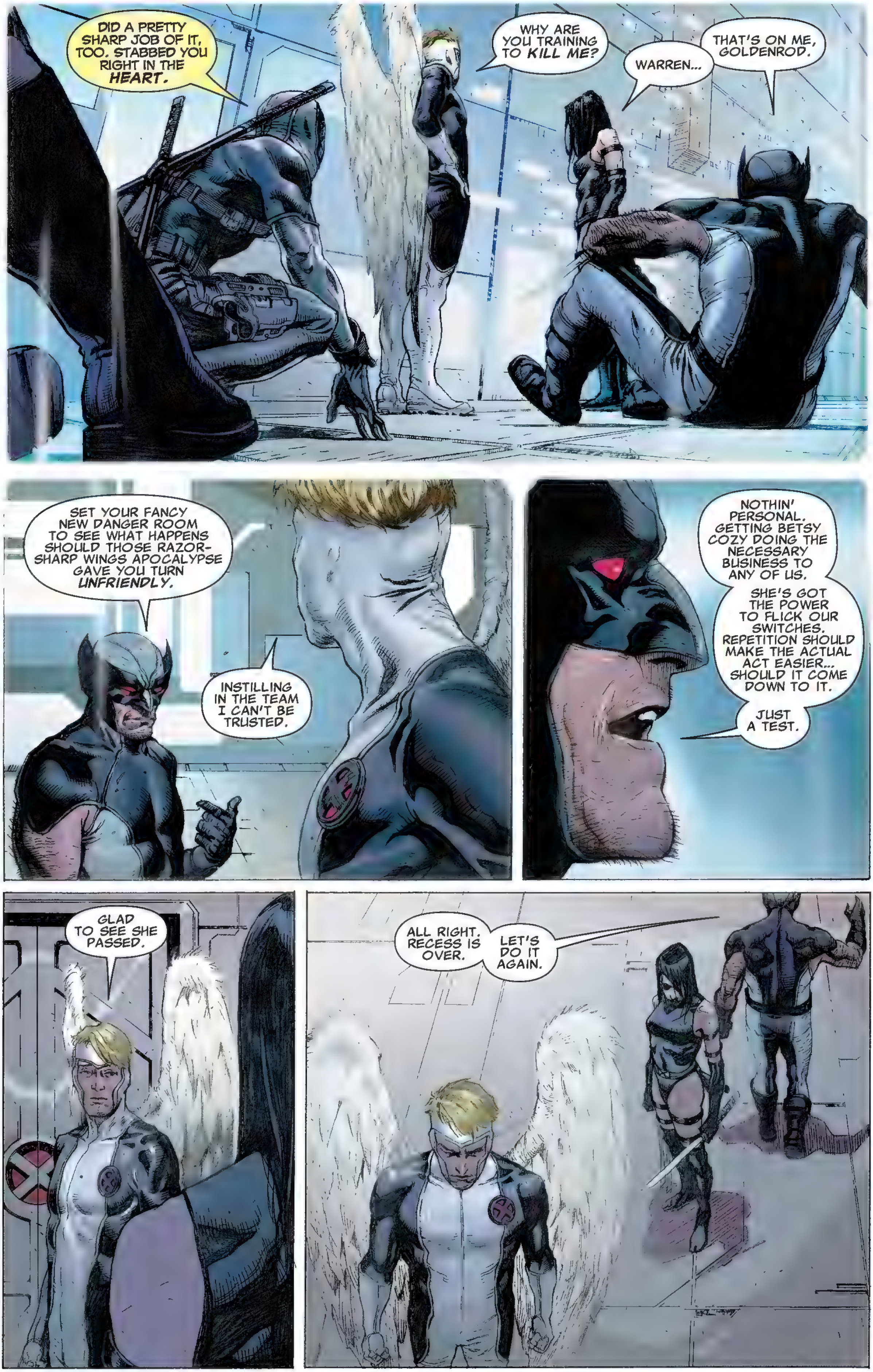

...IF WE FAIL TO KILL APOCALYPSE.
MASTER, LORD OF ALL, OUR DEFENSES ARE-- BZRTYZZ
AS EXPECTED.

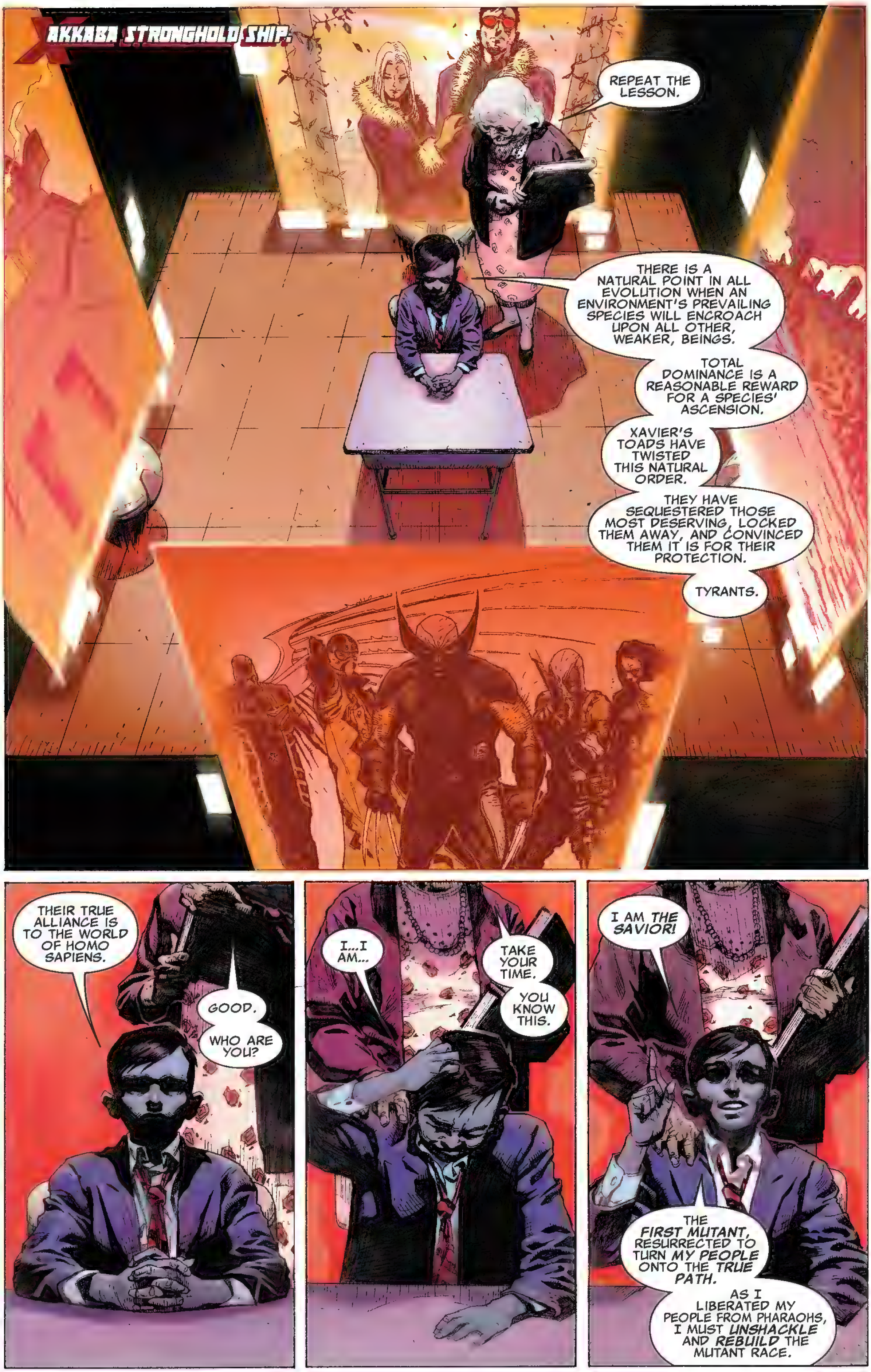

I APPRECIATE YOUR PROMPT ARRIVAL.
THWOOOOOOM

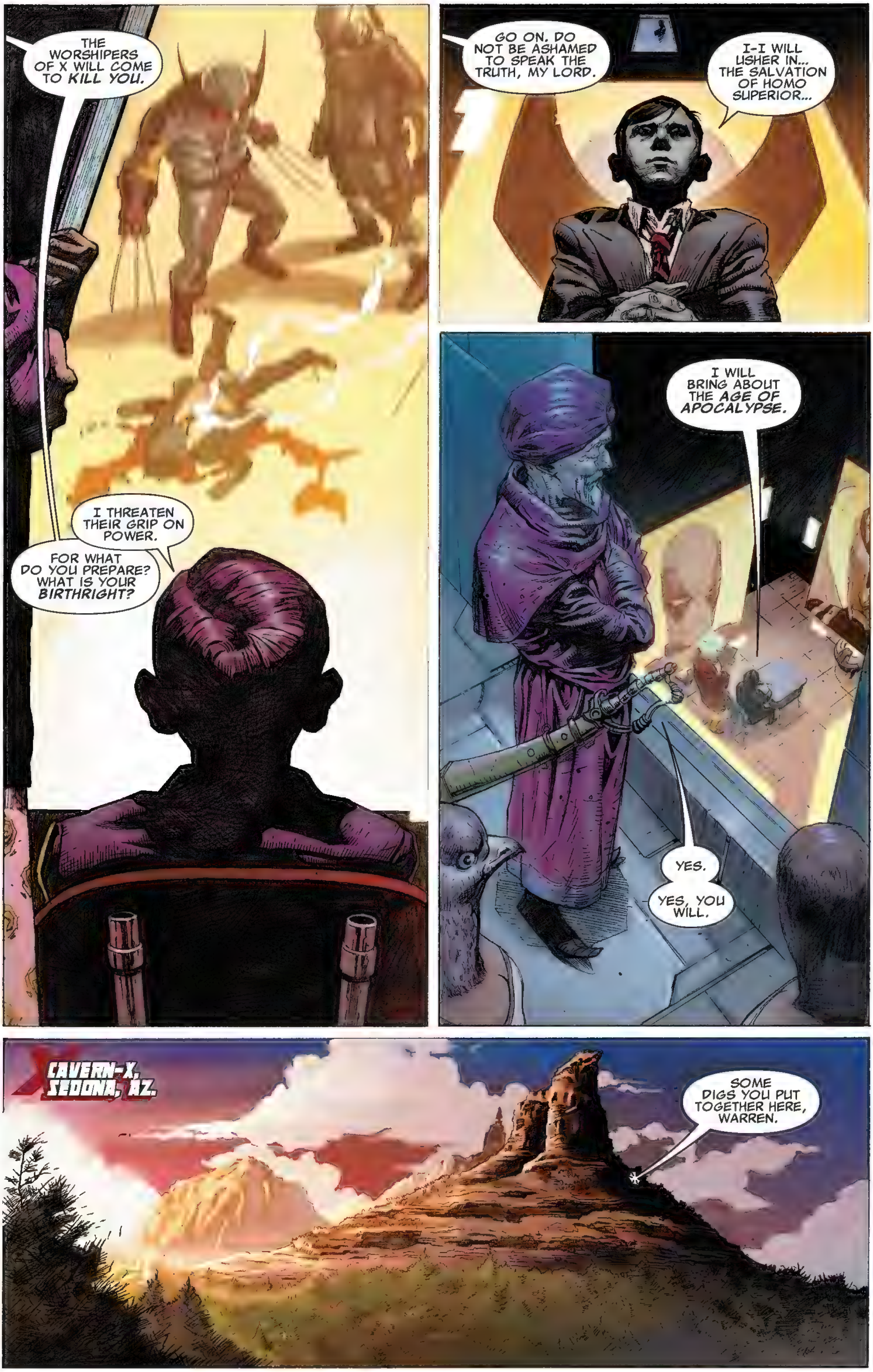

PUNCTUALITY IS THE POLITENESS OF KINGS.
THERE ARE SO FEW OF US NOW.
NO TALK. PUT THE CUR DOWN.
AND THE THREATS CONTINUE TO GROW.

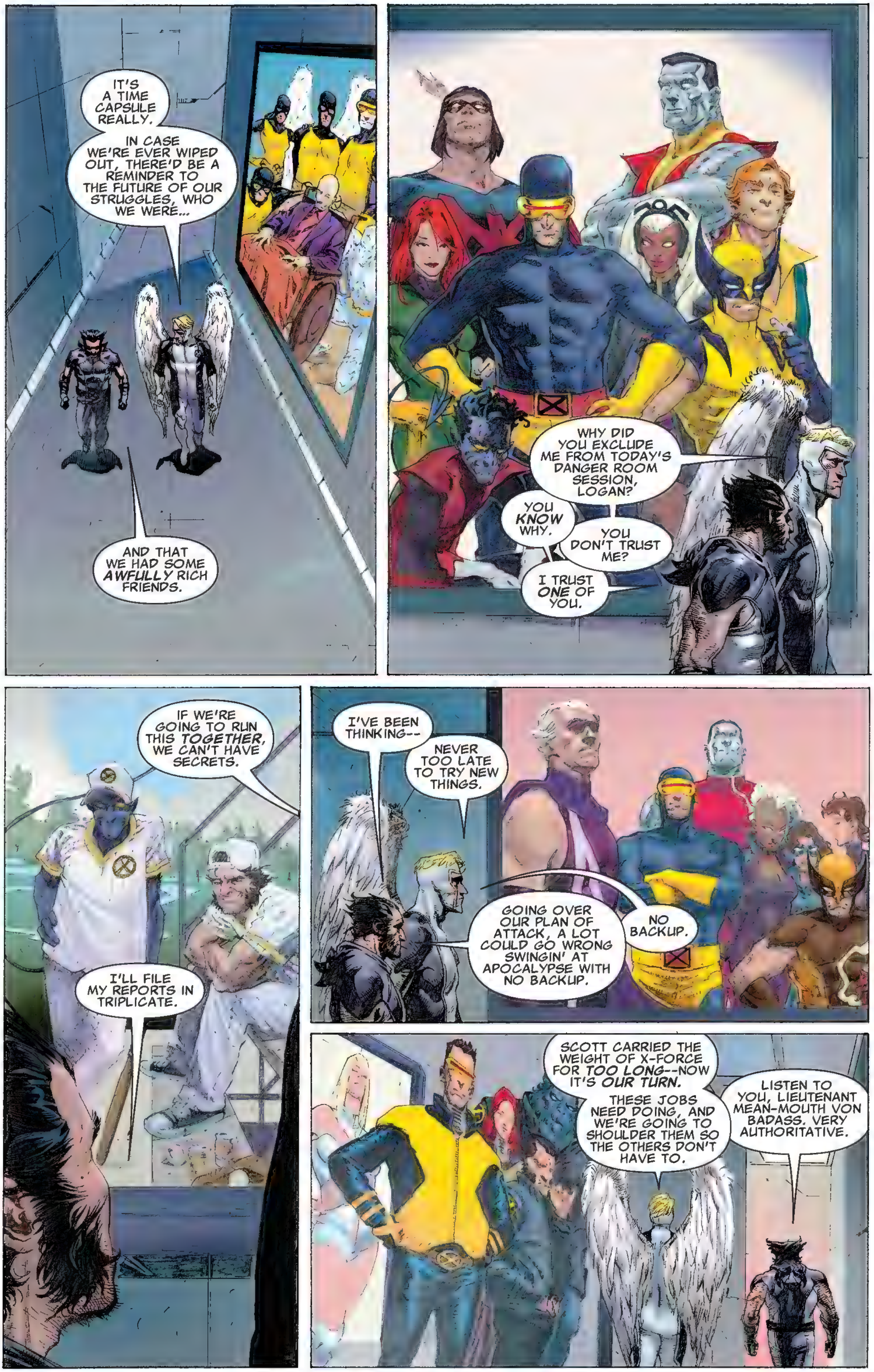

NO!
GHRAHH--
SHHRNKK
ALL ACCORDING TO SCRIPT.
THE THREATS INFECT US.

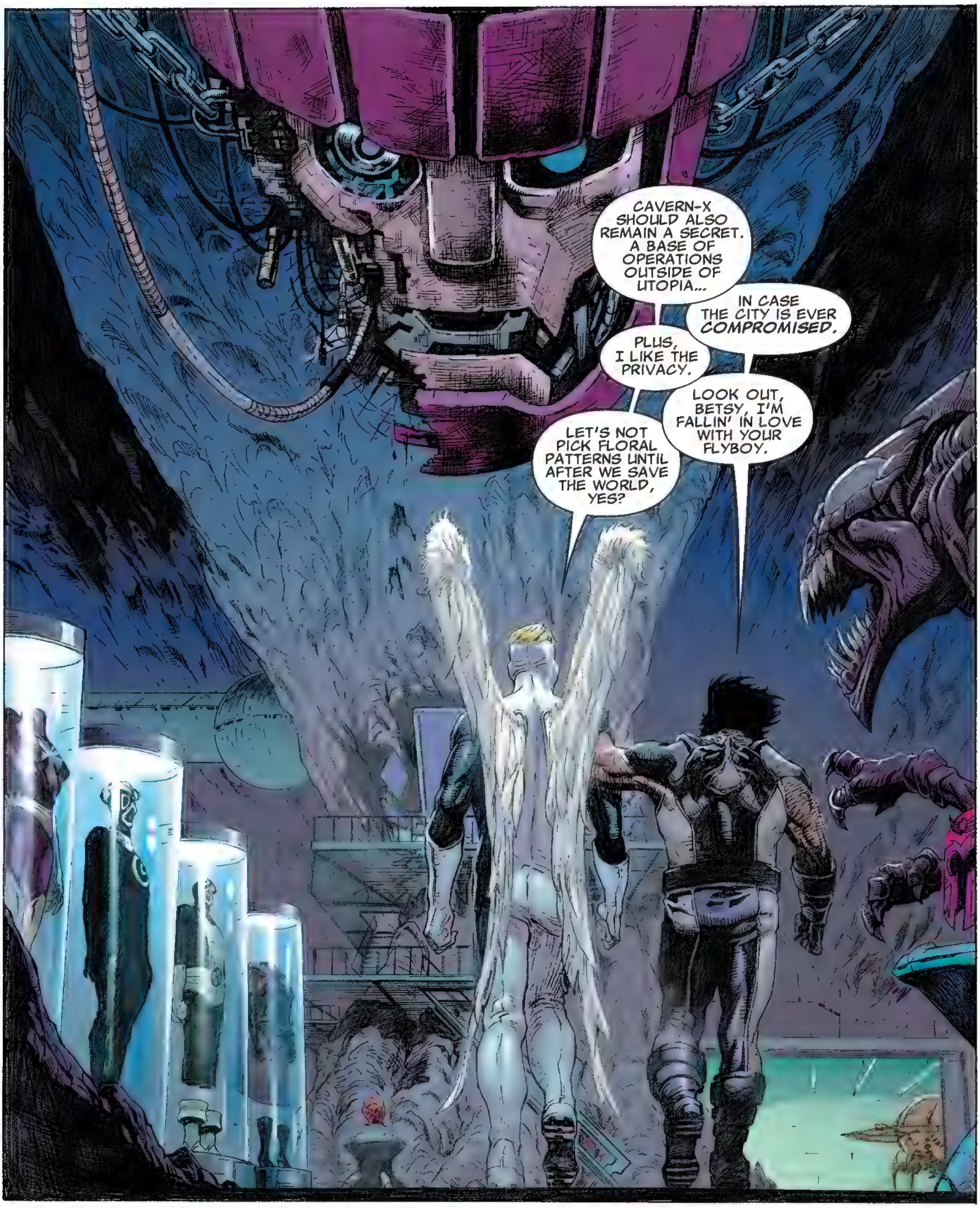

THEY INFILTRATE THE *BEST* AMONG US.
IT WAS *ALWAYS* GOING TO BE THIS WAY.
GAKK--
SNIK!
SNIK!
SNIK!
SNIK!
WE MUST BE PREPARED TO *DEAL* WITH THEM.
NO MATTER THE *COST.*
ARGH!
SHUNK
IT HURTS THE SAME EVERY TIME.
I'M IMPRESSED, PSYLOCKE.
WHAT IS *THIS?*
NO AMOUNT OF REPETITION DULLS THE PAIN OF KILLING SOMEONE.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
ESPECIALLY SOMEONE YOU LOVE.
BETSY *KILLED* YOU.

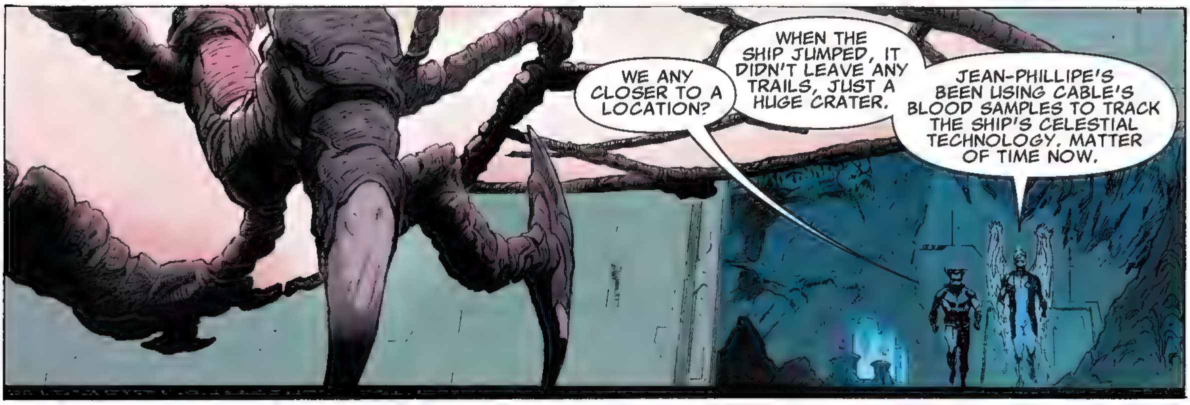

DID A PRETTY SHARP JOB OF IT, TOO. STABBED YOU RIGHT IN THE *HEART*.
WHY ARE YOU TRAINING TO *KILL ME?*
WARREN...
THAT'S ON ME, GOLDENROD.
SET YOUR FANCY NEW DANGER ROOM TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS SHOULD THOSE RAZOR-SHARP WINGS APOCALYPSE GAVE YOU TURN *UNFRIENDLY*.
INSTILLING IN THE TEAM I CAN'T BE TRUSTED.
NOTHIN' PERSONAL. GETTING BETSY COZY DOING THE NECESSARY BUSINESS TO ANY OF US.
SHE'S GOT THE POWER TO FLICK OUR SWITCHES. REPETITION SHOULD MAKE THE ACTUAL ACT EASIER... SHOULD IT COME DOWN TO IT.
JUST A TEST.
GLAD TO SEE SHE PASSED.
ALL RIGHT. RECESS IS OVER.
LET'S DO IT AGAIN.

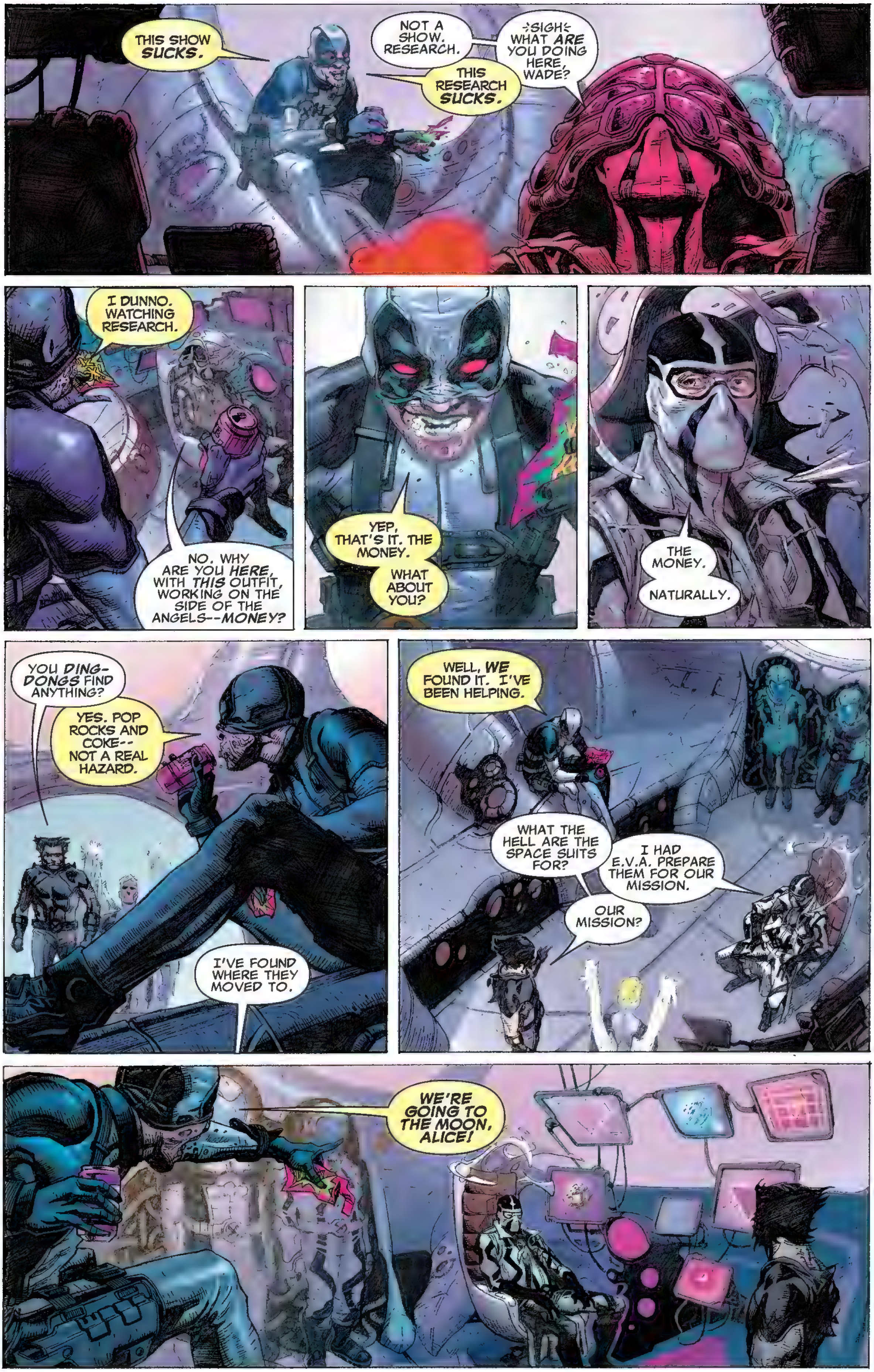

AKKABA STRONGHOLD SHIP.
REPEAT THE LESSON.
THERE IS A NATURAL POINT IN ALL EVOLUTION WHEN AN ENVIRONMENT'S PREVAILING SPECIES WILL ENCROACH UPON ALL OTHER, WEAKER, BEINGS.
TOTAL DOMINANCE IS A REASONABLE REWARD FOR A SPECIES' ASCENSION.
XAVIER'S TOADS HAVE TWISTED THIS NATURAL ORDER.
THEY HAVE SEQUESTERED THOSE MOST DESERVING, LOCKED THEM AWAY, AND CONVINCED THEM IT IS FOR THEIR PROTECTION.
TYRANTS.
THEIR TRUE ALLIANCE IS TO THE WORLD OF HOMO SAPIENS.
GOOD.
WHO ARE YOU?
I...I AM...
TAKE YOUR TIME.
YOU KNOW THIS.
I AM THE SAVIOR!
THE FIRST MUTANT, RESURRECTED TO TURN MY PEOPLE ONTO THE TRUE PATH.
AS I LIBERATED MY PEOPLE FROM PHARAOHS, I MUST UNSHACKLE AND REBUILD THE MUTANT RACE.

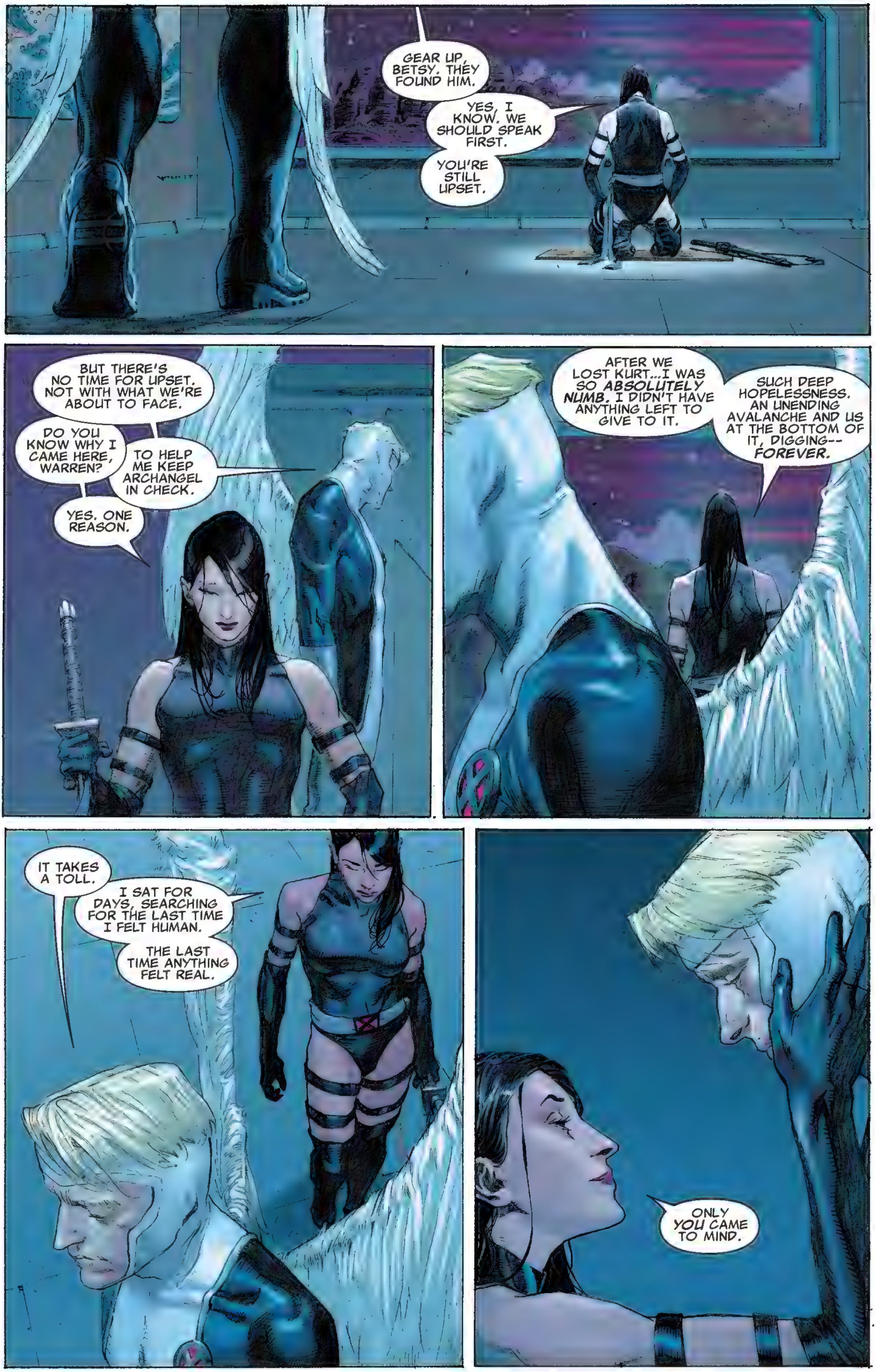

THE WORSHIPERS OF X WILL COME TO KILL YOU.
I THREATEN THEIR GRIP ON POWER.
FOR WHAT DO YOU PREPARE? WHAT IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT?
GO ON. DO NOT BE ASHAMED TO SPEAK THE TRUTH, MY LORD.
I-I WILL USHER IN... THE SALVATION OF HOMO SUPERIOR...
I WILL BRING ABOUT THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE.
YES.
YES, YOU WILL.
CAVERN-X, SEDONA, AZ.
SOME DIGS YOU PUT TOGETHER HERE, WARREN.

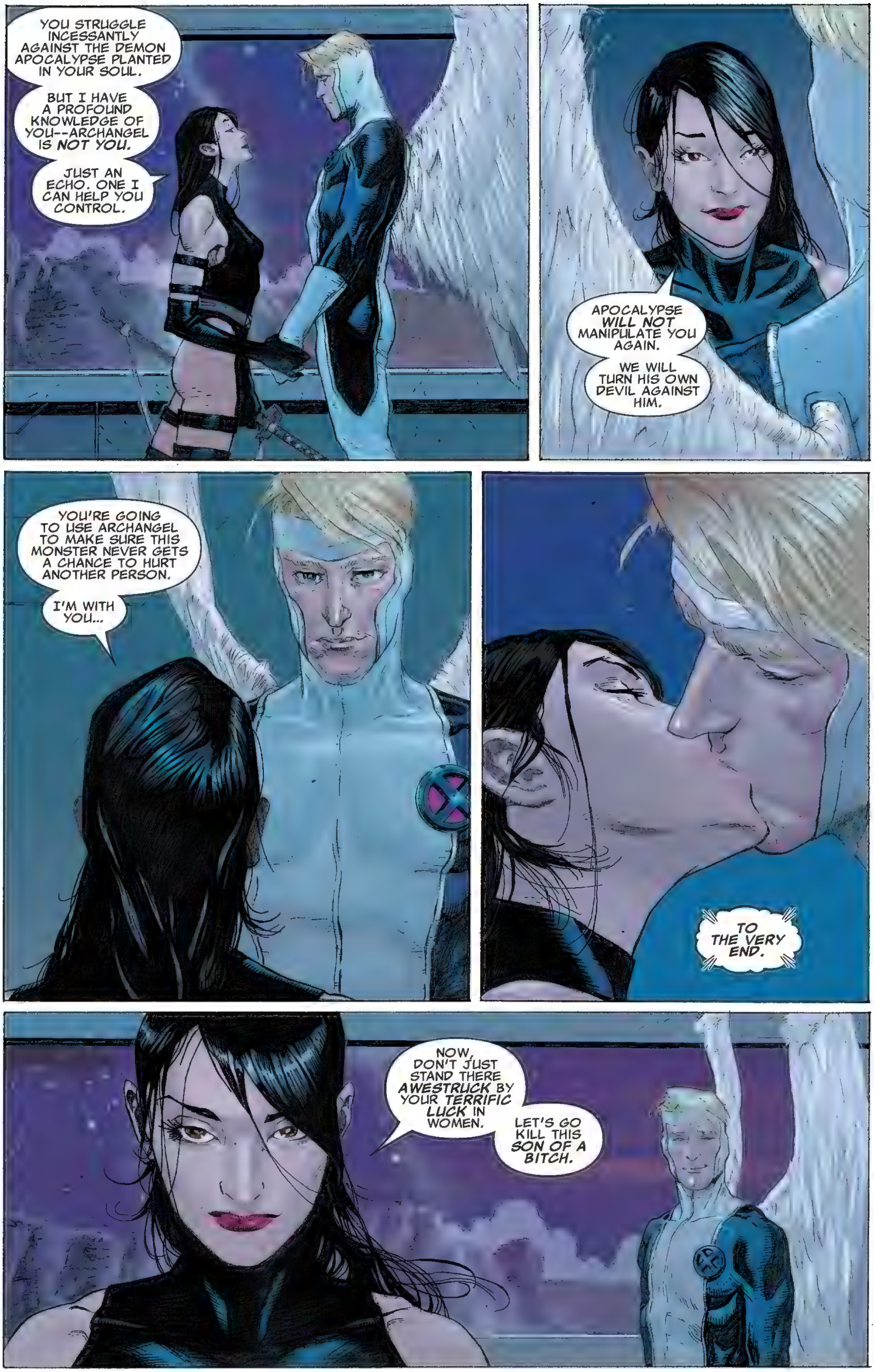

IT'S A TIME CAPSULE REALLY.
IN CASE WE'RE EVER WIPED OUT, THERE'D BE A REMINDER TO THE FUTURE OF OUR STRUGGLES, WHO WE WERE...
AND THAT WE HAD SOME ***AWFULLY*** RICH FRIENDS.
WHY DID YOU EXCLUDE ME FROM TODAY'S DANGER ROOM SESSION, LOGAN?
YOU ***KNOW*** WHY.
YOU DON'T TRUST ME?
I TRUST ***ONE*** OF YOU.
IF WE'RE GOING TO RUN THIS ***TOGETHER***, WE CAN'T HAVE SECRETS.
I'LL FILE MY REPORTS IN TRIPLICATE.
I'VE BEEN THINKING--
NEVER TOO LATE TO TRY NEW THINGS.
GOING OVER OUR PLAN OF ATTACK, A LOT COULD GO WRONG SWINGIN' AT APOCALYPSE WITH NO BACKUP.
NO BACKUP.
SCOTT CARRIED THE WEIGHT OF X-FORCE FOR ***TOO LONG***--NOW IT'S ***OUR TURN.***
THESE JOBS NEED DOING, AND WE'RE GOING TO SHOULDER THEM SO THE OTHERS DON'T HAVE TO.
LISTEN TO YOU, LIEUTENANT MEAN-MOUTH VON BADASS. VERY AUTHORITATIVE.

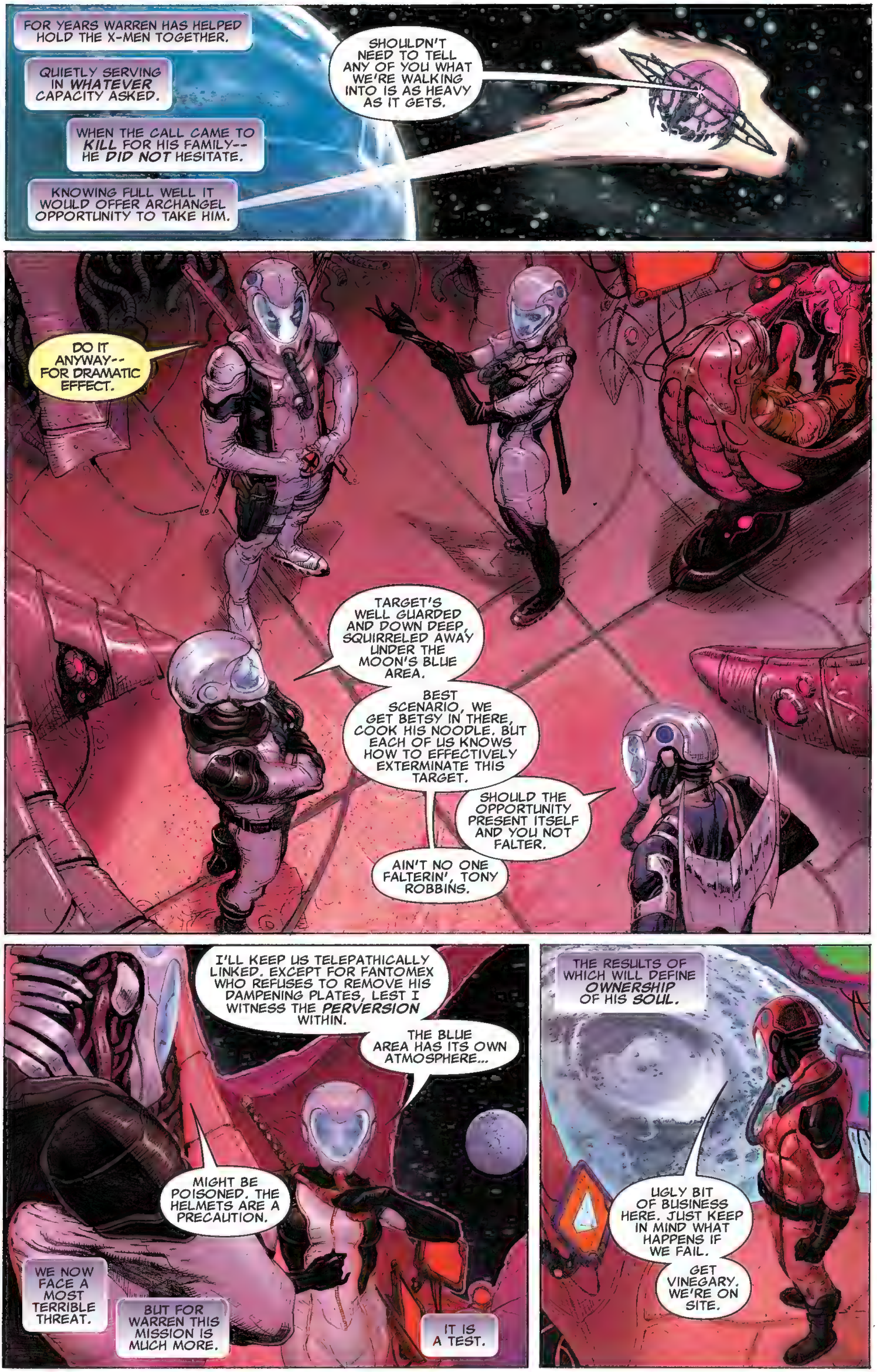

CAVERN-X SHOULD ALSO REMAIN A SECRET. A BASE OF OPERATIONS OUTSIDE OF UTOPIA...
IN CASE THE CITY IS EVER COMPROMISED.
PLUS, I LIKE THE PRIVACY.
LOOK OUT, BETSY, I'M FALLIN' IN LOVE WITH YOUR FLYBOY.
LET'S NOT PICK FLORAL PATTERNS UNTIL AFTER WE SAVE THE WORLD, YES?

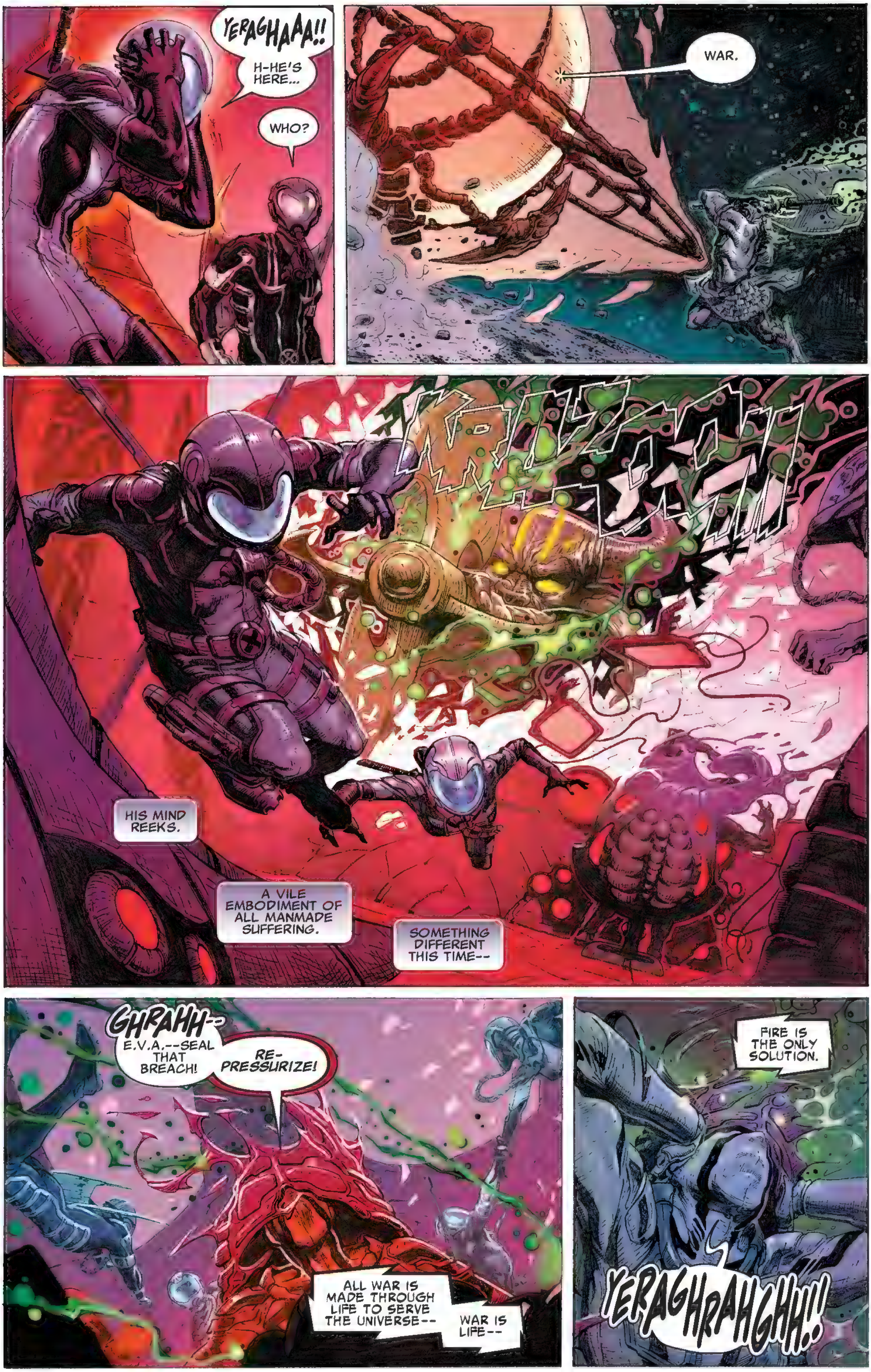

WE ANY CLOSER TO A LOCATION?
WHEN THE SHIP JUMPED, IT DIDN'T LEAVE ANY TRAILS, JUST A HUGE CRATER.
JEAN-PHILLIPE'S BEEN USING CABLE'S BLOOD SAMPLES TO TRACK THE SHIP'S CELESTIAL TECHNOLOGY. MATTER OF TIME NOW.

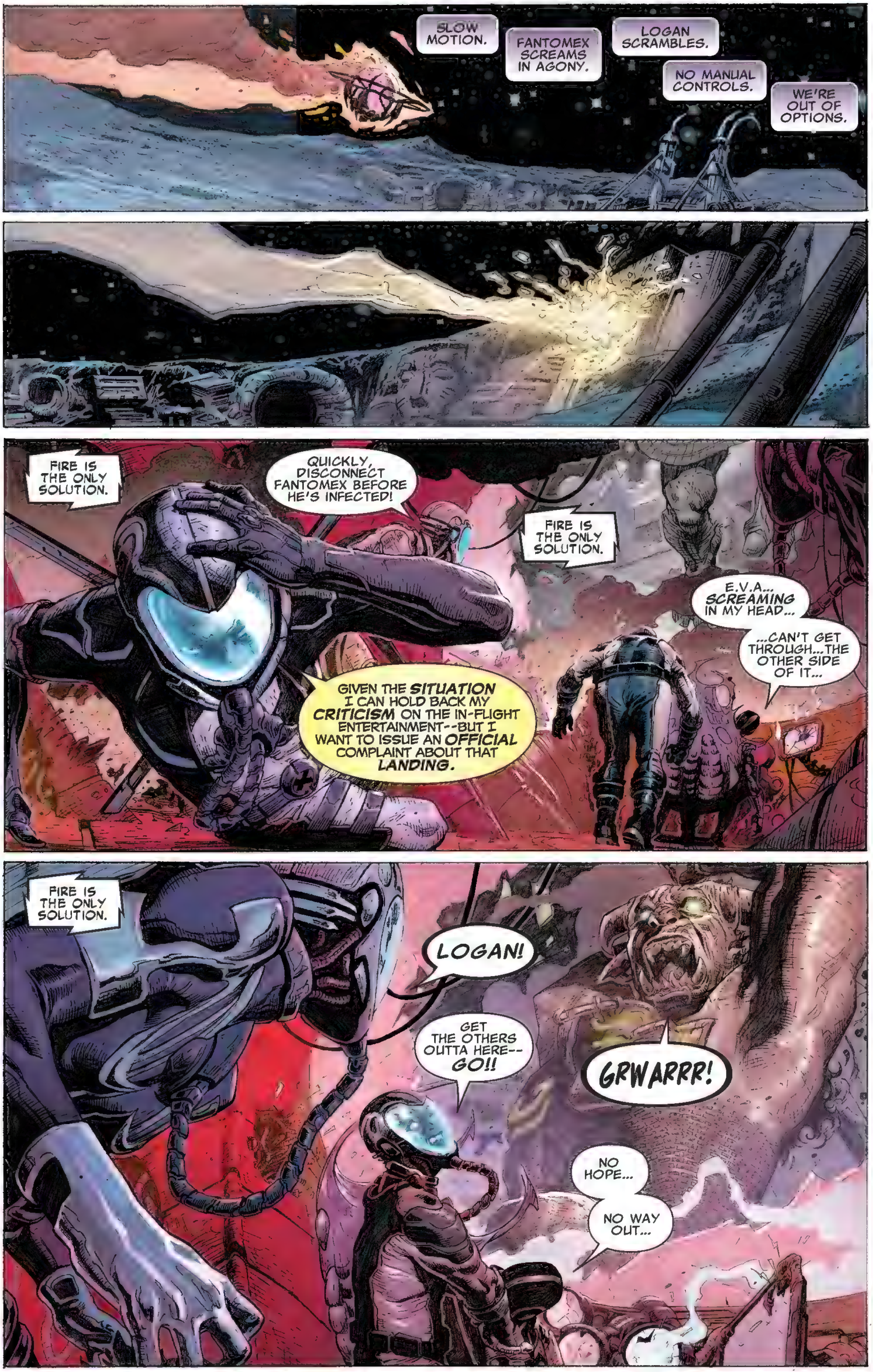

THIS SHOW *SUCKS.*
NOT A SHOW. RESEARCH.
THIS RESEARCH *SUCKS.*
⊰SIGH⊱ WHAT *ARE* YOU DOING HERE, WADE?
I DUNNO. WATCHING RESEARCH.
NO. WHY ARE YOU *HERE,* WITH *THIS* OUTFIT, WORKING ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS--*MONEY?*
YEP, THAT'S IT. THE MONEY.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
THE MONEY.
NATURALLY.
YOU *DING-DONGS* FIND ANYTHING?
YES. POP ROCKS AND COKE--NOT A REAL HAZARD.
I'VE FOUND WHERE THEY MOVED TO.
WELL, *WE* FOUND IT. I'VE BEEN HELPING.
WHAT THE HELL ARE THE SPACE SUITS FOR?
I HAD E.V.A. PREPARE THEM FOR OUR MISSION.
OUR MISSION?
WE'RE GOING TO THE MOON, ALICE!

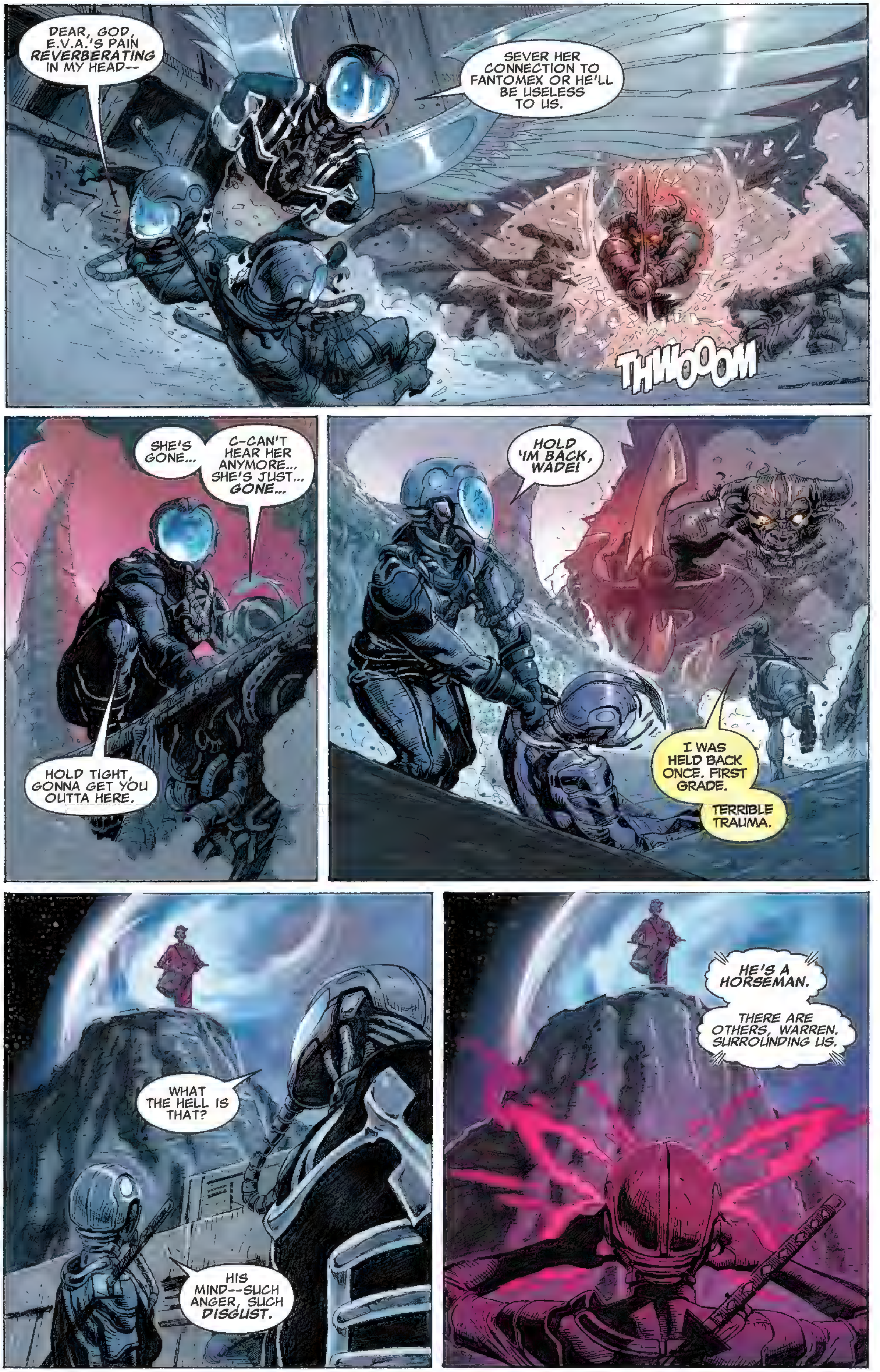

GEAR UP, BETSY. THEY FOUND HIM.
YES, I KNOW. WE SHOULD SPEAK FIRST.
YOU'RE STILL UPSET.
BUT THERE'S NO TIME FOR UPSET. NOT WITH WHAT WE'RE ABOUT TO FACE.
DO YOU KNOW WHY I CAME HERE, WARREN?
TO HELP ME KEEP ARCHANGEL IN CHECK.
YES. ONE REASON.
AFTER WE LOST KURT...I WAS SO **ABSOLUTELY NUMB.** I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT TO GIVE TO IT.
SUCH DEEP HOPELESSNESS. AN UNENDING AVALANCHE AND US AT THE BOTTOM OF IT, DIGGING--**FOREVER.**
IT TAKES A TOLL.
I SAT FOR DAYS, SEARCHING FOR THE LAST TIME I FELT HUMAN.
THE LAST TIME ANYTHING FELT REAL.
ONLY **YOU** CAME TO MIND.

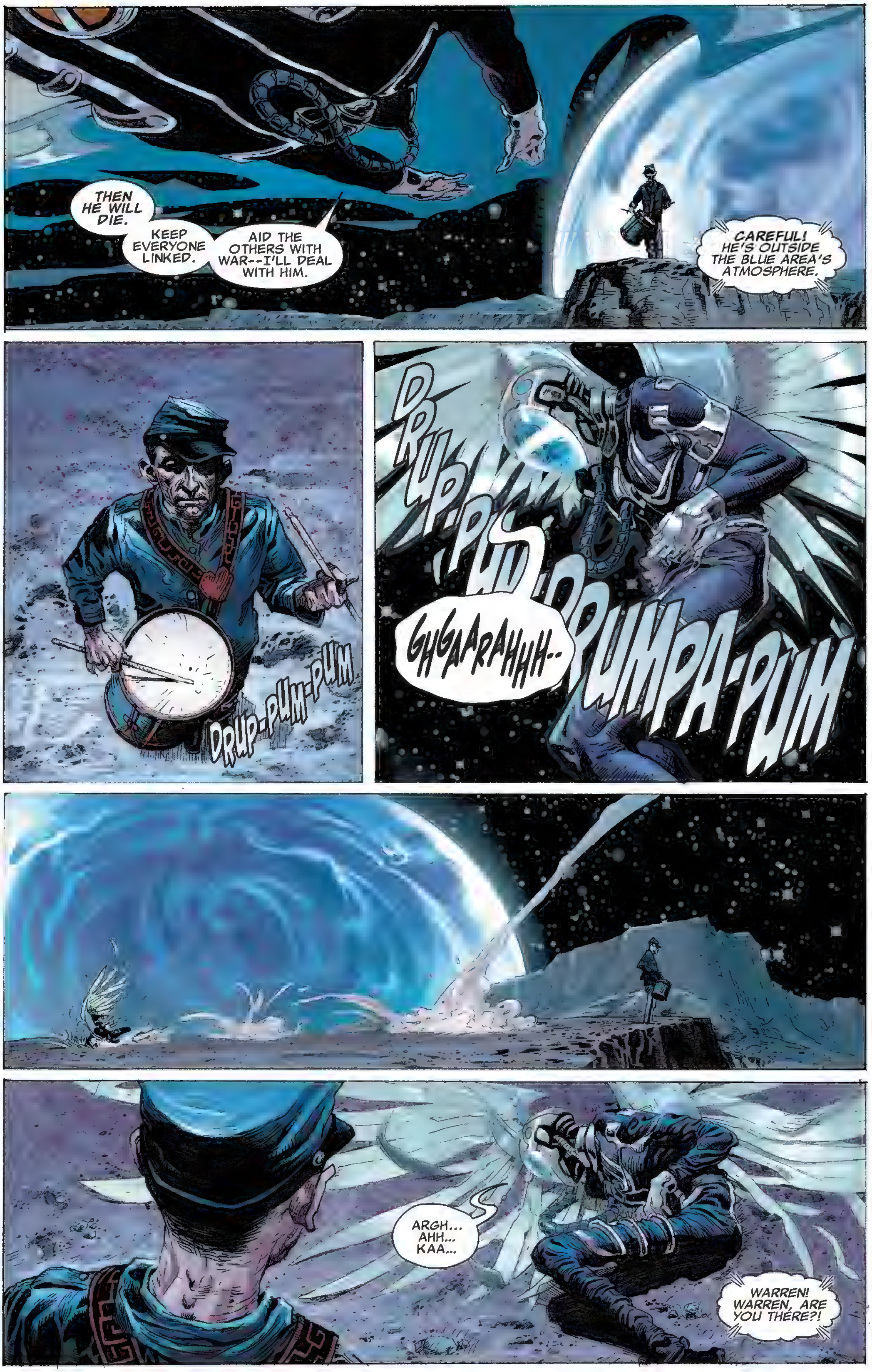

YOU STRUGGLE INCESSANTLY AGAINST THE DEMON APOCALYPSE PLANTED IN YOUR SOUL.
BUT I HAVE A PROFOUND KNOWLEDGE OF YOU--ARCHANGEL IS *NOT YOU.*
JUST AN ECHO. ONE I CAN HELP YOU CONTROL.
APOCALYPSE *WILL NOT* MANIPULATE YOU AGAIN.
WE WILL TURN HIS OWN DEVIL AGAINST HIM.
YOU'RE GOING TO USE ARCHANGEL TO MAKE SURE THIS MONSTER NEVER GETS A CHANCE TO HURT ANOTHER PERSON.
I'M WITH YOU...
TO THE VERY END.
NOW, DON'T JUST STAND THERE *AWESTRUCK* BY YOUR *TERRIFIC LUCK* IN WOMEN.
LET'S GO KILL THIS *SON OF A BITCH.*

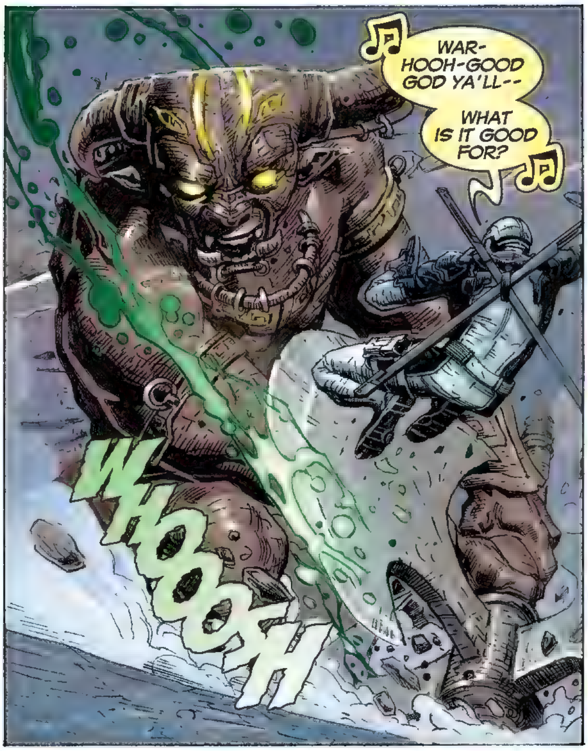

FOR YEARS WARREN HAS HELPED HOLD THE X-MEN TOGETHER.
QUIETLY SERVING IN *WHATEVER* CAPACITY ASKED.
WHEN THE CALL CAME TO *KILL* FOR HIS FAMILY-- HE *DID NOT* HESITATE.
KNOWING FULL WELL IT WOULD OFFER ARCHANGEL OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE HIM.
SHOULDN'T NEED TO TELL ANY OF YOU WHAT WE'RE WALKING INTO IS AS HEAVY AS IT GETS.
DO IT ANYWAY-- FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT.
TARGET'S WELL GUARDED AND DOWN DEEP, SQUIRRELED AWAY UNDER THE MOON'S BLUE AREA.
BEST SCENARIO, WE GET BETSY IN THERE, COOK HIS NOODLE. BUT EACH OF US KNOWS HOW TO EFFECTIVELY EXTERMINATE THIS TARGET.
SHOULD THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENT ITSELF AND YOU NOT FALTER.
AIN'T NO ONE FALTERIN', TONY ROBBINS.
I'LL KEEP US TELEPATHICALLY LINKED. EXCEPT FOR FANTOMEX WHO REFUSES TO REMOVE HIS DAMPENING PLATES, LEST I WITNESS THE *PERVERSION* WITHIN.
THE BLUE AREA HAS ITS OWN ATMOSPHERE...
MIGHT BE POISONED. THE HELMETS ARE A PRECAUTION.
WE NOW FACE A MOST TERRIBLE THREAT.
BUT FOR WARREN THIS MISSION IS MUCH MORE.
IT IS A TEST.
THE RESULTS OF WHICH WILL DEFINE *OWNERSHIP* OF HIS *SOUL*.
UGLY BIT OF BUSINESS HERE. JUST KEEP IN MIND WHAT HAPPENS IF WE FAIL.
GET VINEGARY. WE'RE ON SITE.

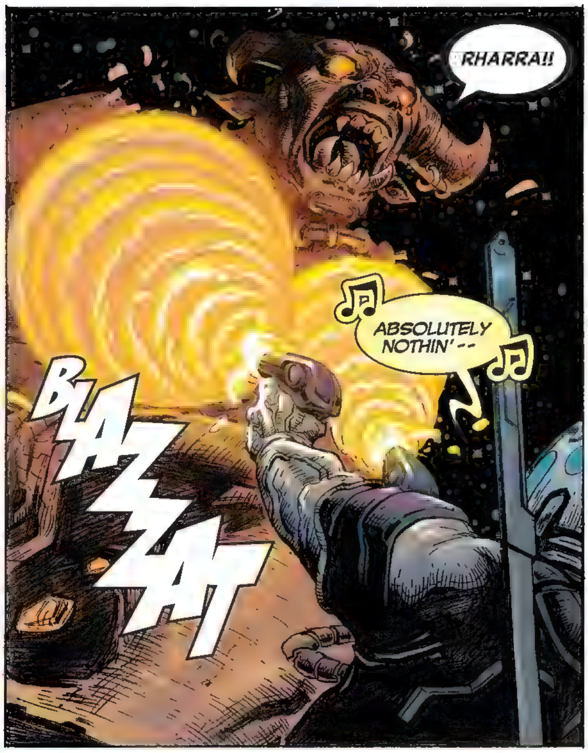

YERAGHAAA!!
H-HE'S HERE...
WHO?
WAR.
HIS MIND REEKS.
A VILE EMBODIMENT OF ALL MANMADE SUFFERING.
SOMETHING DIFFERENT THIS TIME--
GHRAHH--
E.V.A.--SEAL THAT BREACH!
RE-PRESSURIZE!
ALL WAR IS MADE THROUGH LIFE TO SERVE THE UNIVERSE--
WAR IS LIFE--
FIRE IS THE ONLY SOLUTION.
YERAGHRAHGHH!!

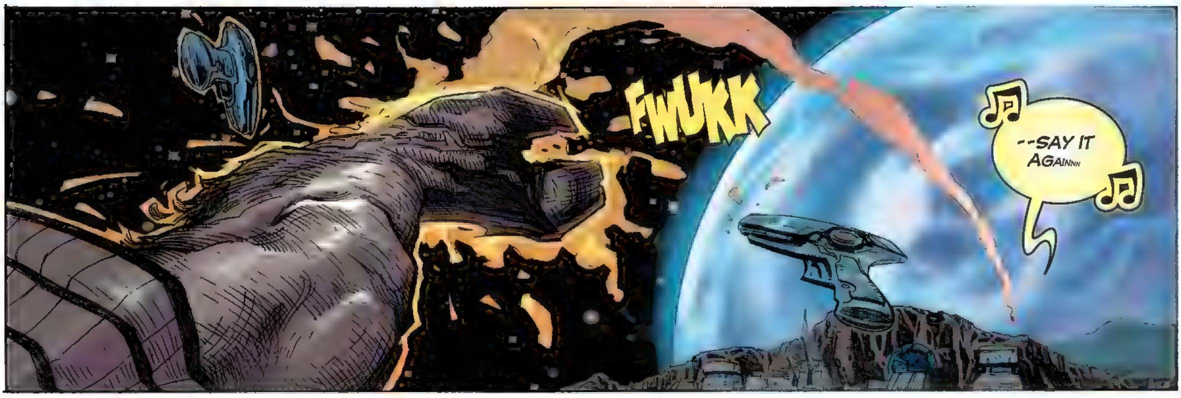

SLOW MOTION.
FANTOMEX SCREAMS IN AGONY.
LOGAN SCRAMBLES.
NO MANUAL CONTROLS.
WE'RE OUT OF OPTIONS.
FIRE IS THE ONLY SOLUTION.
QUICKLY, DISCONNECT FANTOMEX BEFORE HE'S INFECTED!
FIRE IS THE ONLY SOLUTION.
E.V.A... SCREAMING IN MY HEAD...
...CAN'T GET THROUGH...THE OTHER SIDE OF IT...
GIVEN THE SITUATION I CAN HOLD BACK MY CRITICISM ON THE IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT--BUT I WANT TO ISSUE AN OFFICIAL COMPLAINT ABOUT THAT LANDING.
FIRE IS THE ONLY SOLUTION.
LOGAN!
GET THE OTHERS OUTTA HERE-- GO!!
GRWARRR!
NO HOPE...
NO WAY OUT...

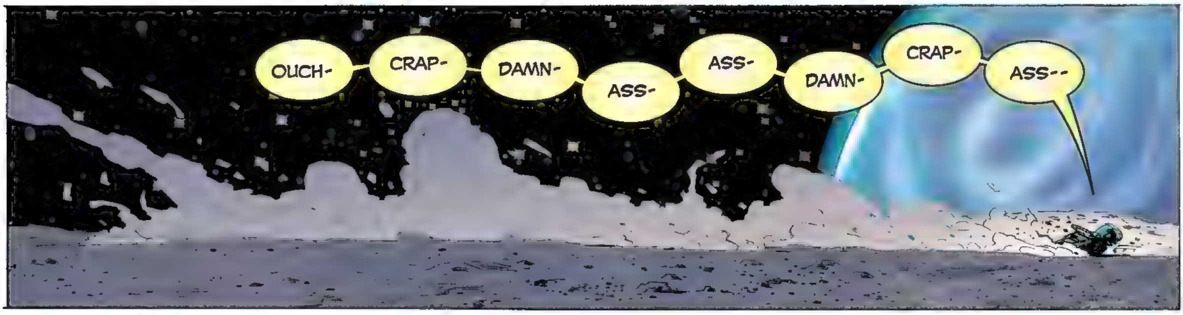

DEAR, GOD, E.V.A.'S PAIN REVERBERATING IN MY HEAD--
SEVER HER CONNECTION TO FANTOMEX OR HE'LL BE USELESS TO US.
THWOOOM
SHE'S GONE...
C-CAN'T HEAR HER ANYMORE... SHE'S JUST... GONE...
HOLD TIGHT, GONNA GET YOU OUTTA HERE.
HOLD 'IM BACK, WADE!
I WAS HELD BACK ONCE. FIRST GRADE.
TERRIBLE TRAUMA.
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?
HIS MIND--SUCH ANGER, SUCH DISGUST.
HE'S A HORSEMAN.
THERE ARE OTHERS, WARREN. SURROUNDING US.

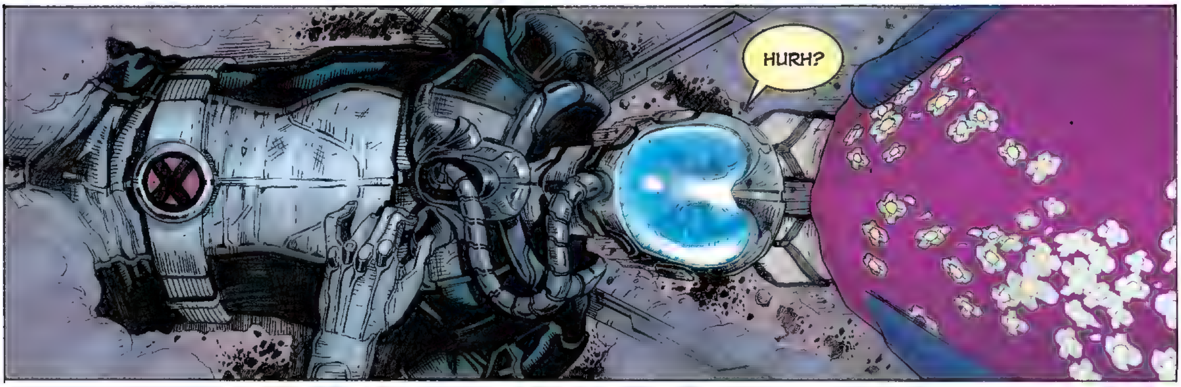

THEN HE WILL DIE.
KEEP EVERYONE LINKED.
AID THE OTHERS WITH WAR--I'LL DEAL WITH HIM.
CAREFUL! HE'S OUTSIDE THE BLUE AREA'S ATMOSPHERE.
DRUP-PUM-PUM
DRUP-PUM-PUD-DRUMPA-PUM
GHGAARAHHH--
ARGH... AHH... KAA...
WARREN! WARREN, ARE YOU THERE?!

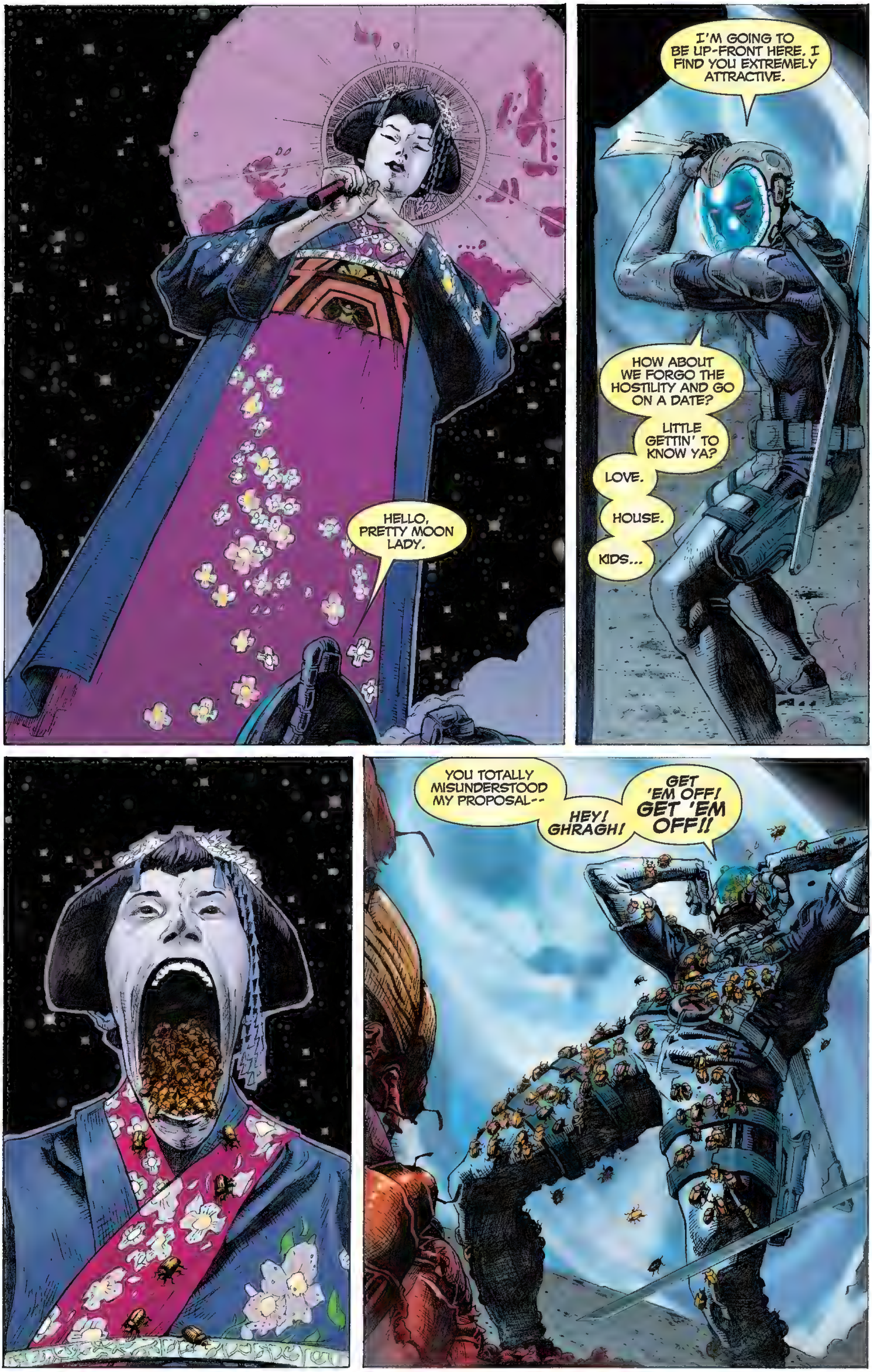

WAR-HOOH-GOOD GOD YA'LL--
WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?
WHOOOSH

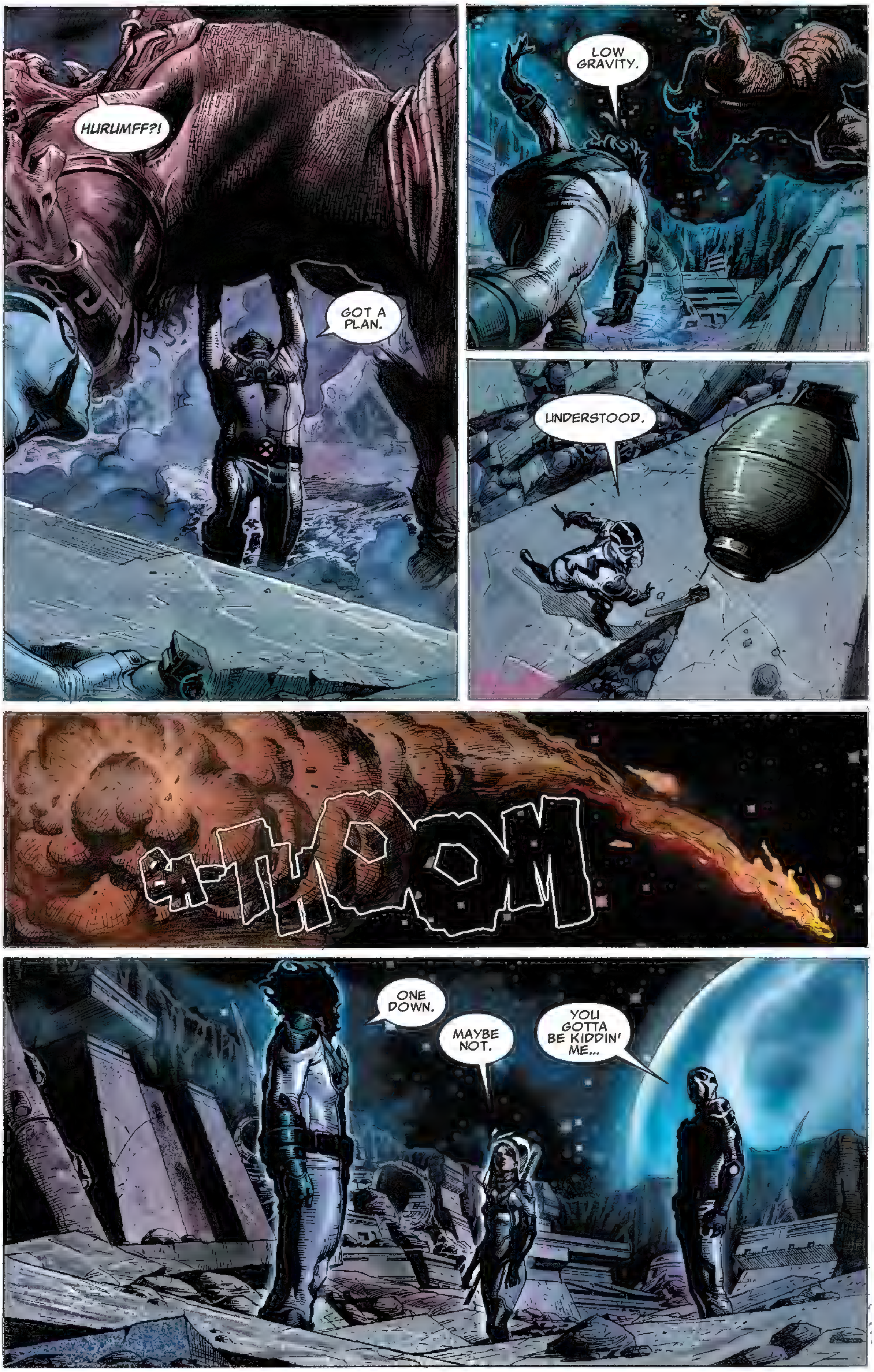

RHARRA!!
ABSOLUTELY NOTHIN'--
BLAZZAT

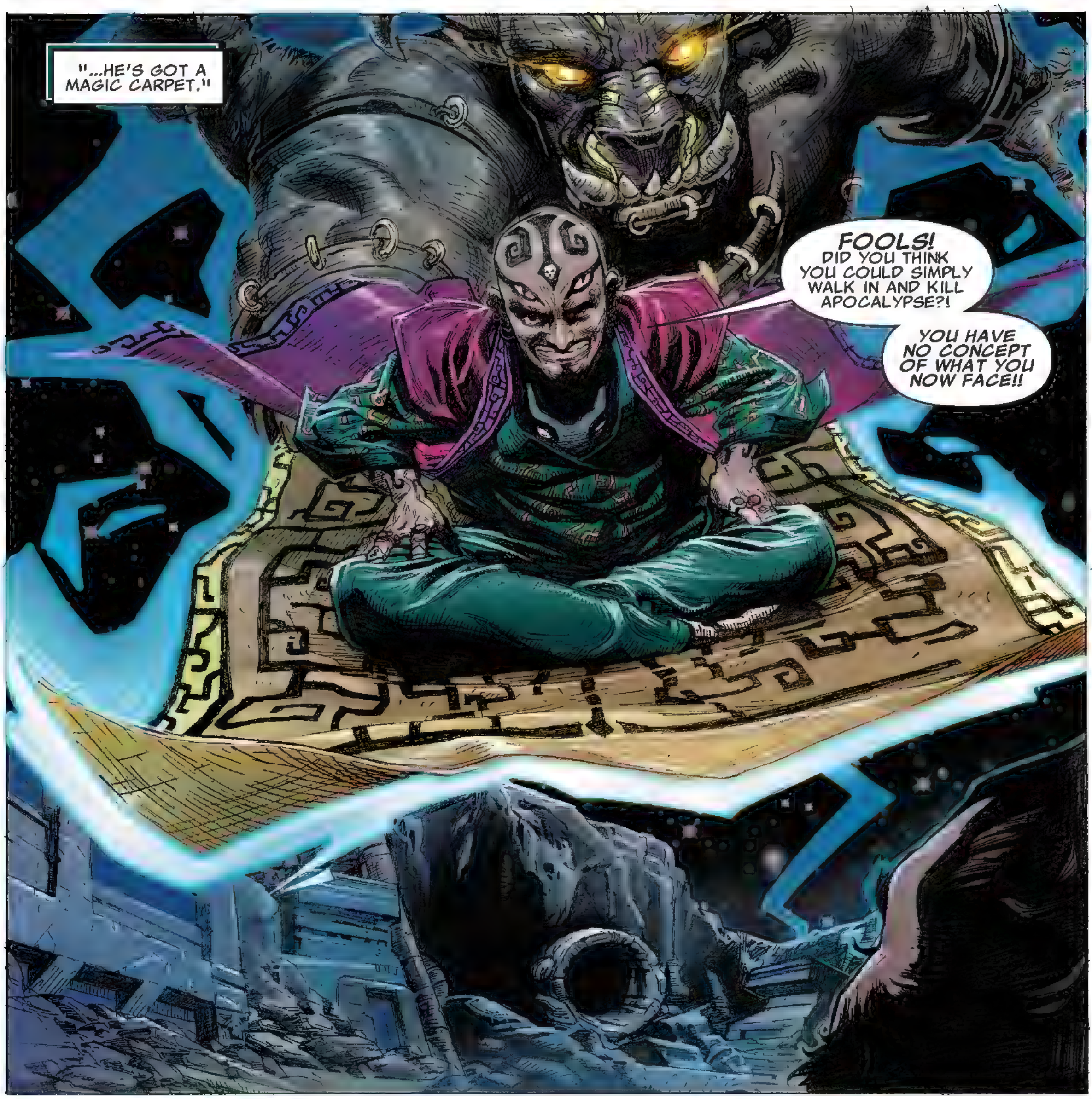

FWUKK
--SAY IT AGAINNN

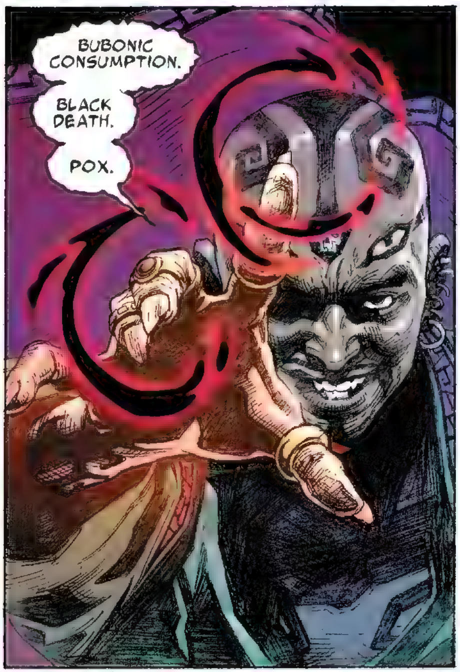

OUCH-
CRAP-
DAMN-
ASS-
ASS-
DAMN-
CRAP-
ASS--

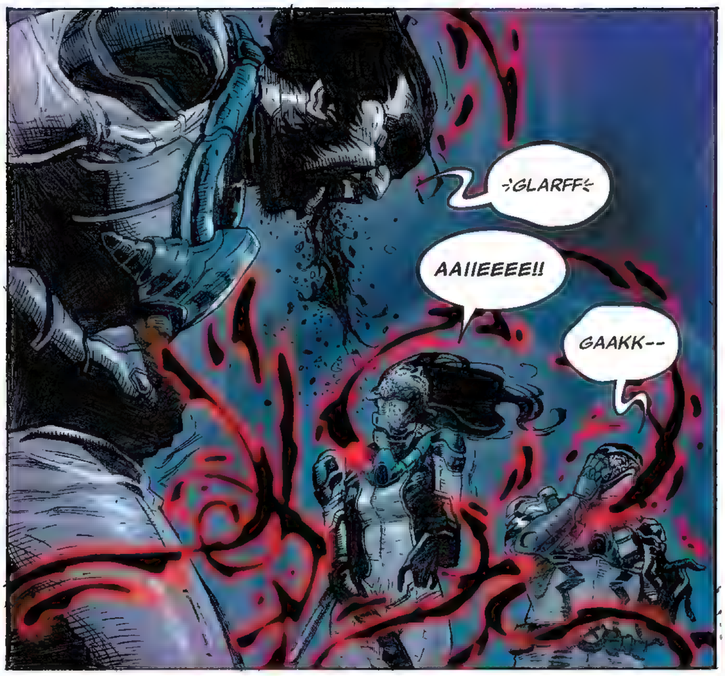

HURH?

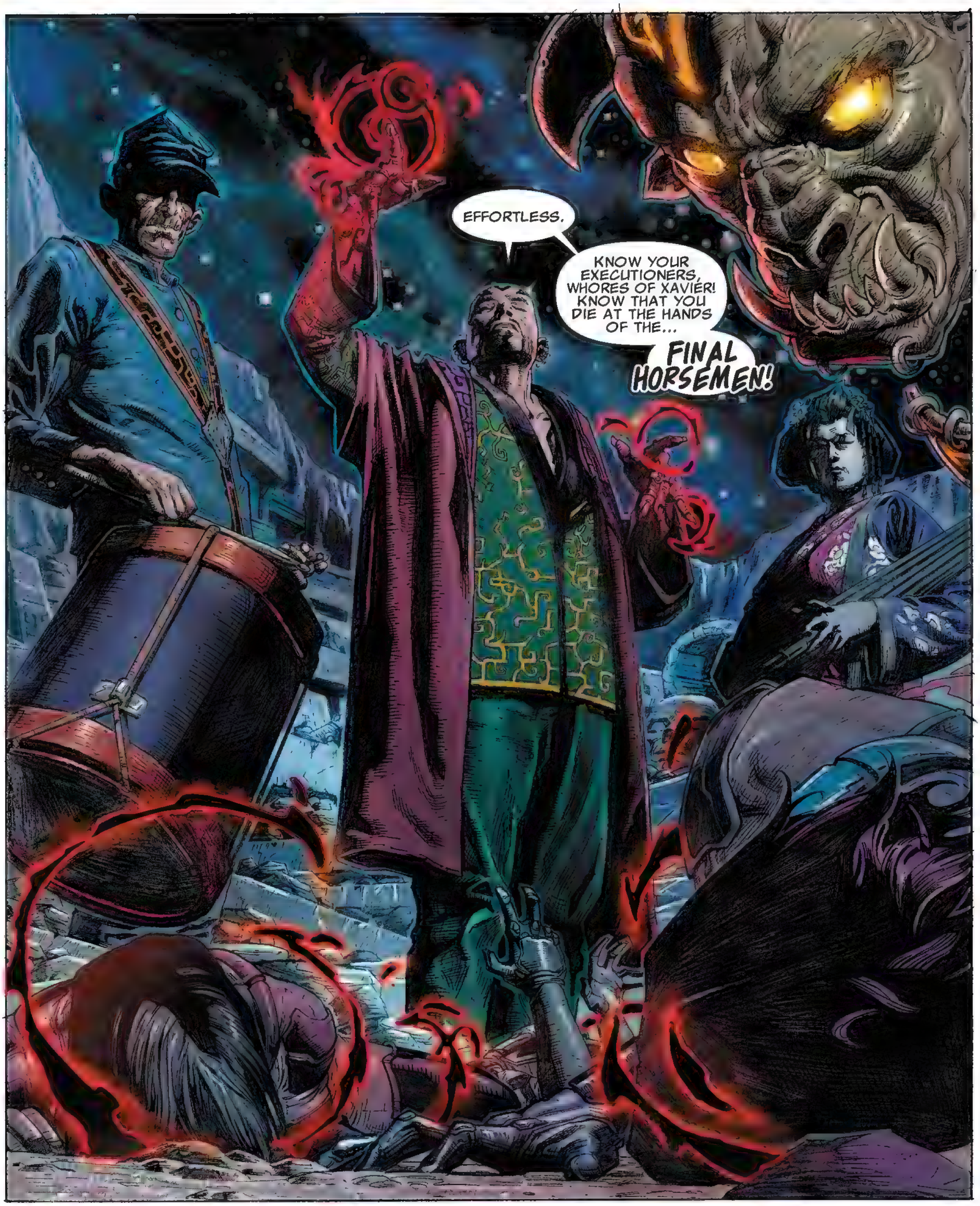

HELLO, PRETTY MOON LADY.
I'M GOING TO BE UP-FRONT HERE. I FIND YOU EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE.
HOW ABOUT WE FORGO THE HOSTILITY AND GO ON A DATE?
LITTLE GETTIN' TO KNOW YA?
LOVE.
HOUSE.
KIDS...
YOU TOTALLY MISUNDERSTOOD MY PROPOSAL--
HEY! GHRAGH!
GET 'EM OFF! GET 'EM OFF!!

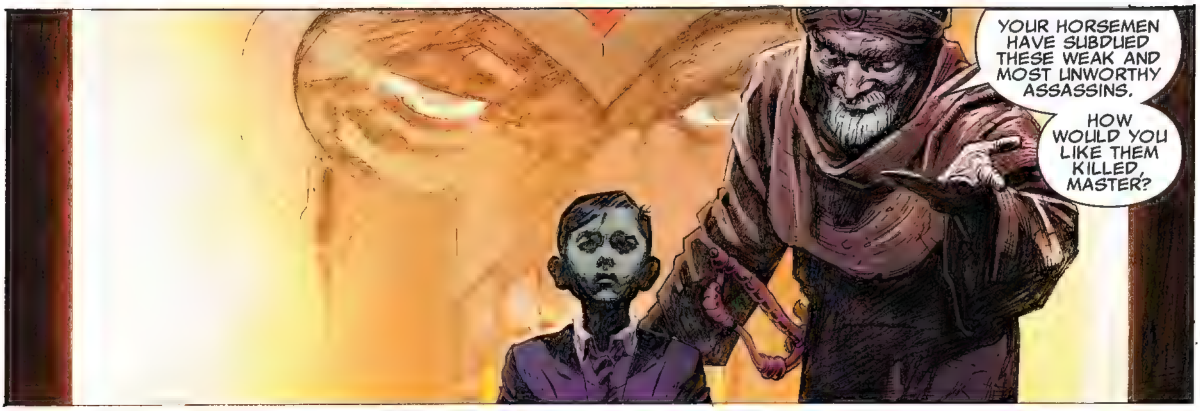

HURUMFF?!
GOT A PLAN.
LOW GRAVITY.
UNDERSTOOD.
KA-THOOM
ONE DOWN.
MAYBE NOT.
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN' ME...

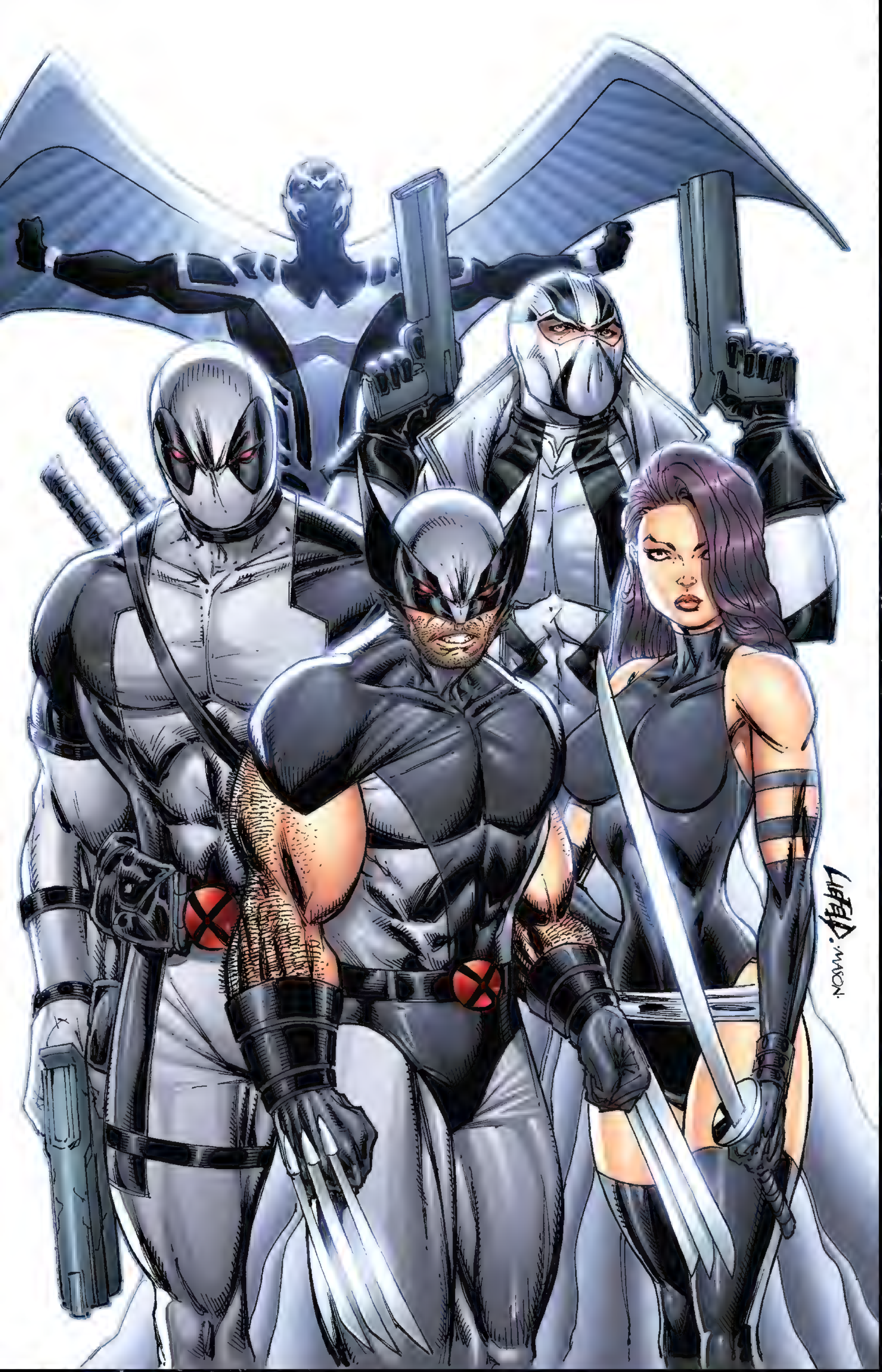

"...HE'S GOT A MAGIC CARPET."
FOOLS! DID YOU THINK YOU COULD SIMPLY WALK IN AND KILL APOCALYPSE?!
YOU HAVE NO CONCEPT OF WHAT YOU NOW FACE!!


BUBONIC CONSUMPTION.
BLACK DEATH.
POX.


GLARFF
AAIIEEEE!!
GAAKK--


EFFORTLESS.
KNOW YOUR EXECUTIONERS, WHORES OF XAVIER! KNOW THAT YOU DIE AT THE HANDS OF THE... FINAL HORSEMEN!


YOUR HORSEMEN HAVE SUBDUED THESE WEAK AND MOST UNWORTHY ASSASSINS.
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE THEM KILLED, MASTER?


LIEFELD
MASON

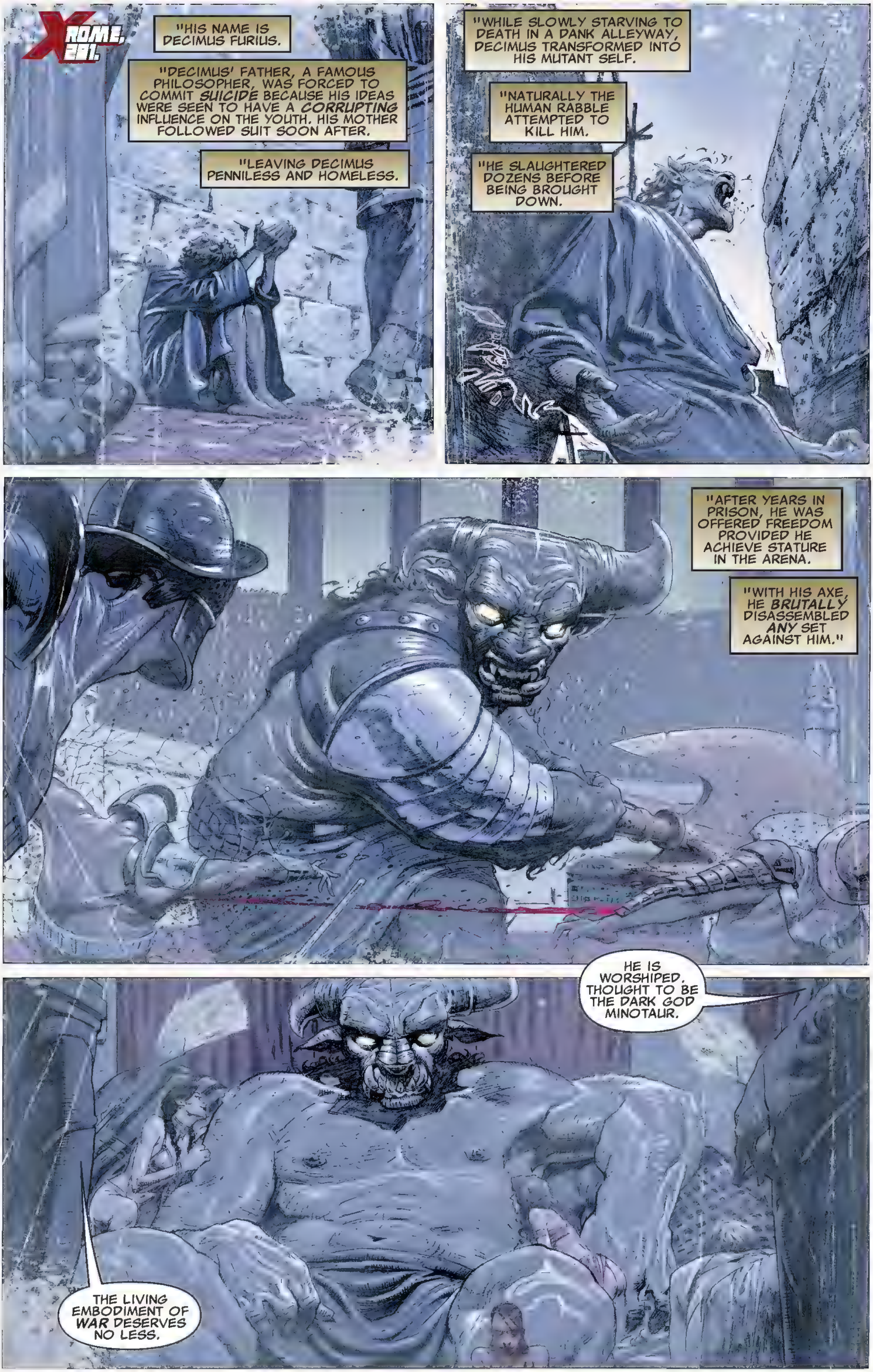
UNCANNY X-FORCE 01 VARIANT

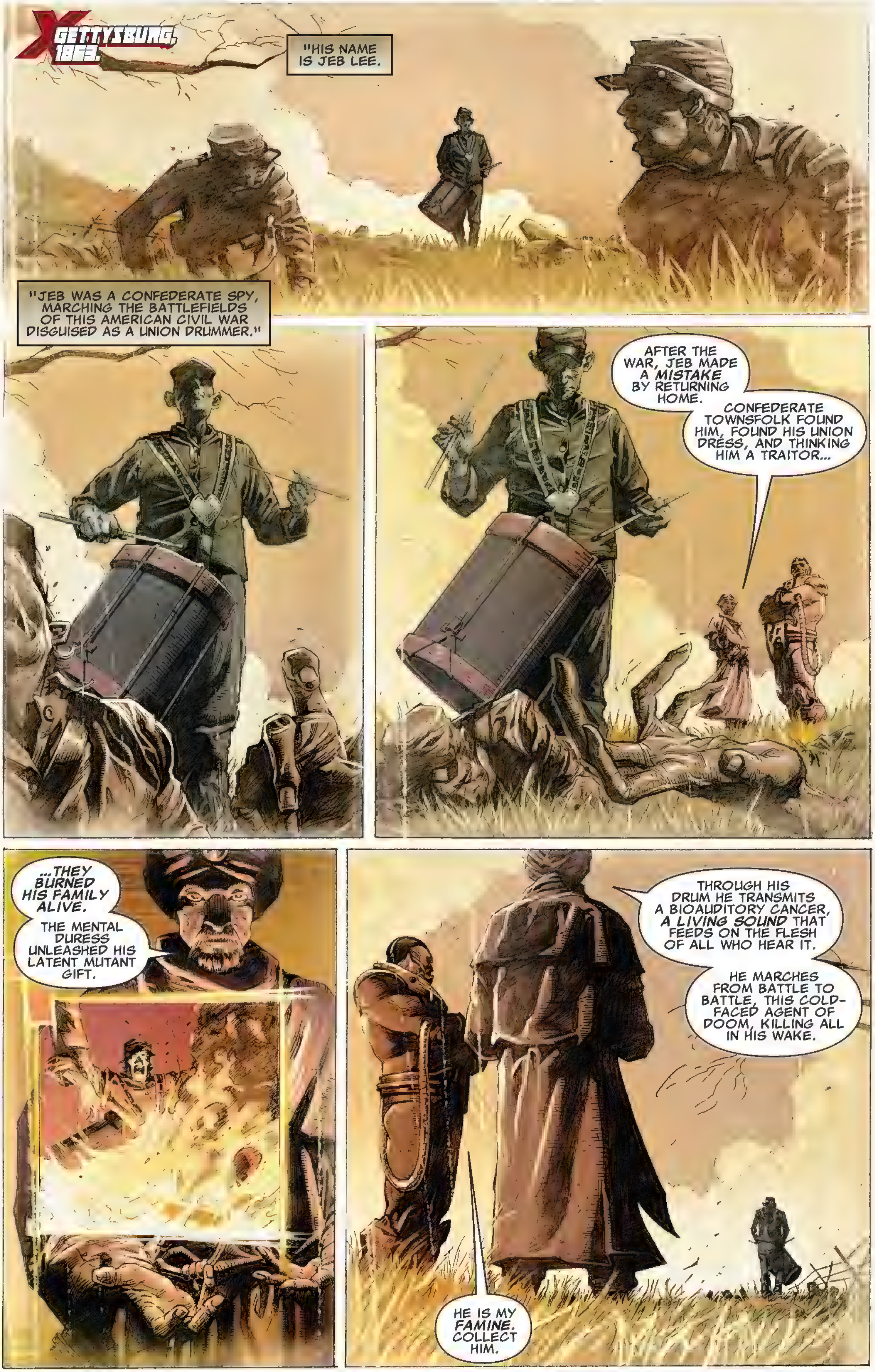
ART BY ROB LIEFELD & THOMAS MASON

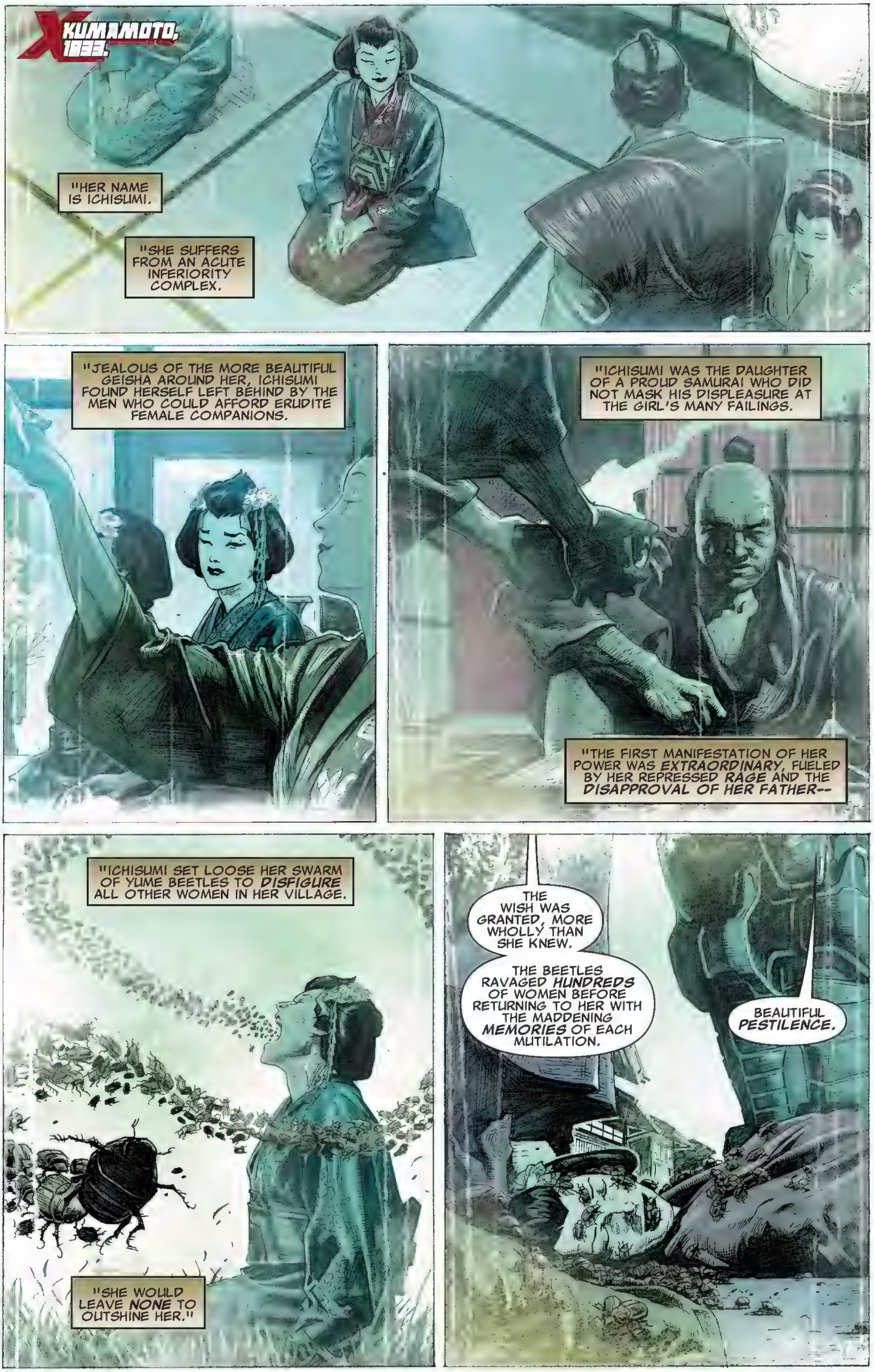
03

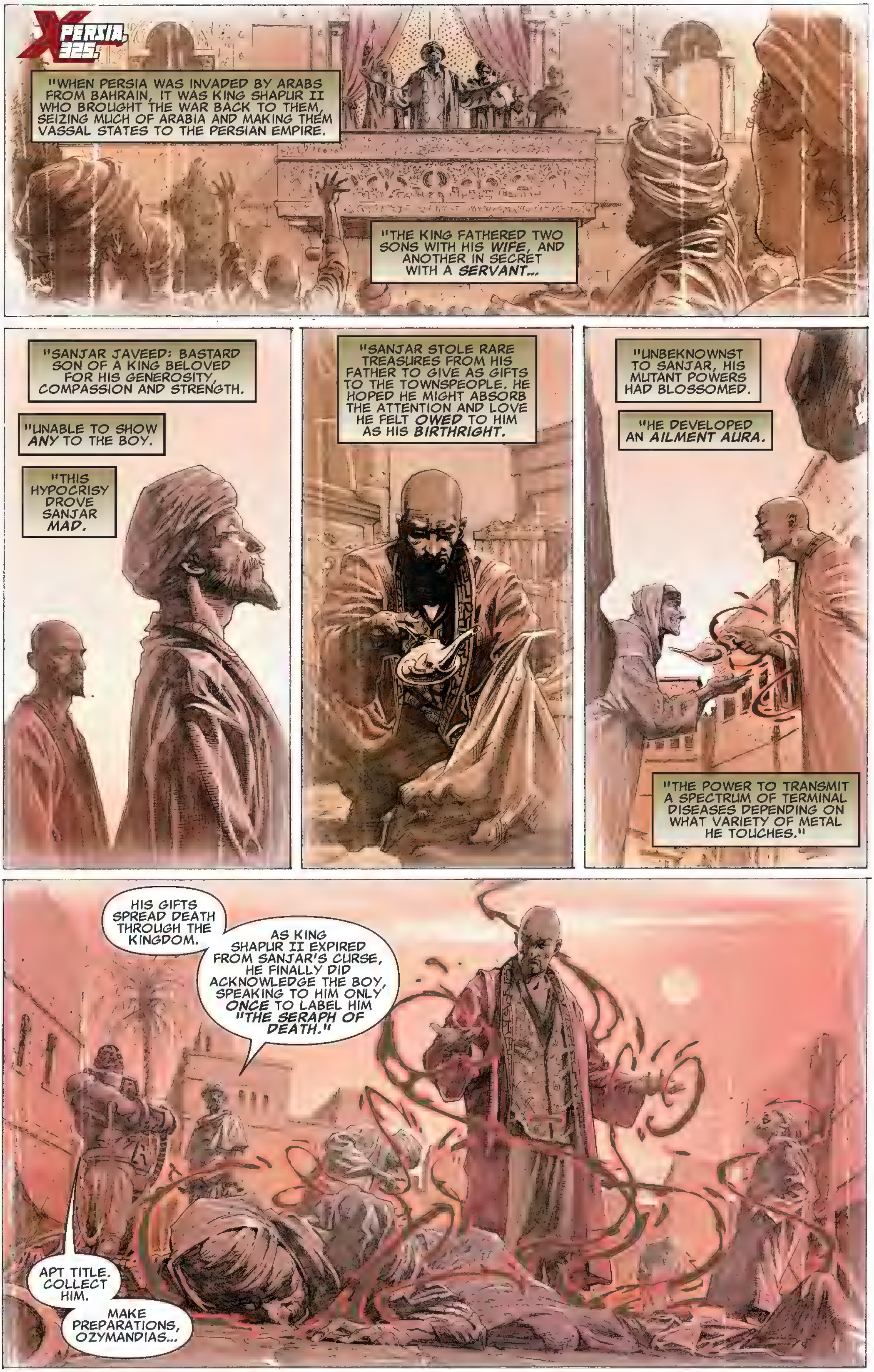
THE APOCALYPSE SOLUTION

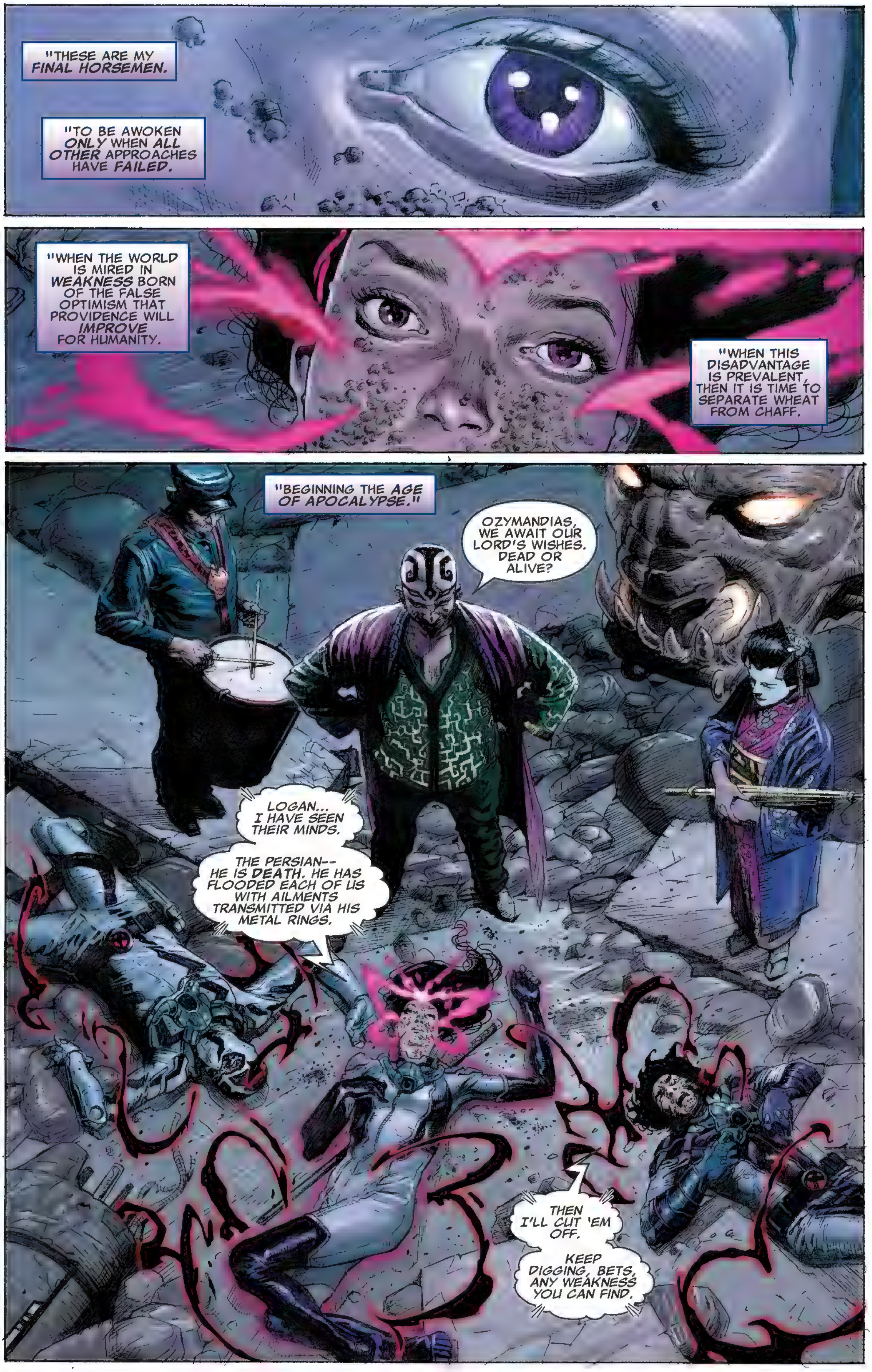
CHAPTER 3

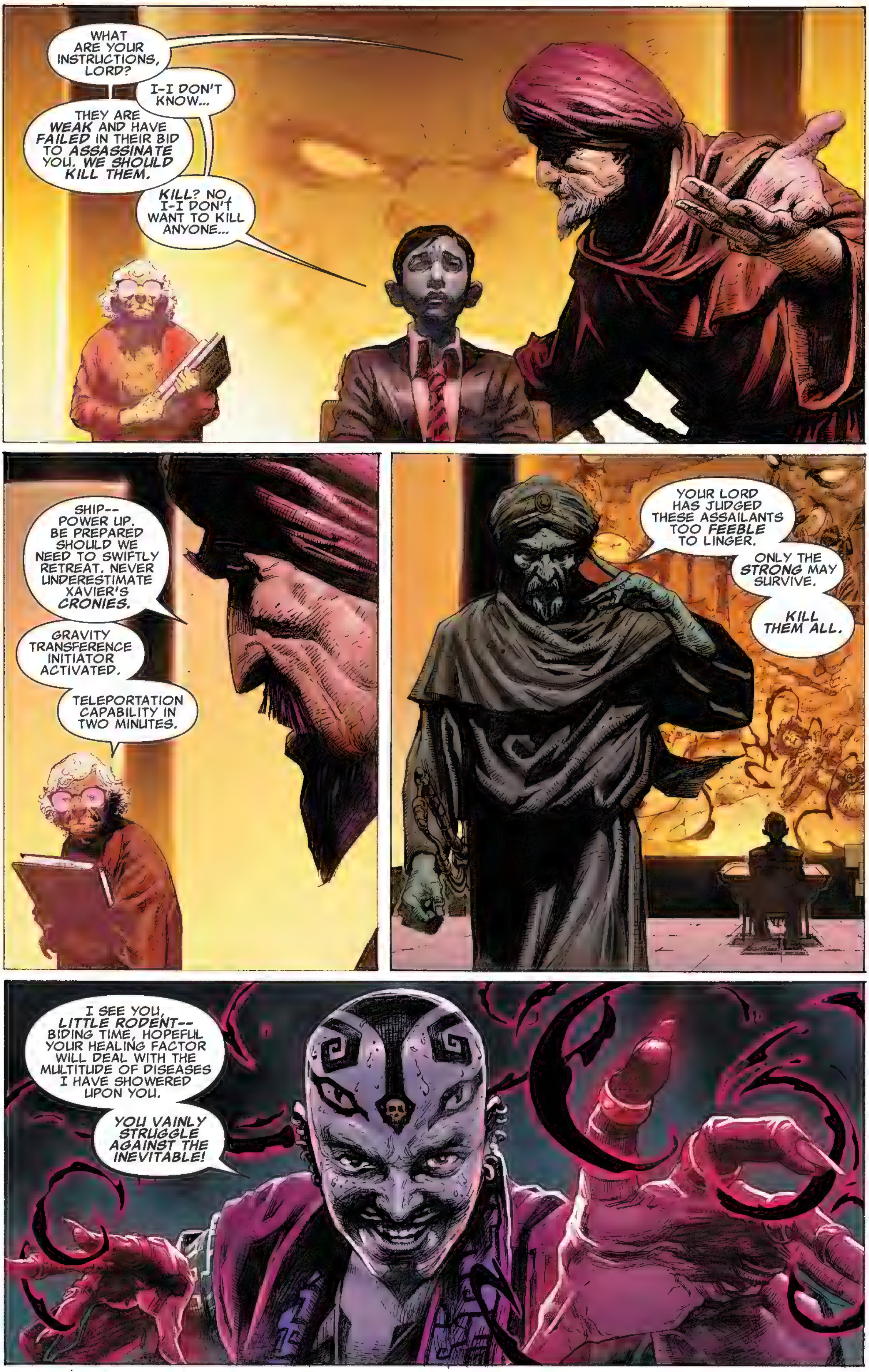

X ROME, 201.
"HIS NAME IS DECIMUS FURIUS.
"DECIMUS' FATHER, A FAMOUS PHILOSOPHER, WAS FORCED TO COMMIT *SUICIDE* BECAUSE HIS IDEAS WERE SEEN TO HAVE A *CORRUPTING* INFLUENCE ON THE YOUTH. HIS MOTHER FOLLOWED SUIT SOON AFTER.
"LEAVING DECIMUS PENNILESS AND HOMELESS.
"WHILE SLOWLY STARVING TO DEATH IN A DANK ALLEYWAY, DECIMUS TRANSFORMED INTO HIS MUTANT SELF.
"NATURALLY THE HUMAN RABBLE ATTEMPTED TO KILL HIM.
"HE SLAUGHTERED DOZENS BEFORE BEING BROUGHT DOWN.
"AFTER YEARS IN PRISON, HE WAS OFFERED FREEDOM PROVIDED HE ACHIEVE STATURE IN THE ARENA.
"WITH HIS AXE, HE *BRUTALLY* DISASSEMBLED *ANY* SET AGAINST HIM."
HE IS WORSHIPED, THOUGHT TO BE THE DARK GOD MINOTAUR.
THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF *WAR* DESERVES NO LESS.

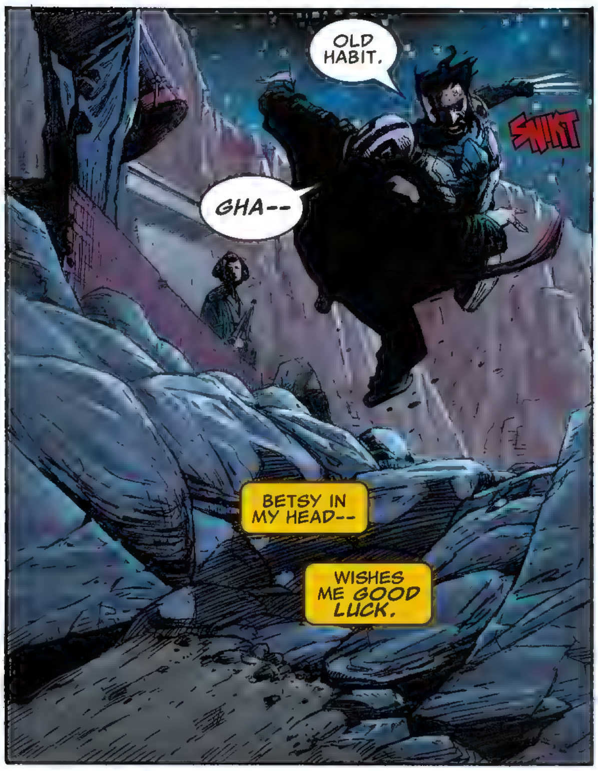

GETTYSBURG, 1863.
"HIS NAME IS JEB LEE.
"JEB WAS A CONFEDERATE SPY, MARCHING THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THIS AMERICAN CIVIL WAR DISGUISED AS A UNION DRUMMER."
AFTER THE WAR, JEB MADE A *MISTAKE* BY RETURNING HOME.
CONFEDERATE TOWNSFOLK FOUND HIM, FOUND HIS UNION DRESS, AND THINKING HIM A TRAITOR...
...THEY *BURNED HIS FAMILY ALIVE.*
THE MENTAL DURESS UNLEASHED HIS LATENT MUTANT GIFT.
THROUGH HIS DRUM HE TRANSMITS A BIOAUDITORY CANCER, *A LIVING SOUND* THAT FEEDS ON THE FLESH OF ALL WHO HEAR IT.
HE MARCHES FROM BATTLE TO BATTLE, THIS COLD-FACED AGENT OF DOOM, KILLING ALL IN HIS WAKE.
HE IS MY *FAMINE.* COLLECT HIM.

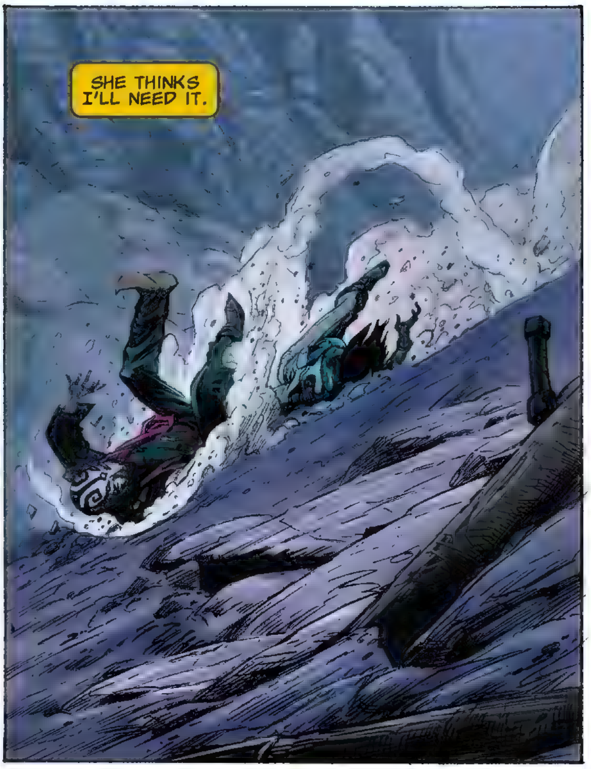

KUMAMOTO, 1933.
"HER NAME IS ICHISUMI.
"SHE SUFFERS FROM AN ACUTE INFERIORITY COMPLEX.
"JEALOUS OF THE MORE BEAUTIFUL GEISHA AROUND HER, ICHISUMI FOUND HERSELF LEFT BEHIND BY THE MEN WHO COULD AFFORD ERUDITE FEMALE COMPANIONS.
"ICHISUMI WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A PROUD SAMURAI WHO DID NOT MASK HIS DISPLEASURE AT THE GIRL'S MANY FAILINGS.
"THE FIRST MANIFESTATION OF HER POWER WAS *EXTRAORDINARY*, FUELED BY HER REPRESSED *RAGE* AND THE *DISAPPROVAL OF HER FATHER*--
"ICHISUMI SET LOOSE HER SWARM OF YUME BEETLES TO *DISFIGURE* ALL OTHER WOMEN IN HER VILLAGE.
"SHE WOULD LEAVE *NONE* TO OUTSHINE HER."
THE WISH WAS GRANTED, MORE WHOLLY THAN SHE KNEW.
THE BEETLES RAVAGED *HUNDREDS* OF WOMEN BEFORE RETURNING TO HER WITH THE MADDENING *MEMORIES* OF EACH MUTILATION.
BEAUTIFUL *PESTILENCE*.

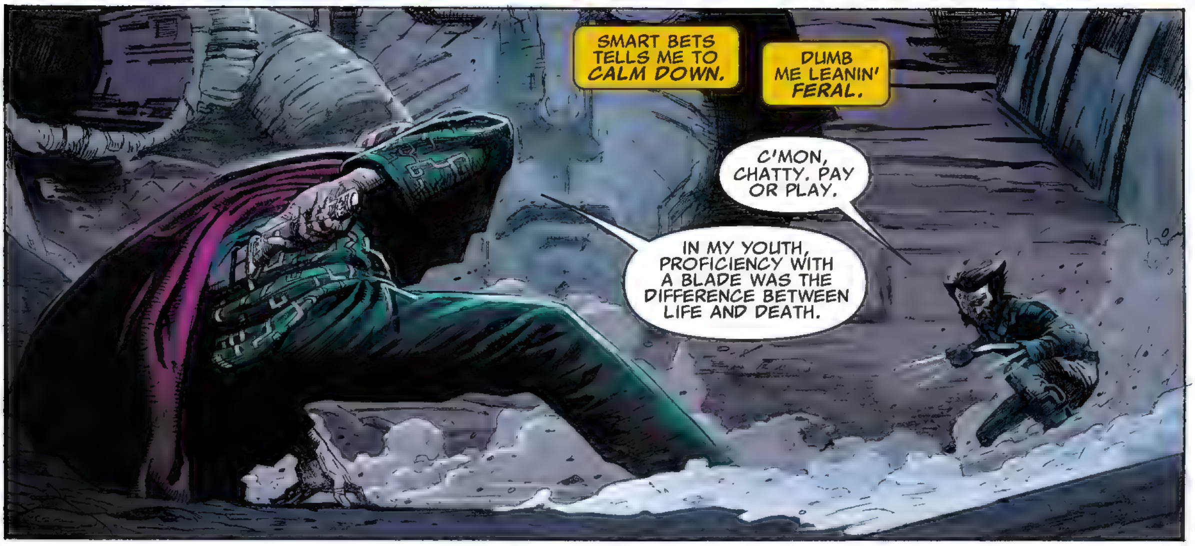

X PERSIA, 325.
"WHEN PERSIA WAS INVADED BY ARABS FROM BAHRAIN, IT WAS KING SHAPUR II WHO BROUGHT THE WAR BACK TO THEM, SEIZING MUCH OF ARABIA AND MAKING THEM VASSAL STATES TO THE PERSIAN EMPIRE.
"THE KING FATHERED TWO SONS WITH HIS *WIFE*, AND ANOTHER IN SECRET WITH A *SERVANT*...
"SANJAR JAVEED: BASTARD SON OF A KING BELOVED FOR HIS GENEROSITY, COMPASSION AND STRENGTH.
"UNABLE TO SHOW *ANY* TO THE BOY.
"THIS HYPOCRISY DROVE SANJAR *MAD*.
"SANJAR STOLE RARE TREASURES FROM HIS FATHER TO GIVE AS GIFTS TO THE TOWNSPEOPLE. HE HOPED HE MIGHT ABSORB THE ATTENTION AND LOVE HE FELT *OWED* TO HIM AS HIS *BIRTHRIGHT*.
"UNBEKNOWNST TO SANJAR, HIS MUTANT POWERS HAD BLOSSOMED.
"HE DEVELOPED AN *AILMENT AURA*.
"THE POWER TO TRANSMIT A SPECTRUM OF TERMINAL DISEASES DEPENDING ON WHAT VARIETY OF METAL HE TOUCHES."
HIS GIFTS SPREAD DEATH THROUGH THE KINGDOM.
AS KING SHAPUR II EXPIRED FROM SANJAR'S CURSE, HE FINALLY DID ACKNOWLEDGE THE BOY, SPEAKING TO HIM ONLY *ONCE* TO LABEL HIM *"THE SERAPH OF DEATH."*
APT TITLE. COLLECT HIM.
MAKE PREPARATIONS, OZYMANDIAS...

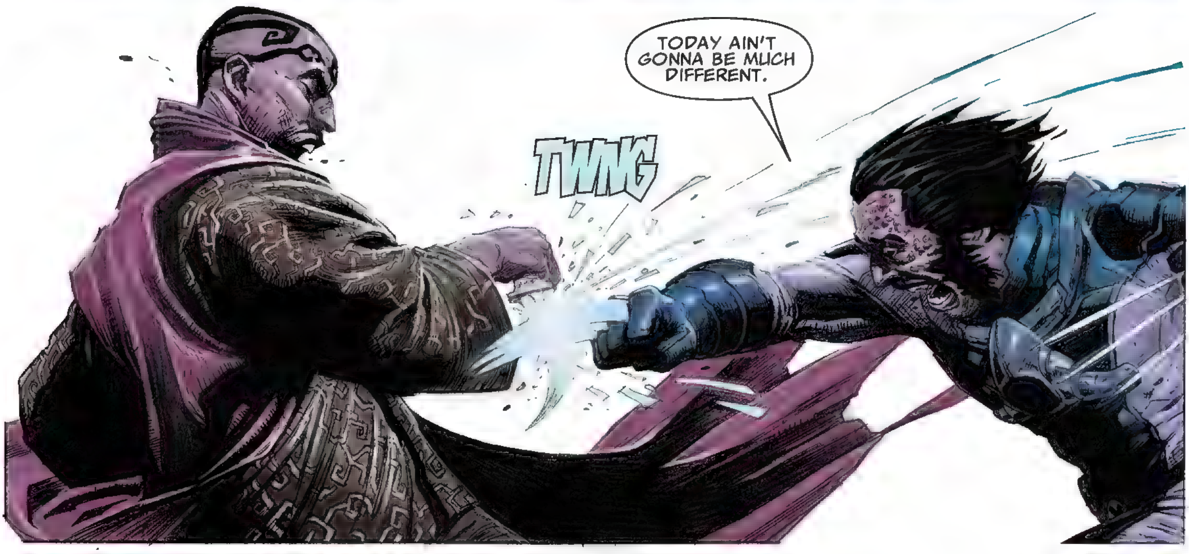

"THESE ARE MY *FINAL HORSEMEN.*
"TO BE AWOKEN *ONLY* WHEN *ALL OTHER* APPROACHES HAVE *FAILED.*
"WHEN THE WORLD IS MIRED IN *WEAKNESS* BORN OF THE FALSE OPTIMISM THAT PROVIDENCE WILL *IMPROVE* FOR HUMANITY.
"WHEN THIS DISADVANTAGE IS PREVALENT, THEN IT IS TIME TO SEPARATE WHEAT FROM CHAFF.
"BEGINNING THE *AGE OF APOCALYPSE.*"
OZYMANDIAS, WE AWAIT OUR LORD'S WISHES. DEAD OR ALIVE?
LOGAN... I HAVE SEEN THEIR MINDS.
THE PERSIAN-- HE IS *DEATH.* HE HAS FLOODED EACH OF US WITH AILMENTS TRANSMITTED VIA HIS METAL RINGS.
THEN I'LL CUT 'EM OFF.
KEEP DIGGING, BETS. ANY WEAKNESS YOU CAN FIND.

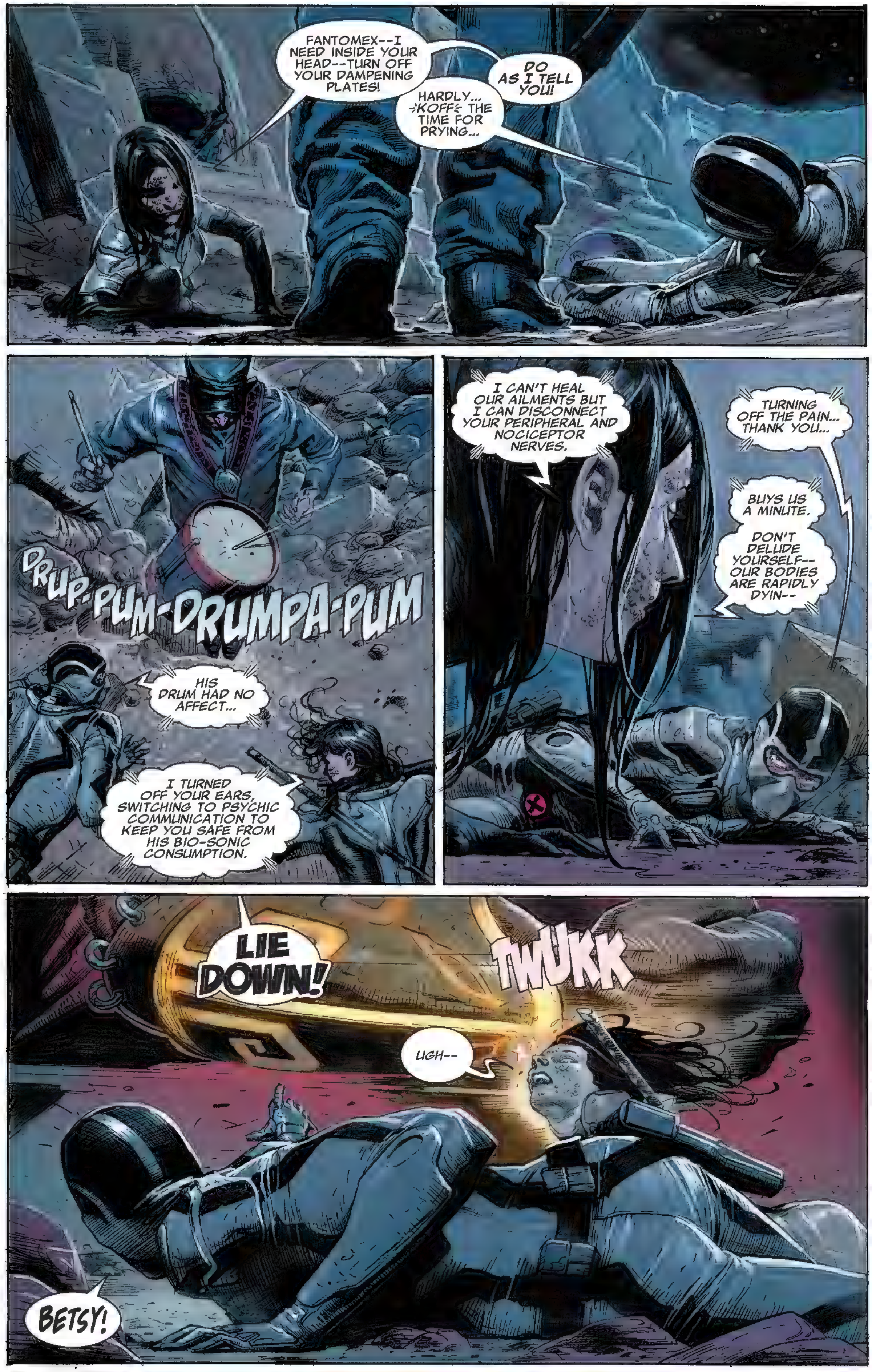

WHAT ARE YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, LORD?
I-I DON'T KNOW...
THEY ARE *WEAK* AND HAVE *FAILED* IN THEIR BID TO *ASSASSINATE* YOU. *WE SHOULD KILL THEM.*
KILL? NO, I-I DON'T WANT TO KILL ANYONE...
SHIP-- POWER UP. BE PREPARED SHOULD WE NEED TO SWIFTLY RETREAT. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE XAVIER'S *CRONIES.*
GRAVITY TRANSFERENCE INITIATOR ACTIVATED.
TELEPORTATION CAPABILITY IN TWO MINUTES.
YOUR LORD HAS JUDGED THESE ASSAILANTS TOO *FEEBLE* TO LINGER.
ONLY THE *STRONG* MAY SURVIVE.
KILL THEM ALL.
I SEE YOU, *LITTLE RODENT--* BIDING TIME, HOPEFUL YOUR HEALING FACTOR WILL DEAL WITH THE MULTITUDE OF DISEASES I HAVE SHOWERED UPON YOU.
YOU VAINLY STRUGGLE AGAINST THE INEVITABLE!

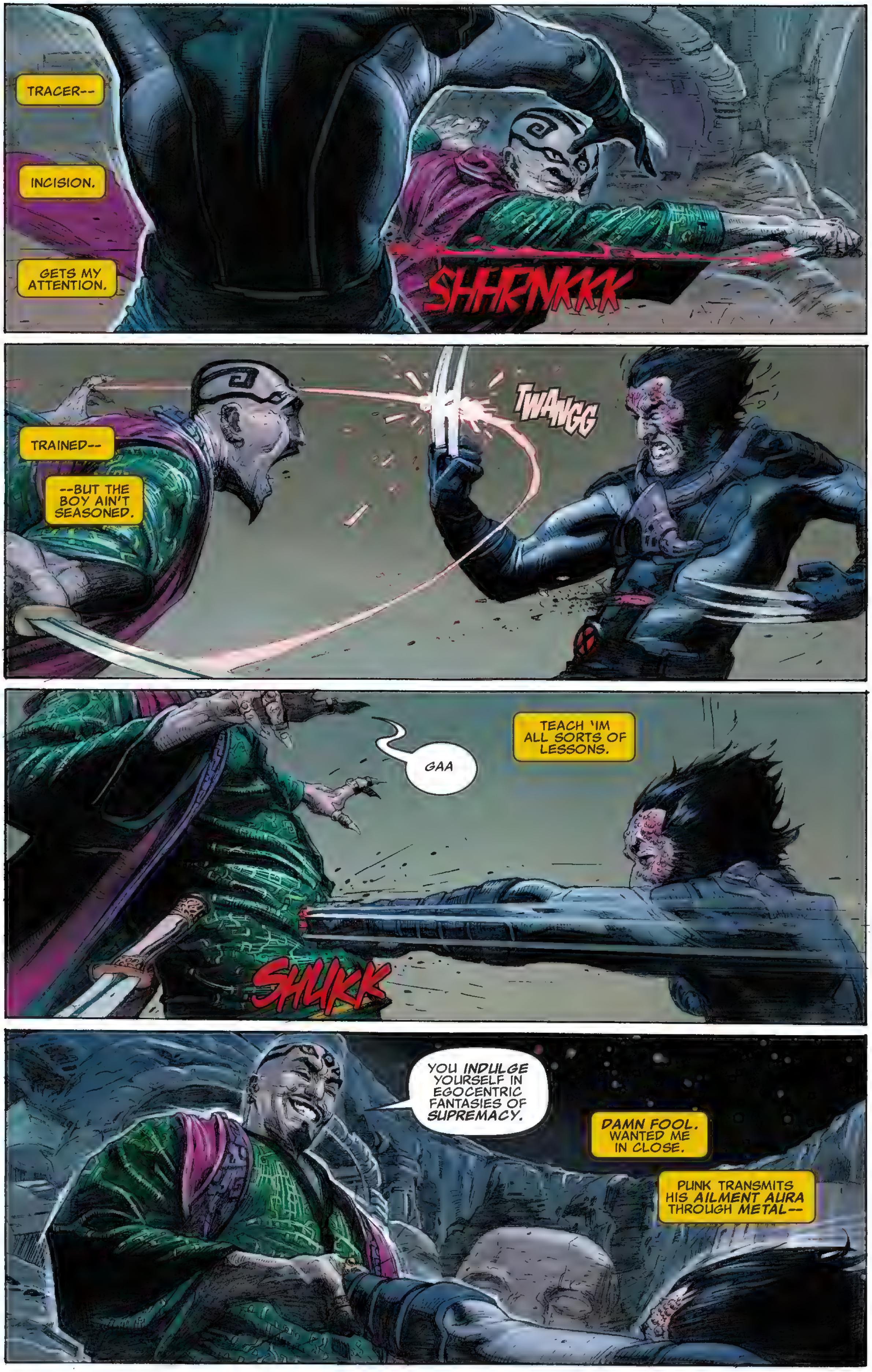

OLD HABIT.
SNIKT
GHA--
BETSY IN MY HEAD--
WISHES ME GOOD LUCK.

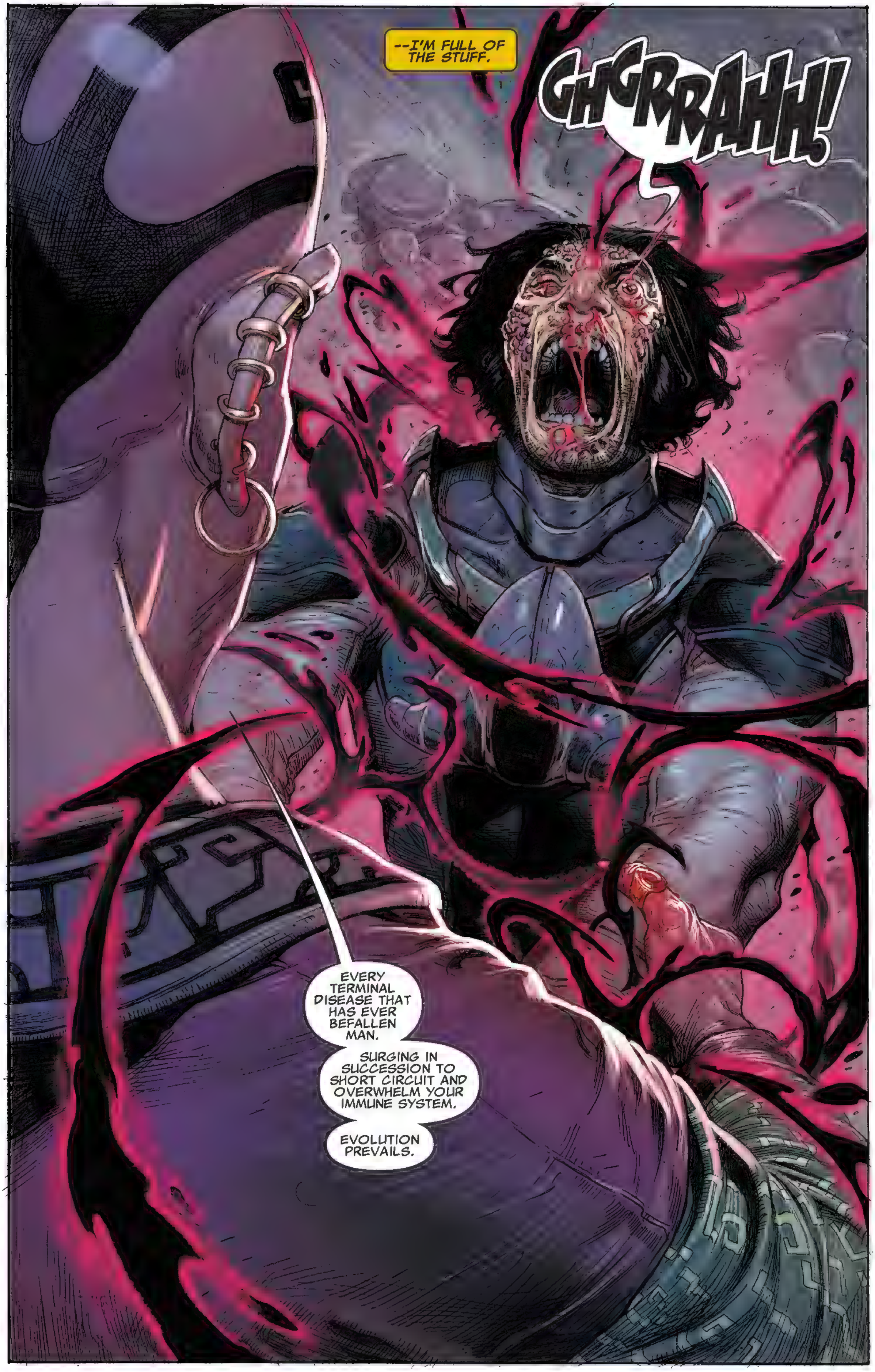

SHE THINKS I'LL NEED IT.

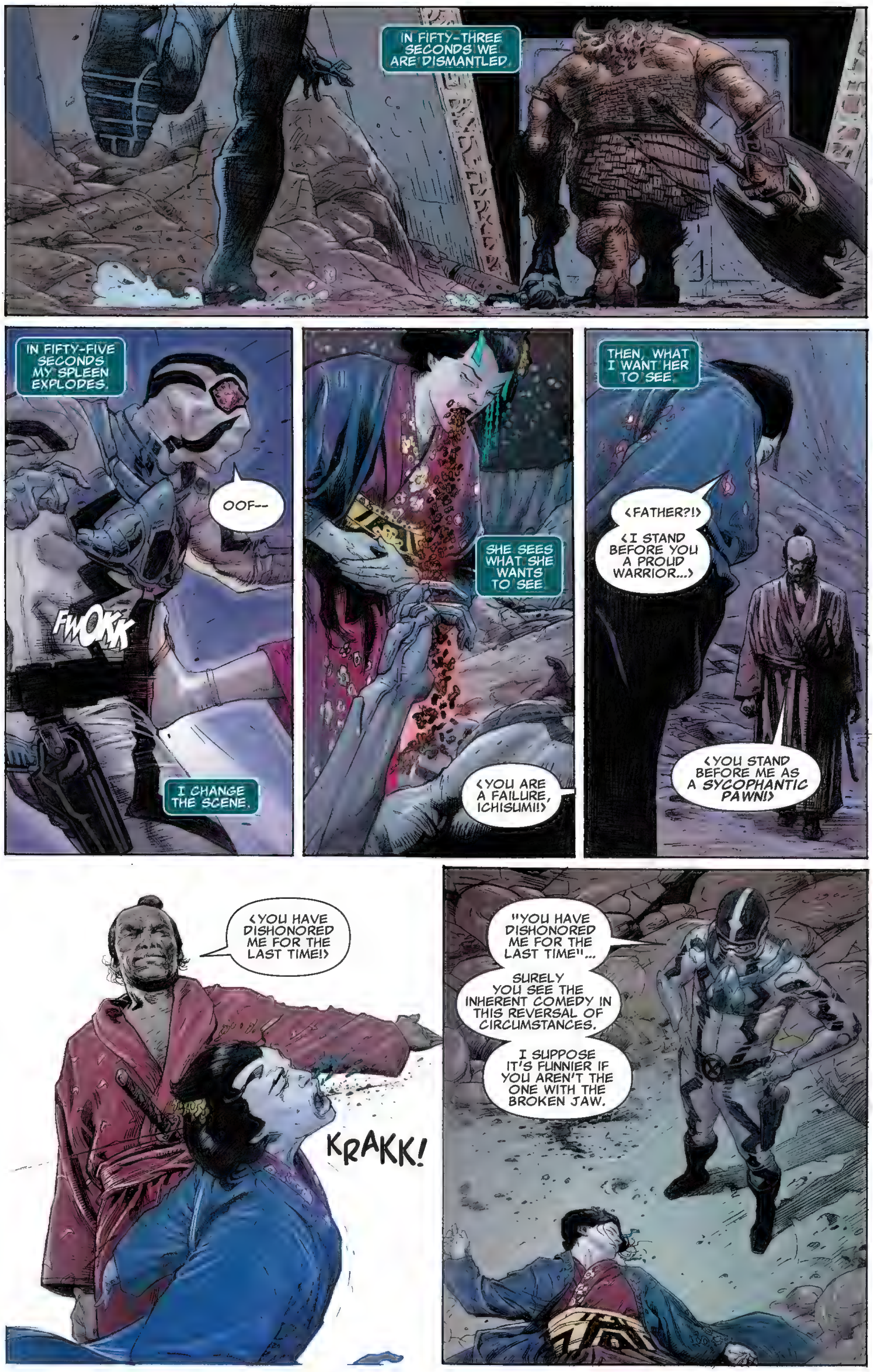

SMART BETS TELLS ME TO CALM DOWN.
DUMB ME LEANIN' FERAL.
C'MON, CHATTY. PAY OR PLAY.
IN MY YOUTH, PROFICIENCY WITH A BLADE WAS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

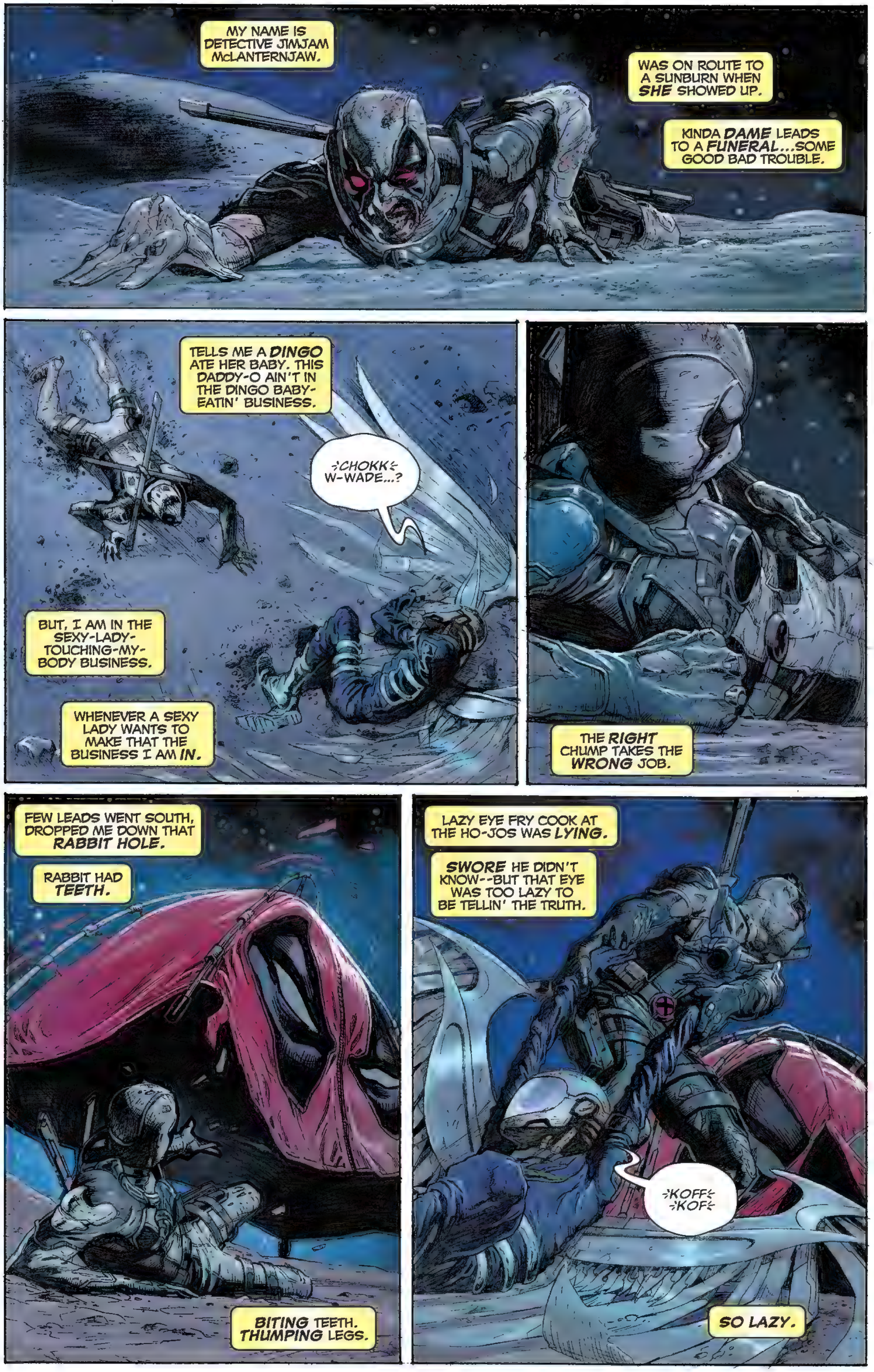

TODAY AIN'T GONNA BE MUCH DIFFERENT.
TWNG

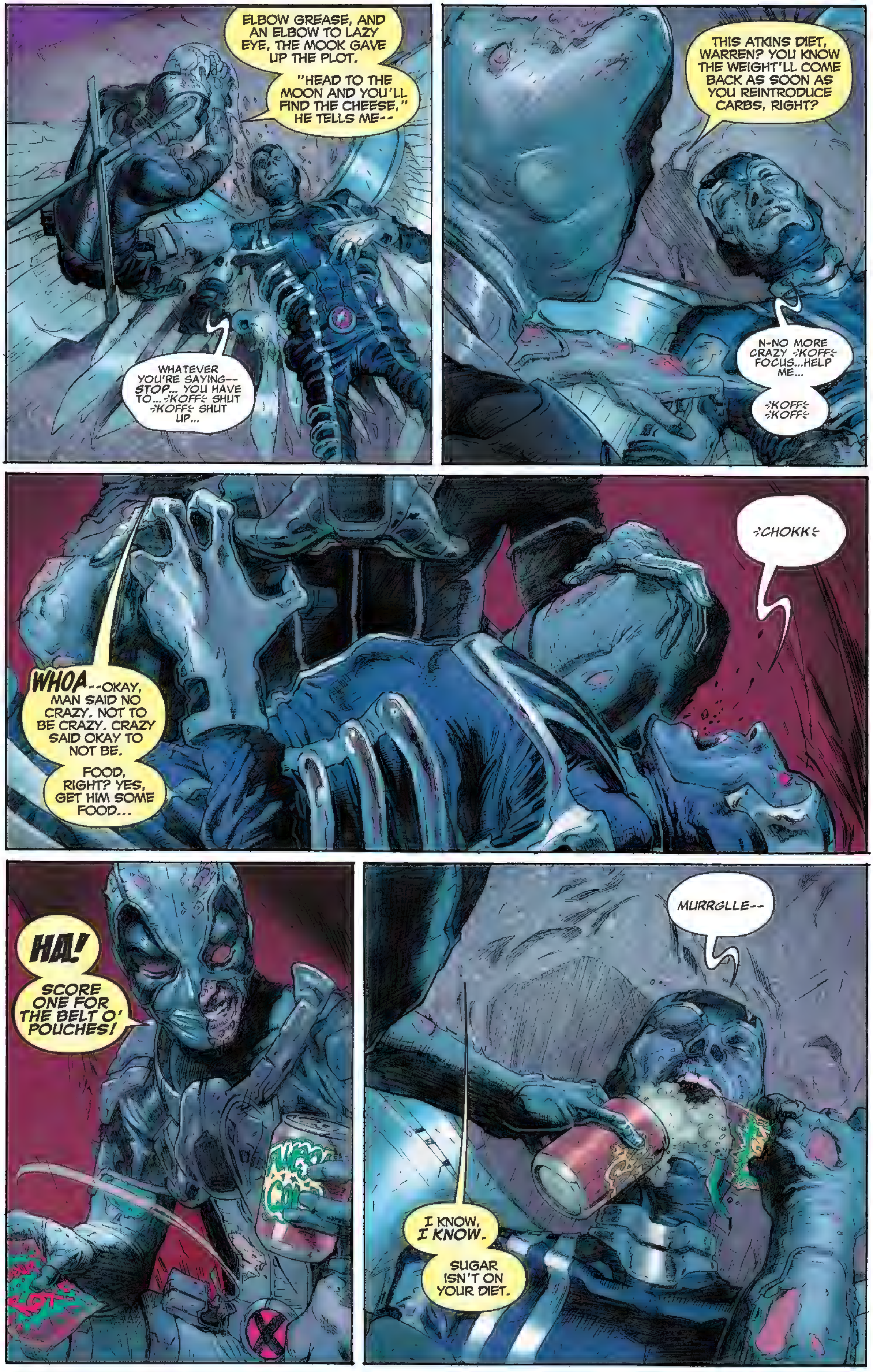

FANTOMEX--I NEED INSIDE YOUR HEAD--TURN OFF YOUR DAMPENING PLATES!
HARDLY... *KOFF* THE TIME FOR PRYING...
DO AS I TELL YOU!
DRUP-PUM-DRUMPA-PUM
HIS DRUM HAD NO AFFECT...
I TURNED OFF YOUR EARS, SWITCHING TO PSYCHIC COMMUNICATION TO KEEP YOU SAFE FROM HIS BIO-SONIC CONSUMPTION.
I CAN'T HEAL OUR AILMENTS BUT I CAN DISCONNECT YOUR PERIPHERAL AND NOCICEPTOR NERVES.
TURNING OFF THE PAIN... THANK YOU...
BUYS US A MINUTE.
DON'T DELUDE YOURSELF--OUR BODIES ARE RAPIDLY DYIN--
LIE DOWN!
TWUKK
UGH--
BETSY!

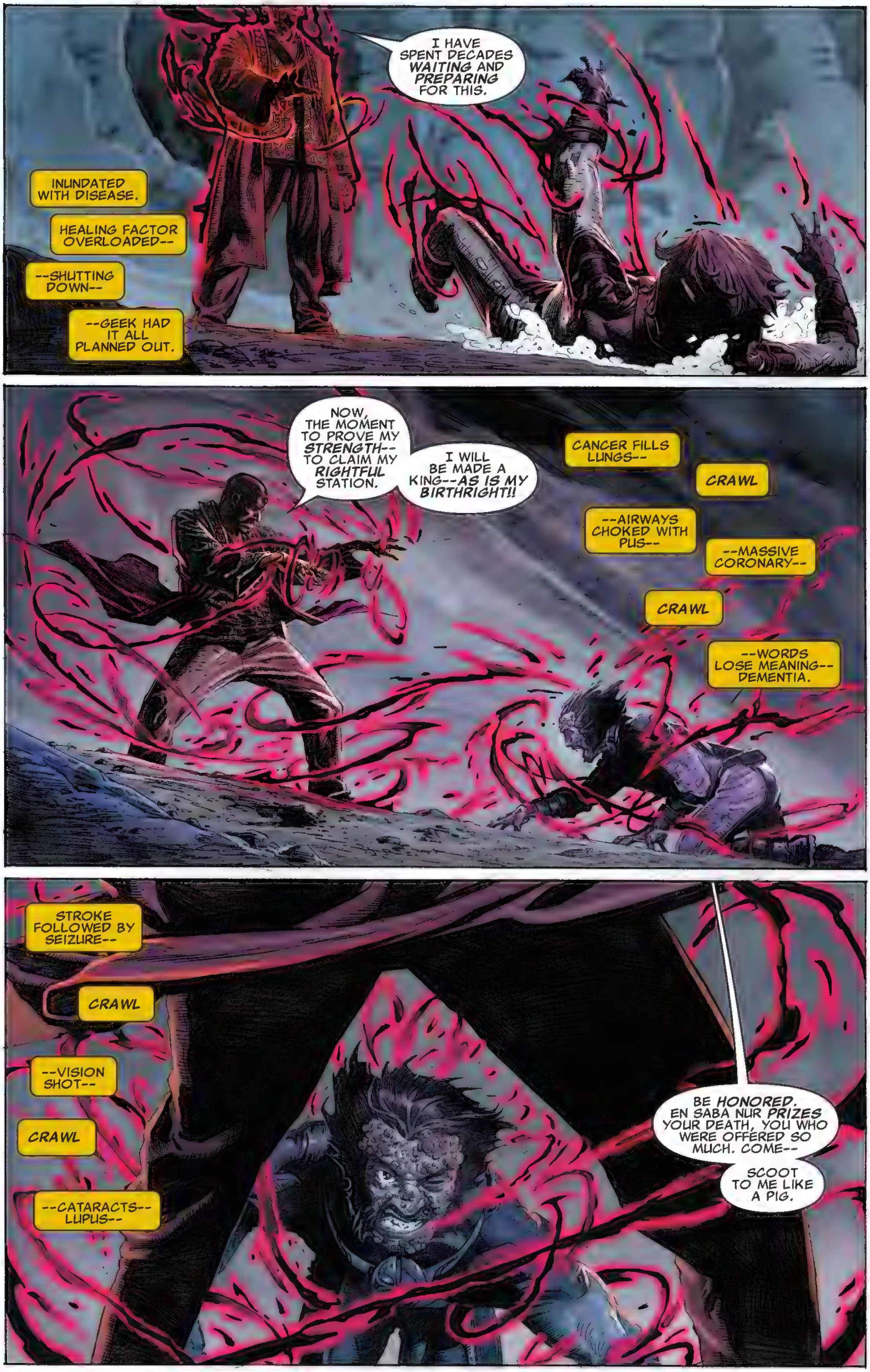

TRACER--
INCISION.
GETS MY ATTENTION.
SHHRNKKK
TWANGG
TRAINED--
--BUT THE BOY AIN'T SEASONED.
GAA
TEACH 'IM ALL SORTS OF LESSONS.
SHUKK
YOU INDULGE YOURSELF IN EGOCENTRIC FANTASIES OF SUPREMACY.
DAMN FOOL. WANTED ME IN CLOSE.
PUNK TRANSMITS HIS AILMENT AURA THROUGH METAL--

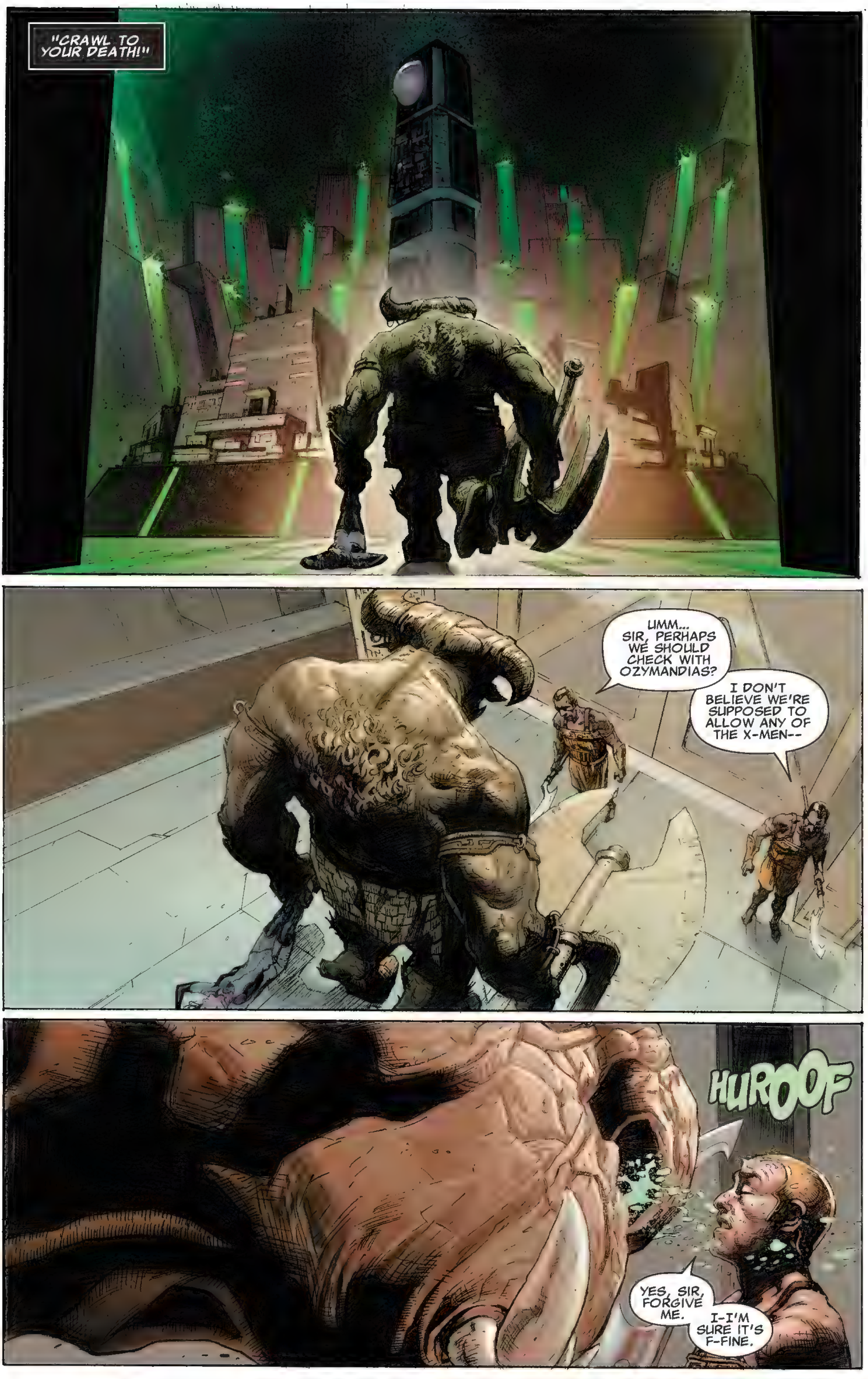

--I'M FULL OF THE STUFF.
GHGRRAHH!
EVERY TERMINAL DISEASE THAT HAS EVER BEFALLEN MAN.
SURGING IN SUCCESSION TO SHORT CIRCUIT AND OVERWHELM YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM.
EVOLUTION PREVAILS.

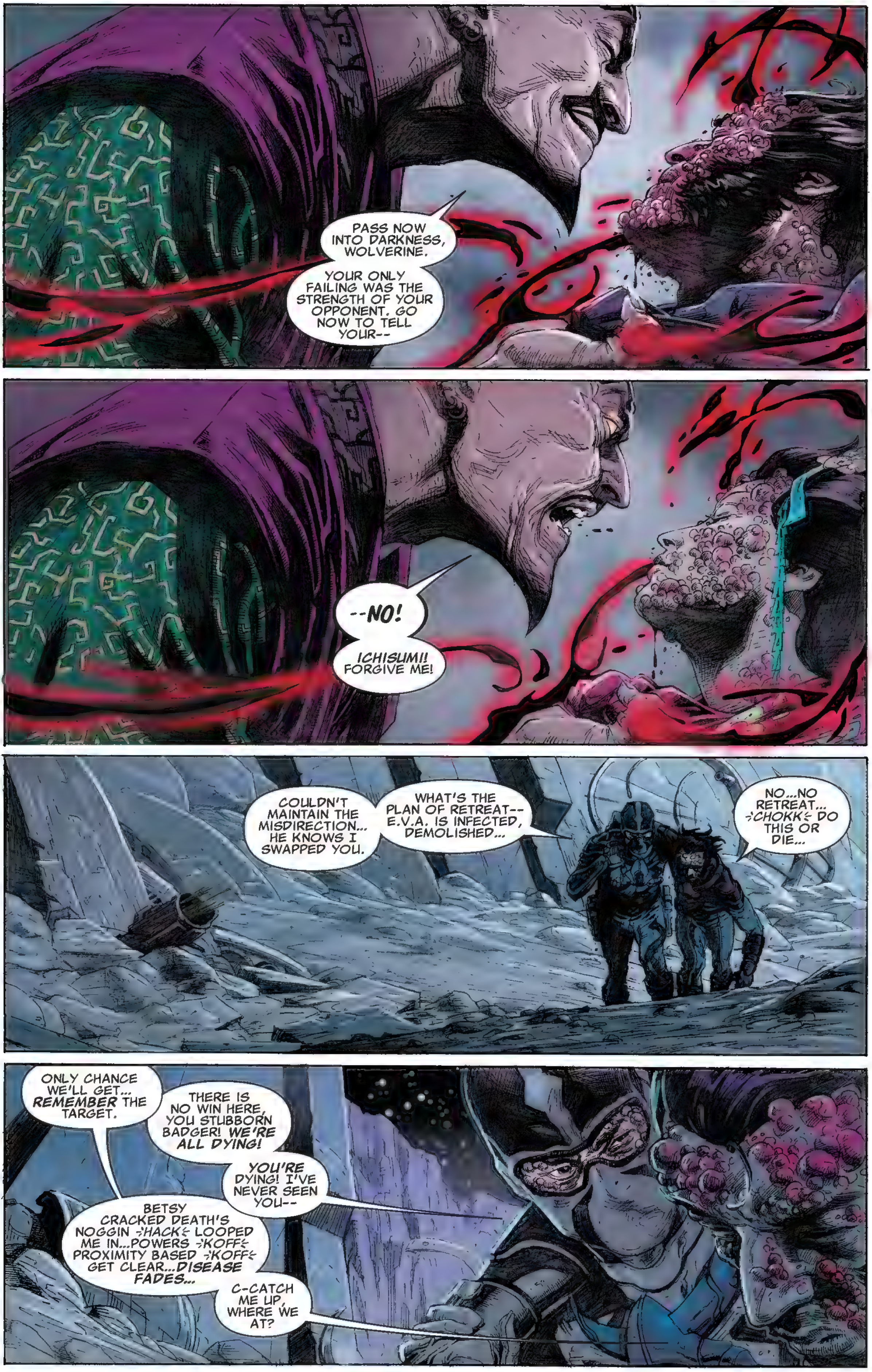

IN FIFTY-THREE SECONDS WE ARE DISMANTLED.
IN FIFTY-FIVE SECONDS MY SPLEEN EXPLODES.
OOF--
FWOKK
I CHANGE THE SCENE.
SHE SEES WHAT SHE WANTS TO SEE.
‹YOU ARE A FAILURE, ICHISUMI!›
THEN, WHAT I WANT HER TO SEE.
‹FATHER?!›
‹I STAND BEFORE YOU A PROUD WARRIOR...›
‹YOU STAND BEFORE ME AS A *SYCOPHANTIC* PAWN!›
‹YOU HAVE DISHONORED ME FOR THE LAST TIME!›
KRAKK!
"YOU HAVE DISHONORED ME FOR THE LAST TIME"...
SURELY YOU SEE THE INHERENT COMEDY IN THIS REVERSAL OF CIRCUMSTANCES.
I SUPPOSE IT'S FUNNIER IF YOU AREN'T THE ONE WITH THE BROKEN JAW.

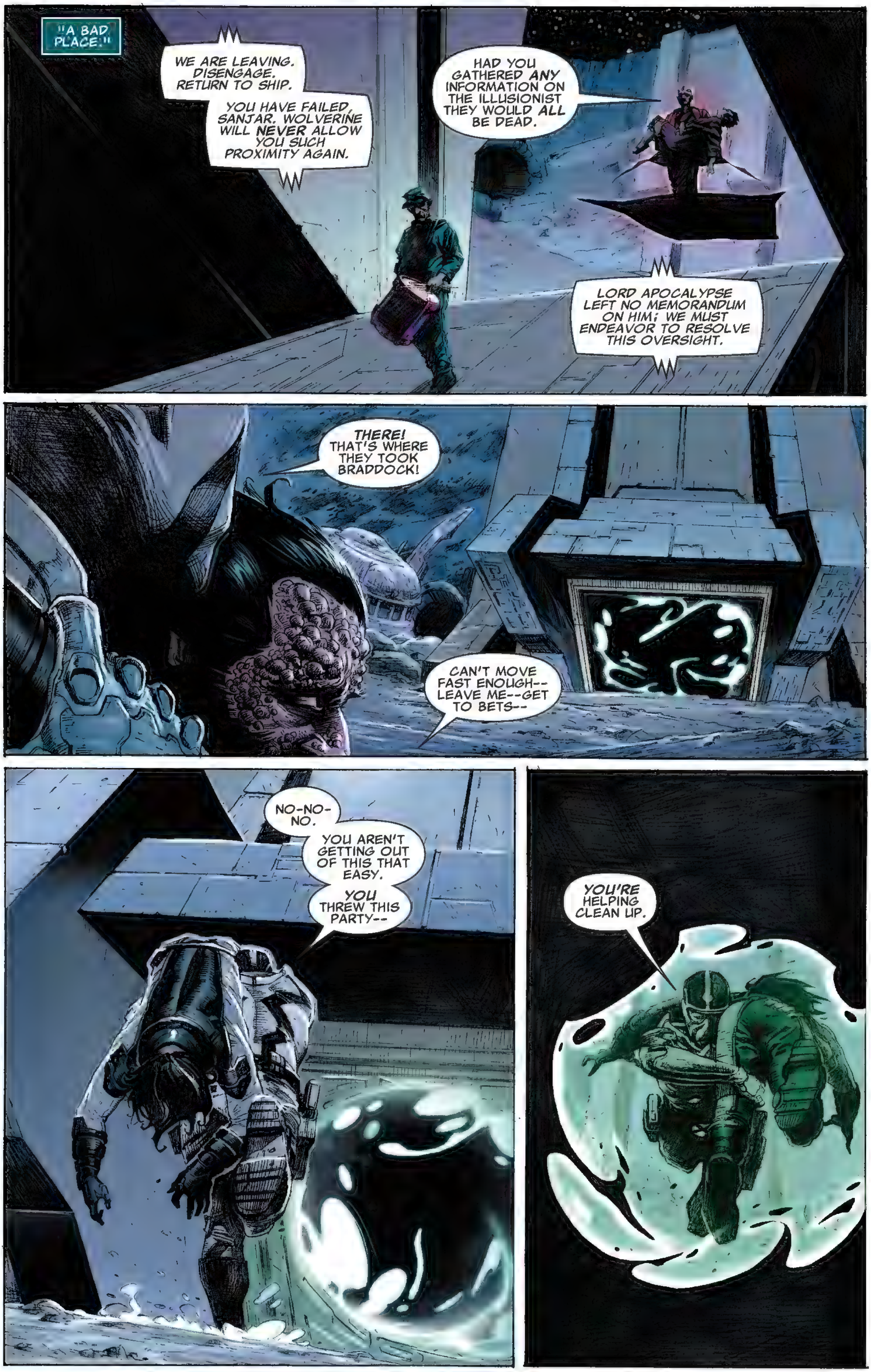

MY NAME IS DETECTIVE JIMJAM McLANTERNJAW.
WAS ON ROUTE TO A SUNBURN WHEN **SHE** SHOWED UP.
KINDA **DAME** LEADS TO A **FUNERAL**...SOME GOOD BAD TROUBLE.
TELLS ME A **DINGO** ATE HER BABY. THIS DADDY-O AIN'T IN THE DINGO BABY-EATIN' BUSINESS.
⁂CHOKK⁂ W-WADE...?
BUT, I AM IN THE SEXY-LADY-TOUCHING-MY-BODY BUSINESS.
WHENEVER A SEXY LADY WANTS TO MAKE THAT THE BUSINESS I AM ***IN.***
THE **RIGHT** CHUMP TAKES THE **WRONG** JOB.
FEW LEADS WENT SOUTH, DROPPED ME DOWN THAT **RABBIT HOLE.**
RABBIT HAD **TEETH.**
BITING TEETH. **THUMPING** LEGS.
LAZY EYE FRY COOK AT THE HO-JOS WAS **LYING.**
SWORE HE DIDN'T KNOW--BUT THAT EYE WAS TOO LAZY TO BE TELLIN' THE TRUTH.
⁂KOFF⁂ ⁂KOF⁂
SO LAZY.

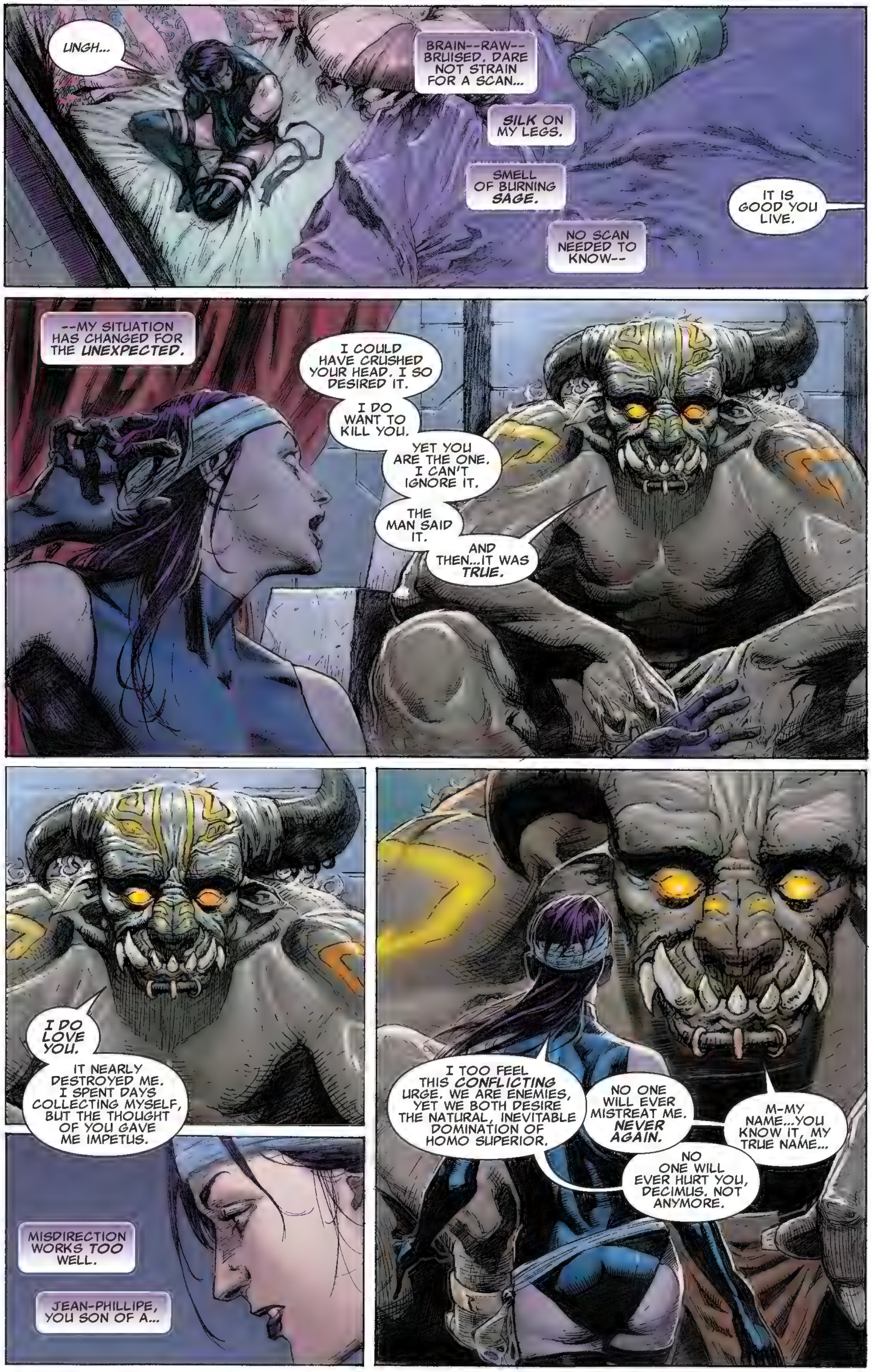

ELBOW GREASE, AND AN ELBOW TO LAZY EYE, THE MOOK GAVE UP THE PLOT.
"HEAD TO THE MOON AND YOU'LL FIND THE CHEESE," HE TELLS ME--
WHATEVER YOU'RE SAYING-- STOP... YOU HAVE TO... ⫘KOFF⫘ SHUT ⫘KOFF⫘ SHUT UP...
THIS ATKINS DIET, WARREN? YOU KNOW THE WEIGHT'LL COME BACK AS SOON AS YOU REINTRODUCE CARBS, RIGHT?
N-NO MORE CRAZY ⫘KOFF⫘ FOCUS...HELP ME...
⫘KOFF⫘ ⫘KOFF⫘
WHOA--OKAY, MAN SAID NO CRAZY. NOT TO BE CRAZY. CRAZY SAID OKAY TO NOT BE.
FOOD, RIGHT? YES, GET HIM SOME FOOD...
⫘CHOKK⫘
HA!
SCORE ONE FOR THE BELT O' POUCHES!
MURRGLLE--
I KNOW, I KNOW.
SUGAR ISN'T ON YOUR DIET.

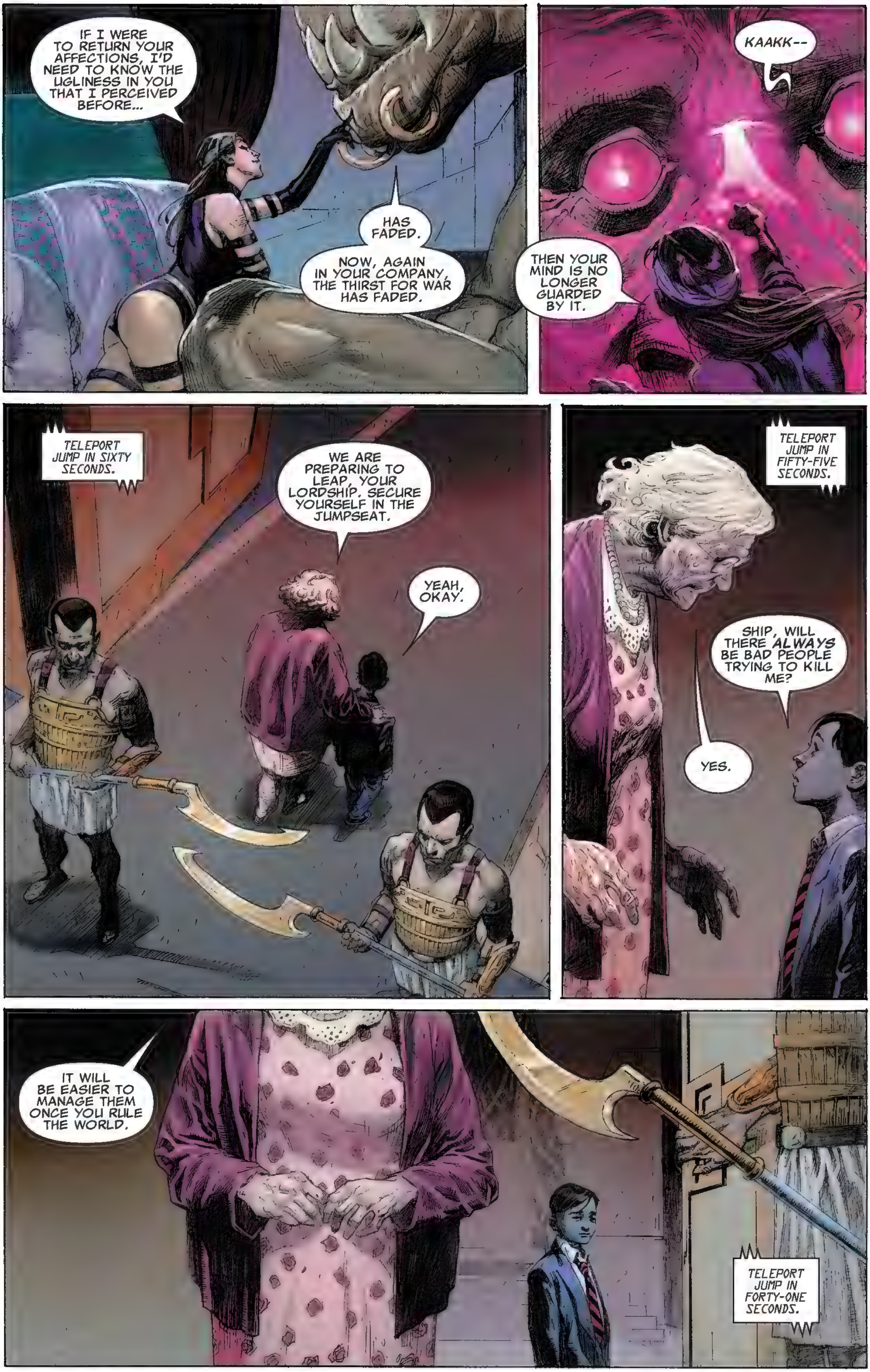

I HAVE SPENT DECADES *WAITING AND PREPARING* FOR THIS.
INUNDATED WITH DISEASE.
HEALING FACTOR OVERLOADED--
--SHUTTING DOWN--
--GEEK HAD IT ALL PLANNED OUT.
NOW, THE MOMENT TO PROVE MY *STRENGTH*--TO CLAIM MY *RIGHTFUL* STATION.
I WILL BE MADE A KING--*AS IS MY BIRTHRIGHT!!*
CANCER FILLS LUNGS--
CRAWL
--AIRWAYS CHOKED WITH PUS--
--MASSIVE CORONARY--
CRAWL
--WORDS LOSE MEANING--DEMENTIA.
STROKE FOLLOWED BY SEIZURE--
CRAWL
--VISION SHOT--
CRAWL
--CATARACTS--LUPUS--
BE *HONORED.* EN SABA NUR *PRIZES* YOUR DEATH, YOU WHO WERE OFFERED SO MUCH. COME--
SCOOT TO ME LIKE A PIG.

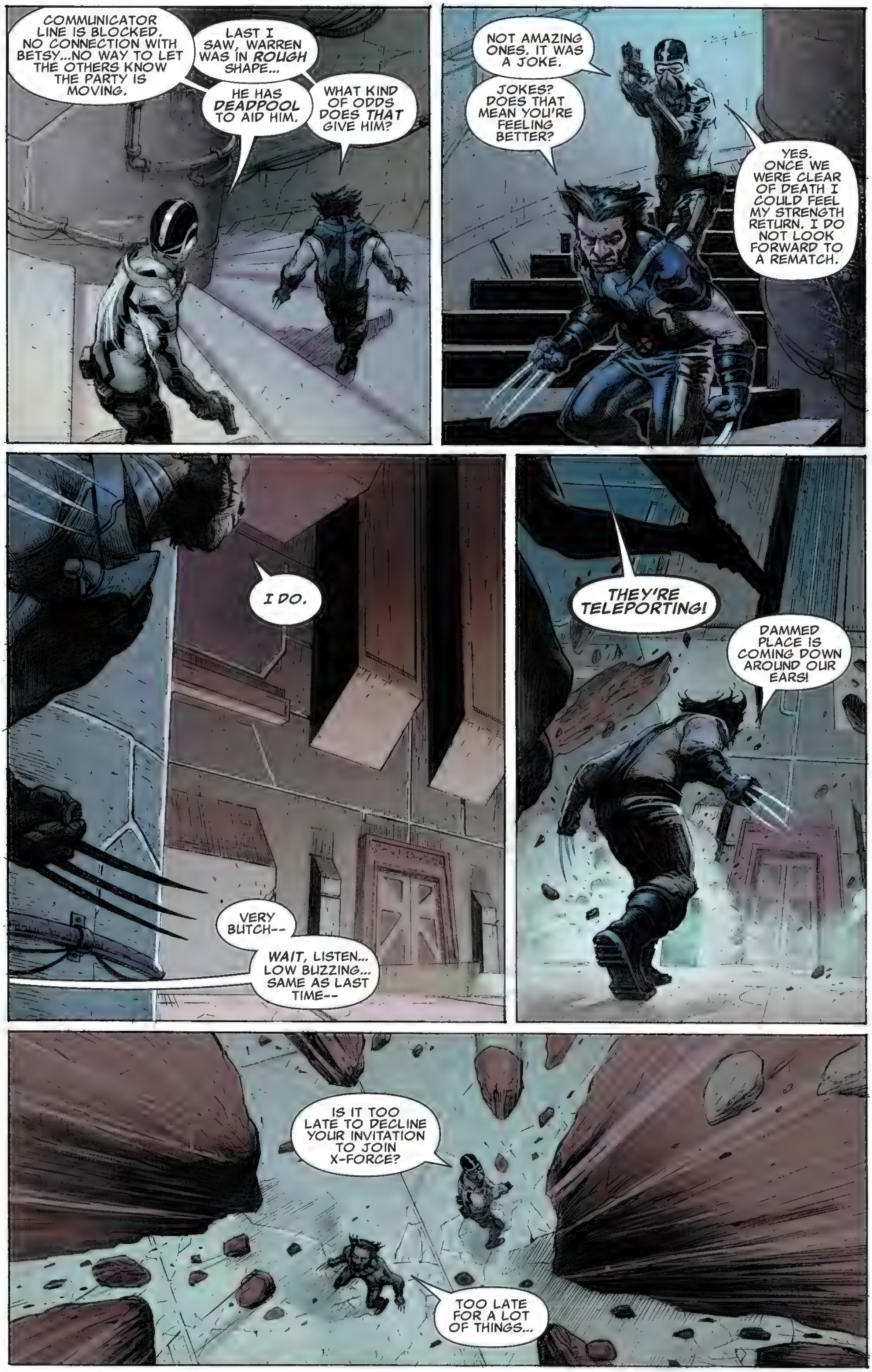

"CRAWL TO YOUR DEATH!"
UMM... SIR, PERHAPS WE SHOULD CHECK WITH OZYMANDIAS?
I DON'T BELIEVE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO ALLOW ANY OF THE X-MEN--
HUROOF
YES, SIR, FORGIVE ME.
I-I'M SURE IT'S F-FINE.

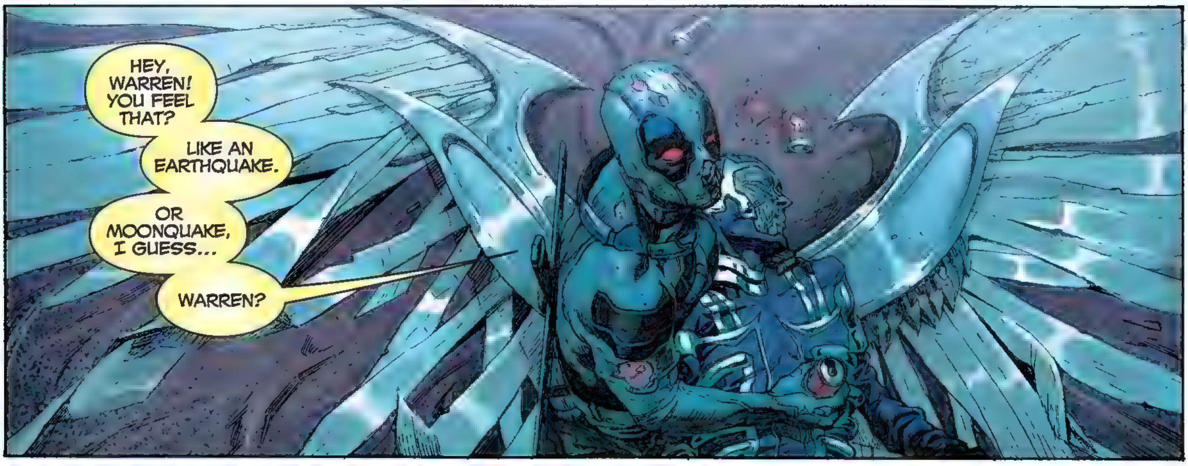

PASS NOW INTO DARKNESS, WOLVERINE.
YOUR ONLY FAILING WAS THE STRENGTH OF YOUR OPPONENT. GO NOW TO TELL YOUR--
--NO!
ICHISUMI! FORGIVE ME!
COULDN'T MAINTAIN THE MISDIRECTION... HE KNOWS I SWAPPED YOU.
WHAT'S THE PLAN OF RETREAT-- E.V.A. IS INFECTED, DEMOLISHED...
NO...NO RETREAT... *CHOKK* DO THIS OR DIE...
ONLY CHANCE WE'LL GET... REMEMBER THE TARGET.
THERE IS NO WIN HERE, YOU STUBBORN BADGER! WE'RE ALL DYING!
YOU'RE DYING! I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU--
BETSY CRACKED DEATH'S NOGGIN *HACK* LOOPED ME IN...POWERS *KOFF* PROXIMITY BASED *KOFF* GET CLEAR...DISEASE FADES...
C-CATCH ME UP, WHERE WE AT?

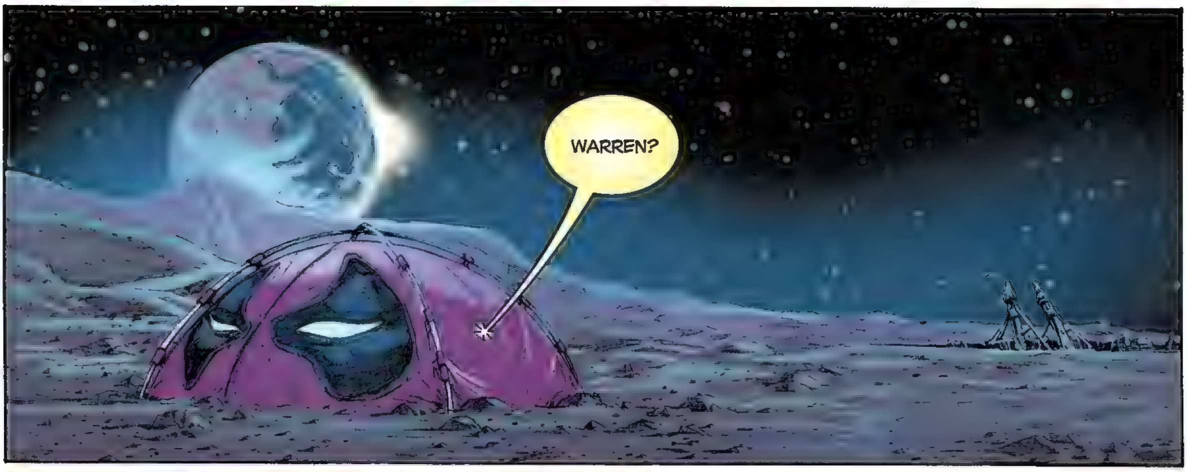

"A BAD PLACE."
WE ARE LEAVING. DISENGAGE. RETURN TO SHIP.
YOU HAVE FAILED, SANJAR. WOLVERINE WILL NEVER ALLOW YOU SUCH PROXIMITY AGAIN.
HAD YOU GATHERED ANY INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSIONIST THEY WOULD ALL BE DEAD.
LORD APOCALYPSE LEFT NO MEMORANDUM ON HIM; WE MUST ENDEAVOR TO RESOLVE THIS OVERSIGHT.
THERE! THAT'S WHERE THEY TOOK BRADDOCK!
CAN'T MOVE FAST ENOUGH-- LEAVE ME--GET TO BETS--
NO-NO-NO.
YOU AREN'T GETTING OUT OF THIS THAT EASY.
YOU THREW THIS PARTY--
YOU'RE HELPING CLEAN UP.

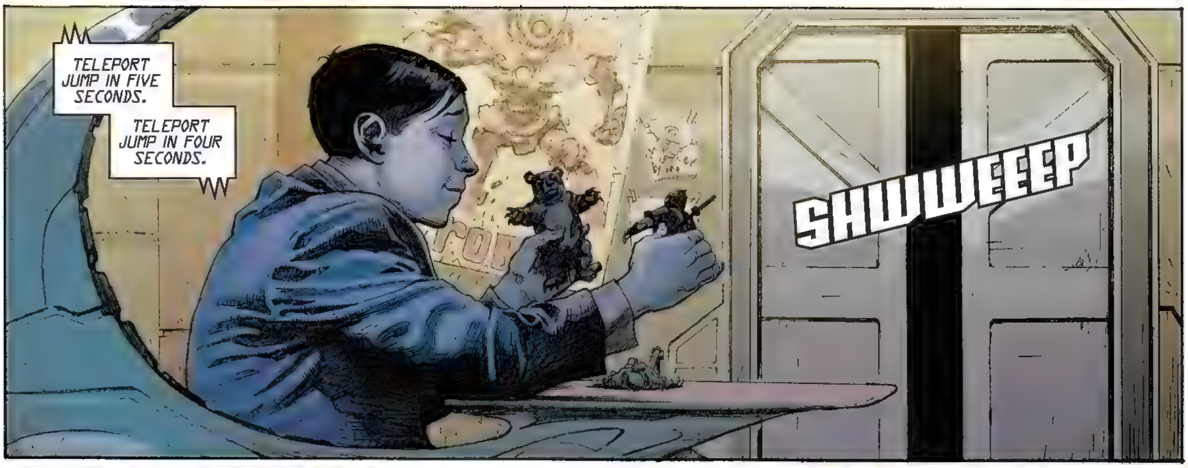

UNGH...
BRAIN--RAW--BRUISED. DARE NOT STRAIN FOR A SCAN...
SILK ON MY LEGS.
SMELL OF BURNING SAGE.
NO SCAN NEEDED TO KNOW--
IT IS GOOD YOU LIVE.
--MY SITUATION HAS CHANGED FOR THE UNEXPECTED.
I COULD HAVE CRUSHED YOUR HEAD. I SO DESIRED IT.
I DO WANT TO KILL YOU.
YET YOU ARE THE ONE. I CAN'T IGNORE IT.
THE MAN SAID IT.
AND THEN...IT WAS TRUE.
I DO LOVE YOU.
IT NEARLY DESTROYED ME. I SPENT DAYS COLLECTING MYSELF, BUT THE THOUGHT OF YOU GAVE ME IMPETUS.
MISDIRECTION WORKS TOO WELL.
JEAN-PHILLIPE, YOU SON OF A...
I TOO FEEL THIS CONFLICTING URGE. WE ARE ENEMIES, YET WE BOTH DESIRE THE NATURAL, INEVITABLE DOMINATION OF HOMO SUPERIOR.
NO ONE WILL EVER MISTREAT ME. NEVER AGAIN.
M-MY NAME...YOU KNOW IT, MY TRUE NAME...
NO ONE WILL EVER HURT YOU, DECIMUS. NOT ANYMORE.

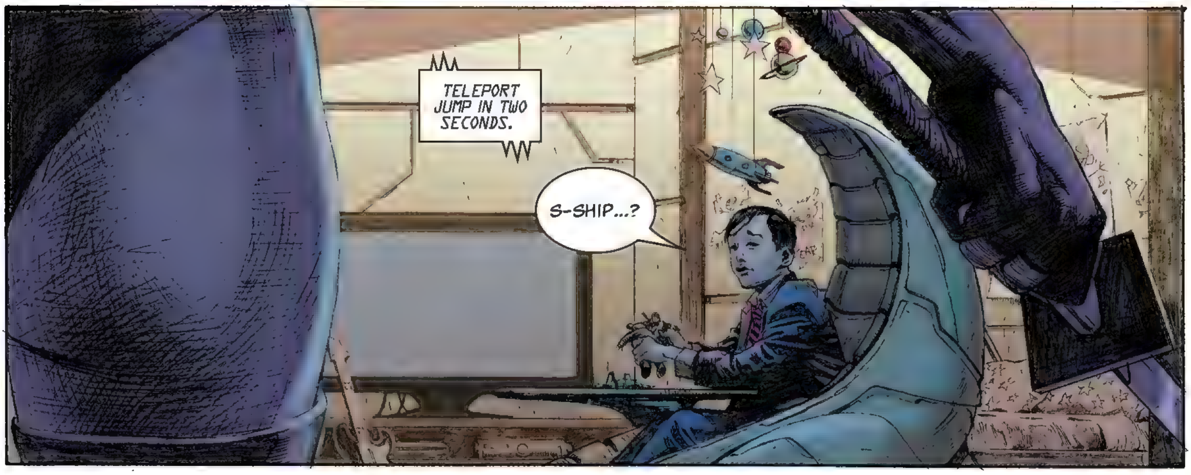

IF I WERE TO RETURN YOUR AFFECTIONS, I'D NEED TO KNOW THE UGLINESS IN YOU THAT I PERCEIVED BEFORE...
HAS FADED.
NOW, AGAIN IN YOUR COMPANY, THE THIRST FOR WAR HAS FADED.
KAAKK--
THEN YOUR MIND IS NO LONGER GUARDED BY IT.
TELEPORT JUMP IN SIXTY SECONDS.
WE ARE PREPARING TO LEAP, YOUR LORDSHIP. SECURE YOURSELF IN THE JUMPSEAT.
YEAH, OKAY.
TELEPORT JUMP IN FIFTY-FIVE SECONDS.
SHIP, WILL THERE ALWAYS BE BAD PEOPLE TRYING TO KILL ME?
YES.
IT WILL BE EASIER TO MANAGE THEM ONCE YOU RULE THE WORLD.
TELEPORT JUMP IN FORTY-ONE SECONDS.

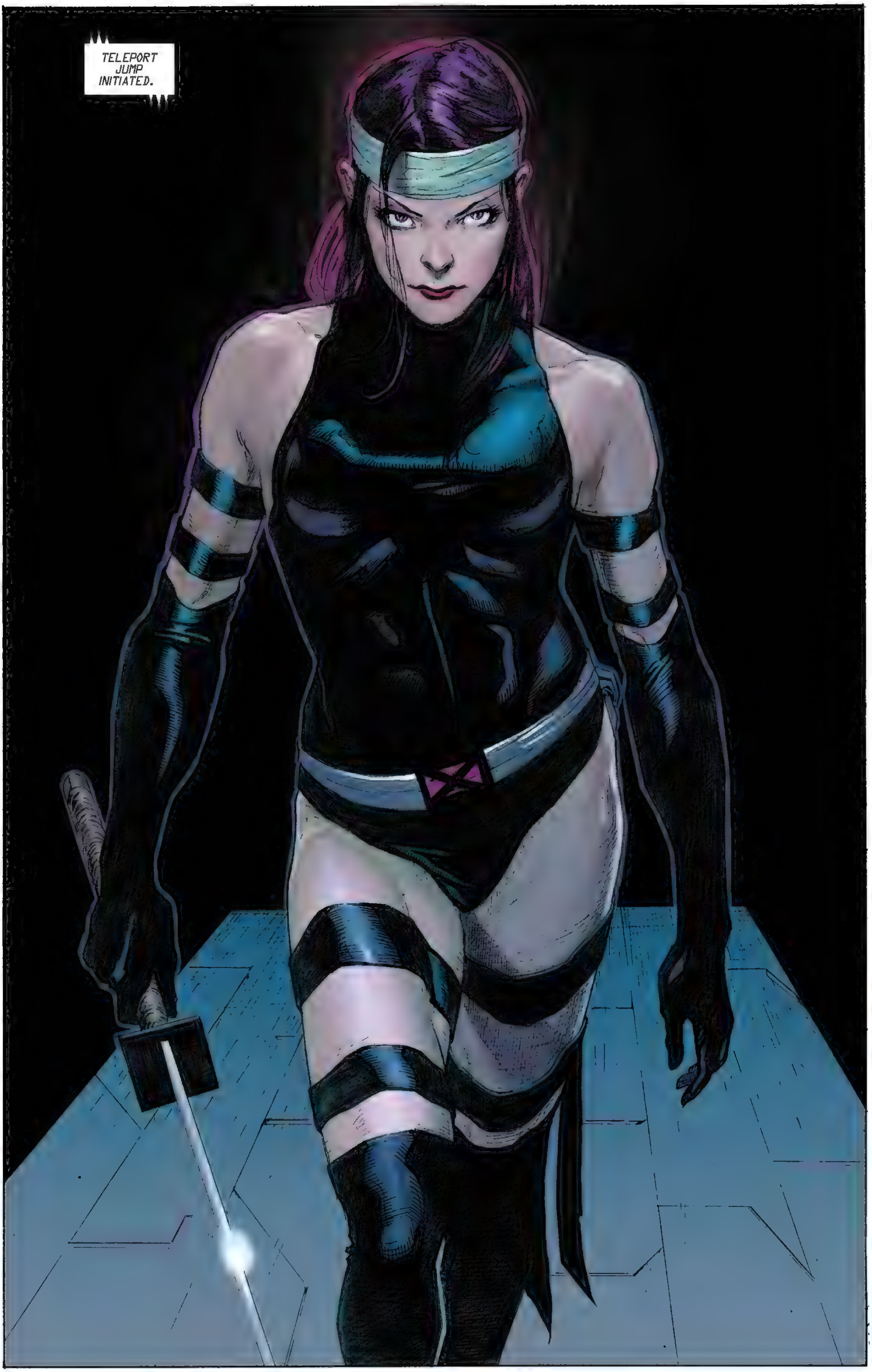

COMMUNICATOR LINE IS BLOCKED. NO CONNECTION WITH BETSY...NO WAY TO LET THE OTHERS KNOW THE PARTY IS MOVING.
LAST I SAW, WARREN WAS IN *ROUGH* SHAPE...
HE HAS *DEADPOOL* TO AID HIM.
WHAT KIND OF ODDS DOES *THAT* GIVE HIM?
NOT AMAZING ONES. IT WAS A JOKE.
JOKES? DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE FEELING BETTER?
YES. ONCE WE WERE CLEAR OF DEATH I COULD FEEL MY STRENGTH RETURN. I DO NOT LOOK FORWARD TO A REMATCH.
I DO.
VERY BUTCH--
WAIT, LISTEN... LOW BUZZING... SAME AS LAST TIME--
THEY'RE TELEPORTING!
DAMMED PLACE IS COMING DOWN AROUND OUR EARS!
IS IT TOO LATE TO DECLINE YOUR INVITATION TO JOIN X-FORCE?
TOO LATE FOR A LOT OF THINGS...


HEY, WARREN! YOU FEEL THAT?
LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE.
OR MOONQUAKE, I GUESS...
WARREN?

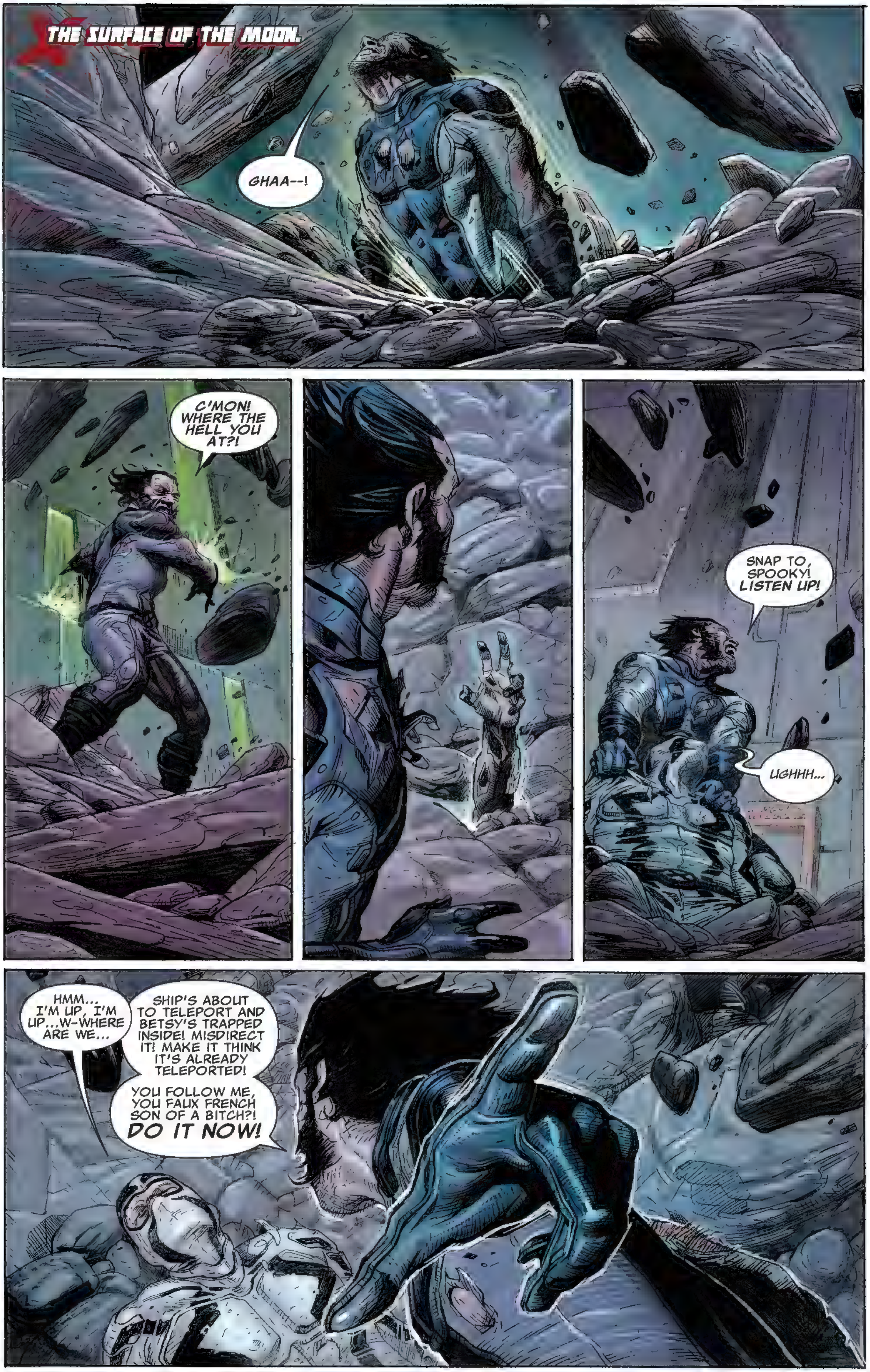

WARREN?

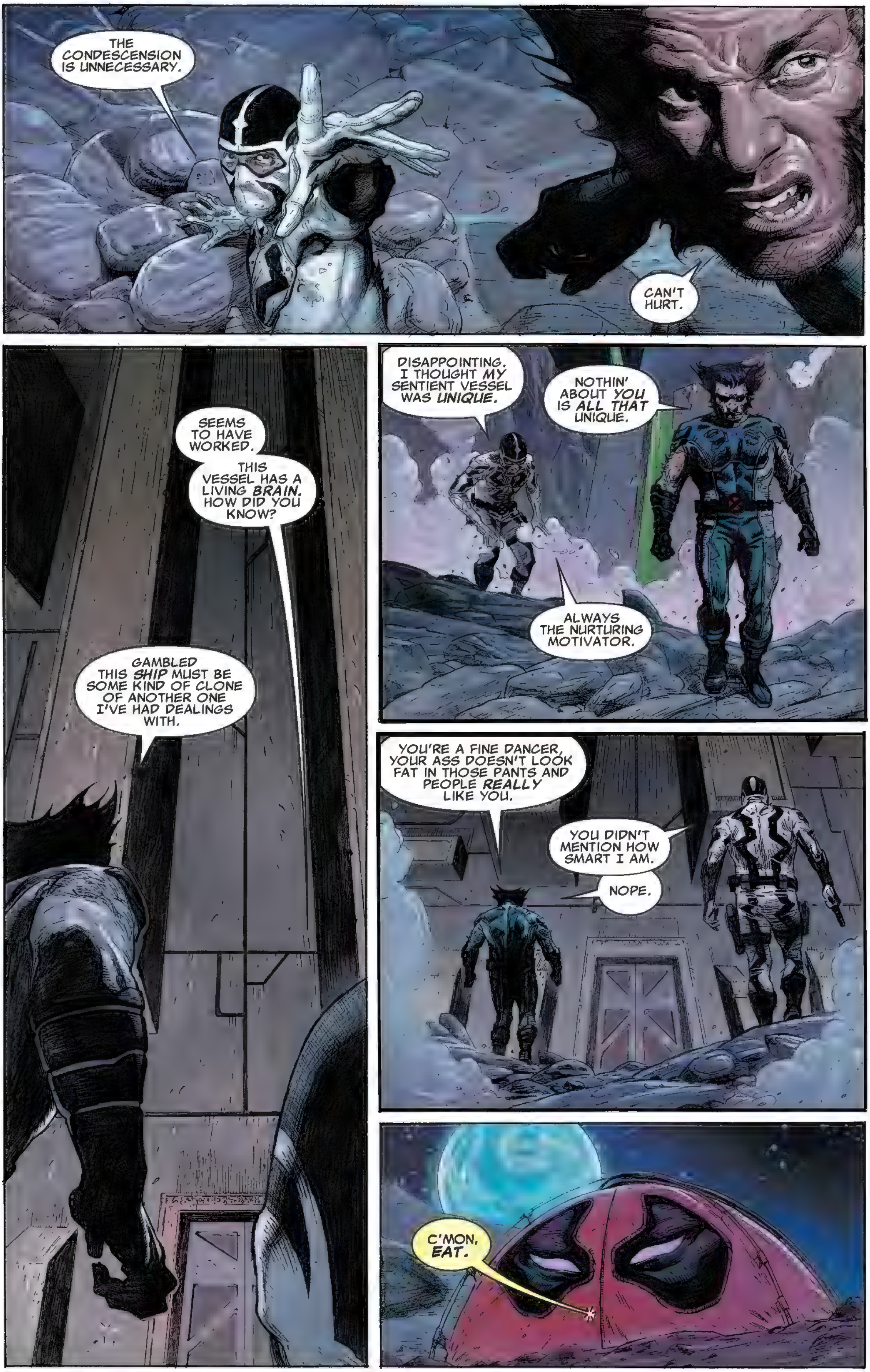

TELEPORT JUMP IN FIVE SECONDS.
TELEPORT JUMP IN FOUR SECONDS.
SHWWEEEP

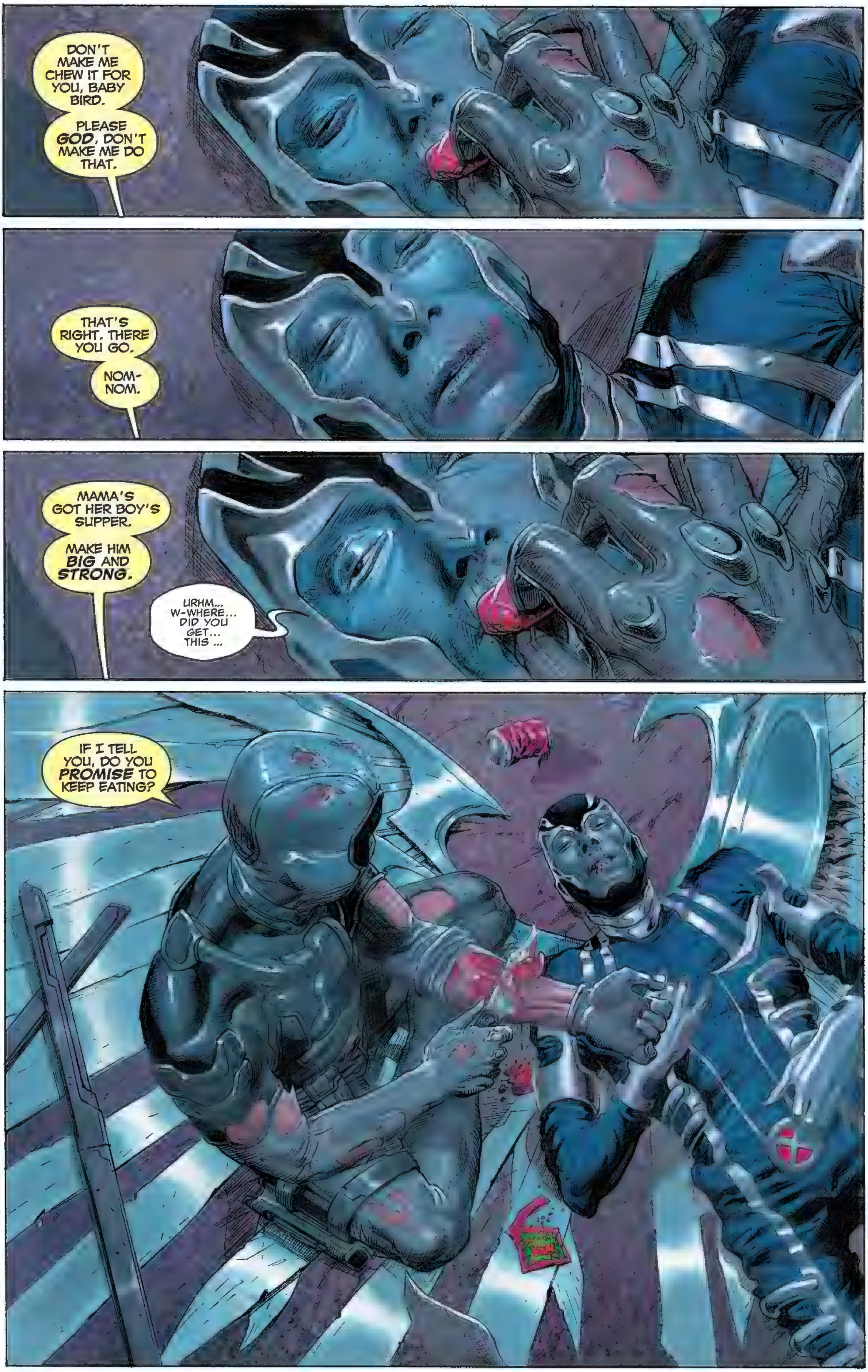

TELEPORT JUMP IN TWO SECONDS.
S-SHIP...?

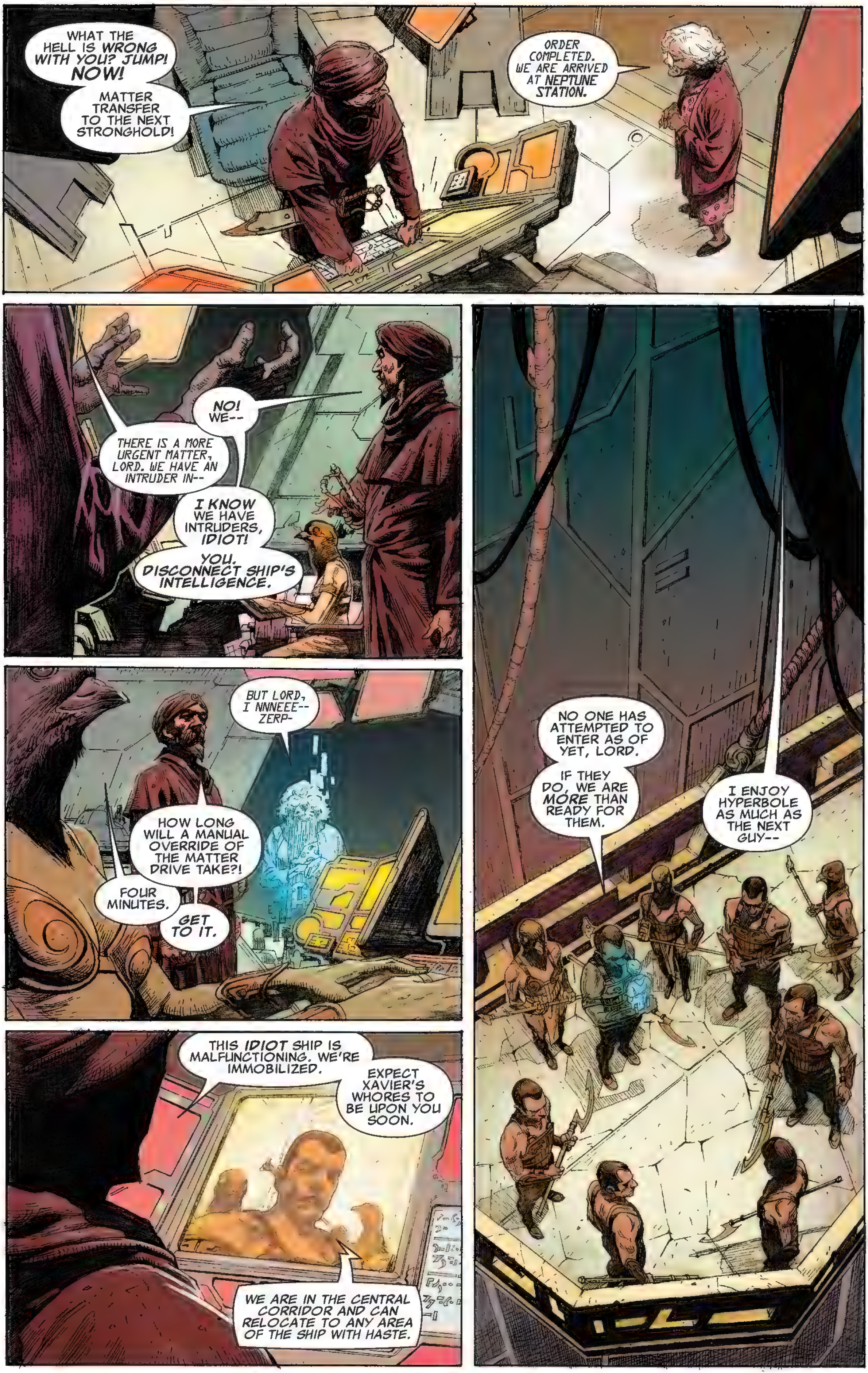

TELEPORT JUMP INITIATED.

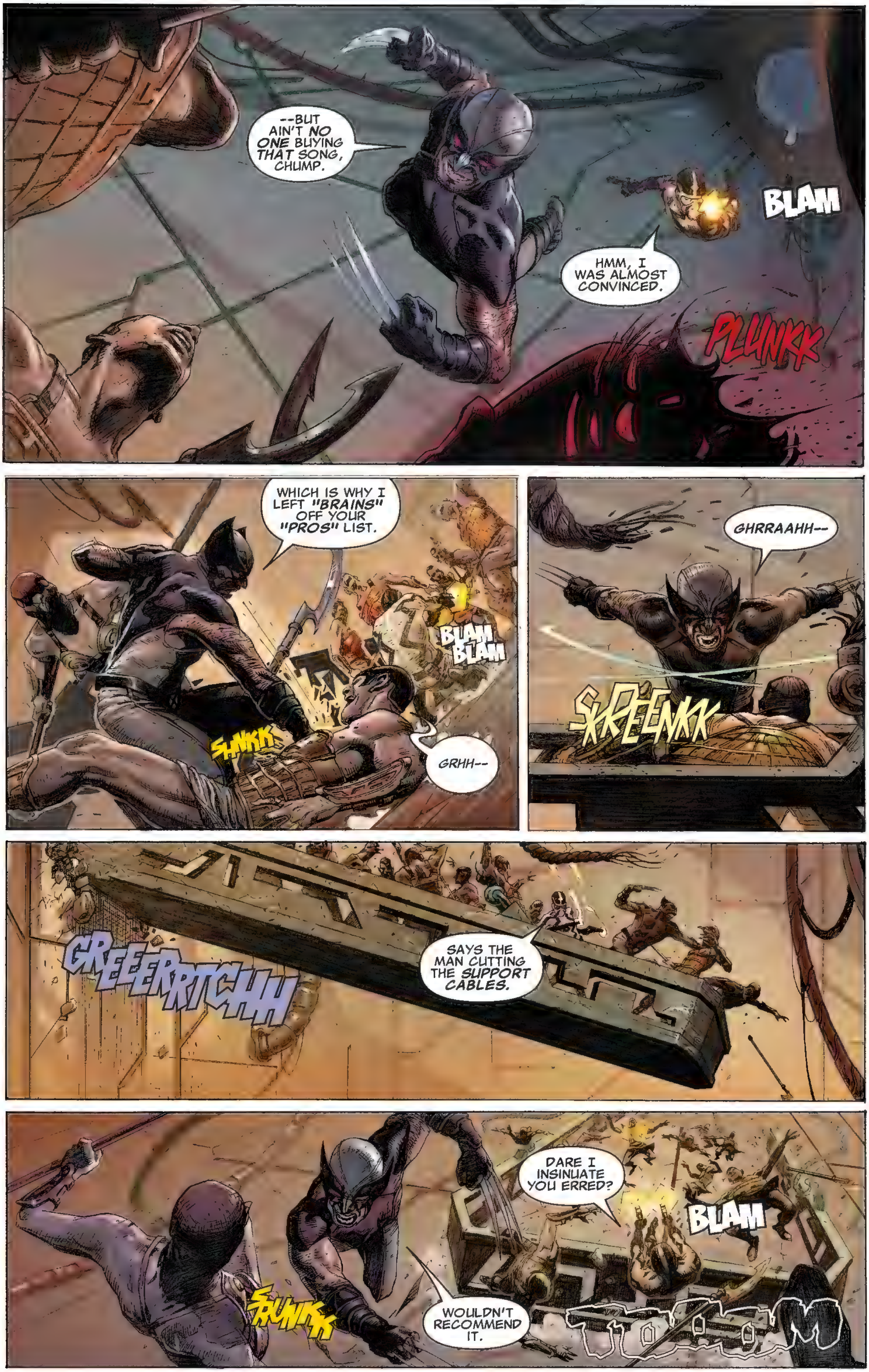
THE APOCALYPSE SOLUTION
CHAPTER 4
04

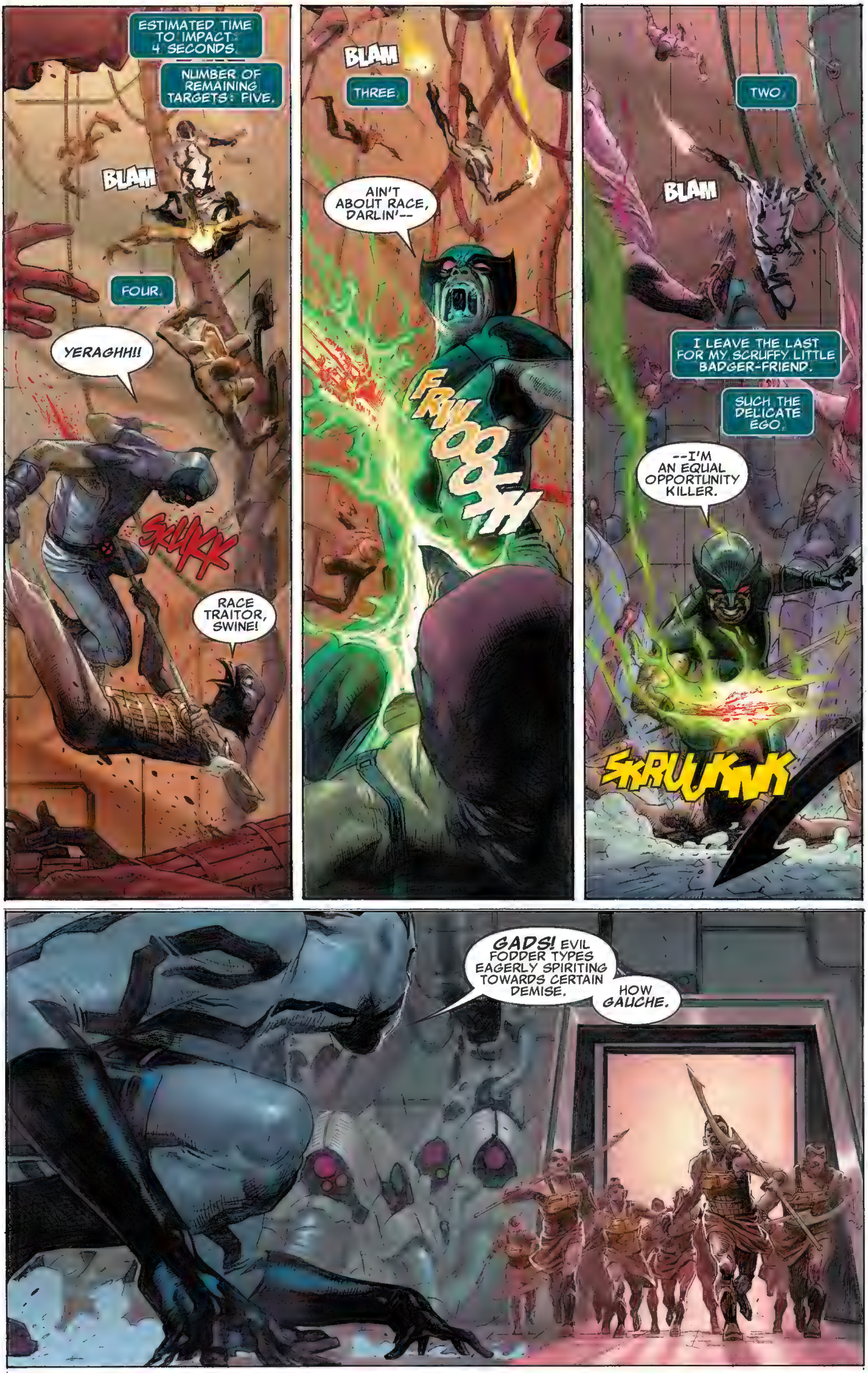

THE SURFACE OF THE MOON.
GHAA--!
C'MON! WHERE THE HELL YOU AT?!
SNAP TO, SPOOKY! LISTEN UP!
UGHHH...
HMM... I'M UP, I'M UP...W-WHERE ARE WE...
SHIP'S ABOUT TO TELEPORT AND BETSY'S TRAPPED INSIDE! MISDIRECT IT! MAKE IT THINK IT'S ALREADY TELEPORTED!
YOU FOLLOW ME, YOU FAUX FRENCH SON OF A BITCH?! DO IT NOW!

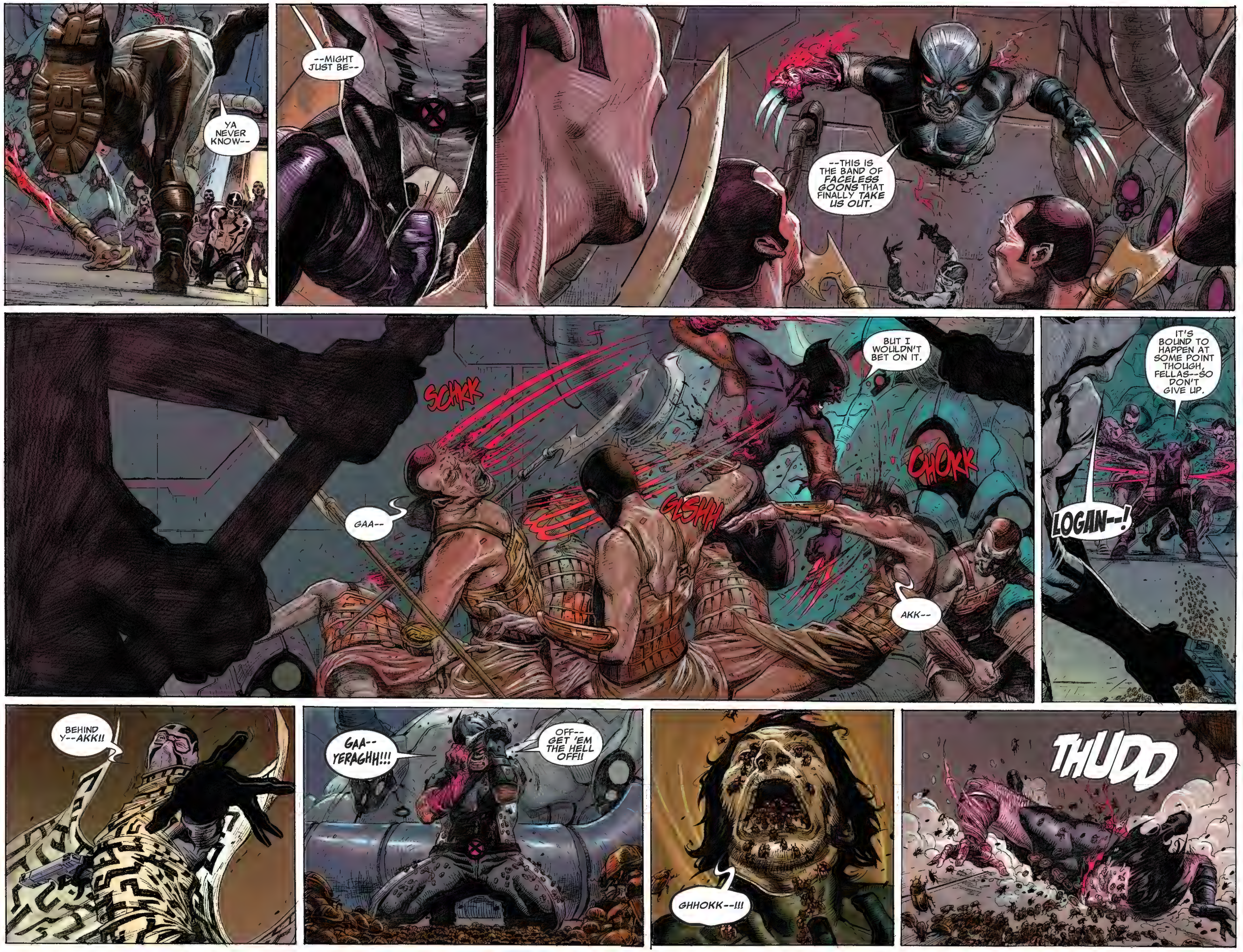

THE CONDESCENSION IS UNNECESSARY.
CAN'T HURT.
SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED.
THIS VESSEL HAS A LIVING *BRAIN.* HOW DID YOU KNOW?
GAMBLED THIS *SHIP* MUST BE SOME KIND OF CLONE OF ANOTHER ONE I'VE HAD DEALINGS WITH.
DISAPPOINTING. I THOUGHT *MY* SENTIENT VESSEL WAS *UNIQUE.*
NOTHIN' ABOUT *YOU* IS *ALL THAT* UNIQUE.
ALWAYS THE NURTURING MOTIVATOR.
YOU'RE A FINE DANCER, YOUR ASS DOESN'T LOOK FAT IN THOSE PANTS AND PEOPLE *REALLY* LIKE YOU.
YOU DIDN'T MENTION HOW SMART I AM.
NOPE.
C'MON, *EAT.*

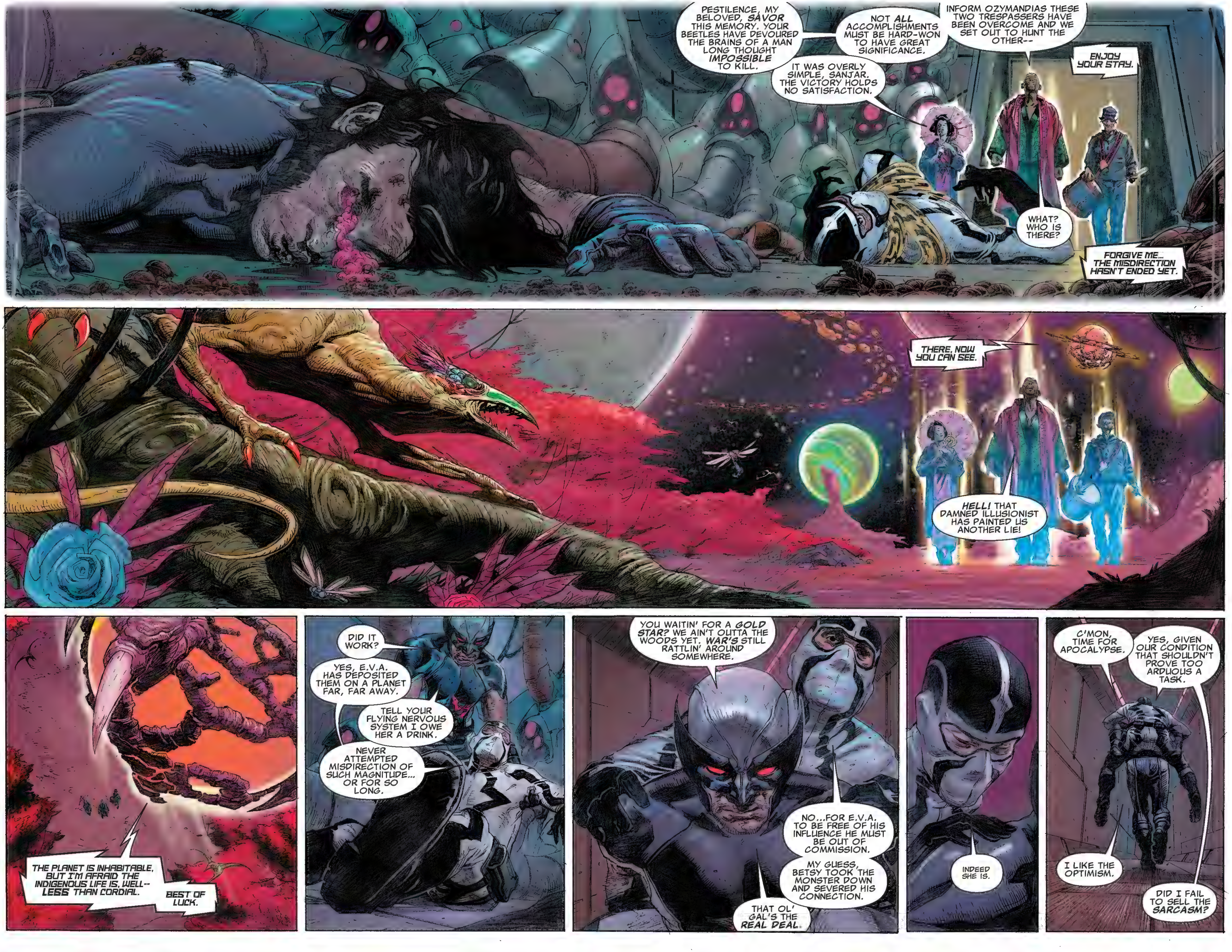

DON'T MAKE ME CHEW IT FOR YOU, BABY BIRD.
PLEASE GOD, DON'T MAKE ME DO THAT.
THAT'S RIGHT. THERE YOU GO.
NOM-NOM.
MAMA'S GOT HER BOY'S SUPPER.
MAKE HIM BIG AND STRONG.
URHM... W-WHERE... DID YOU GET... THIS ...
IF I TELL YOU, DO YOU PROMISE TO KEEP EATING?

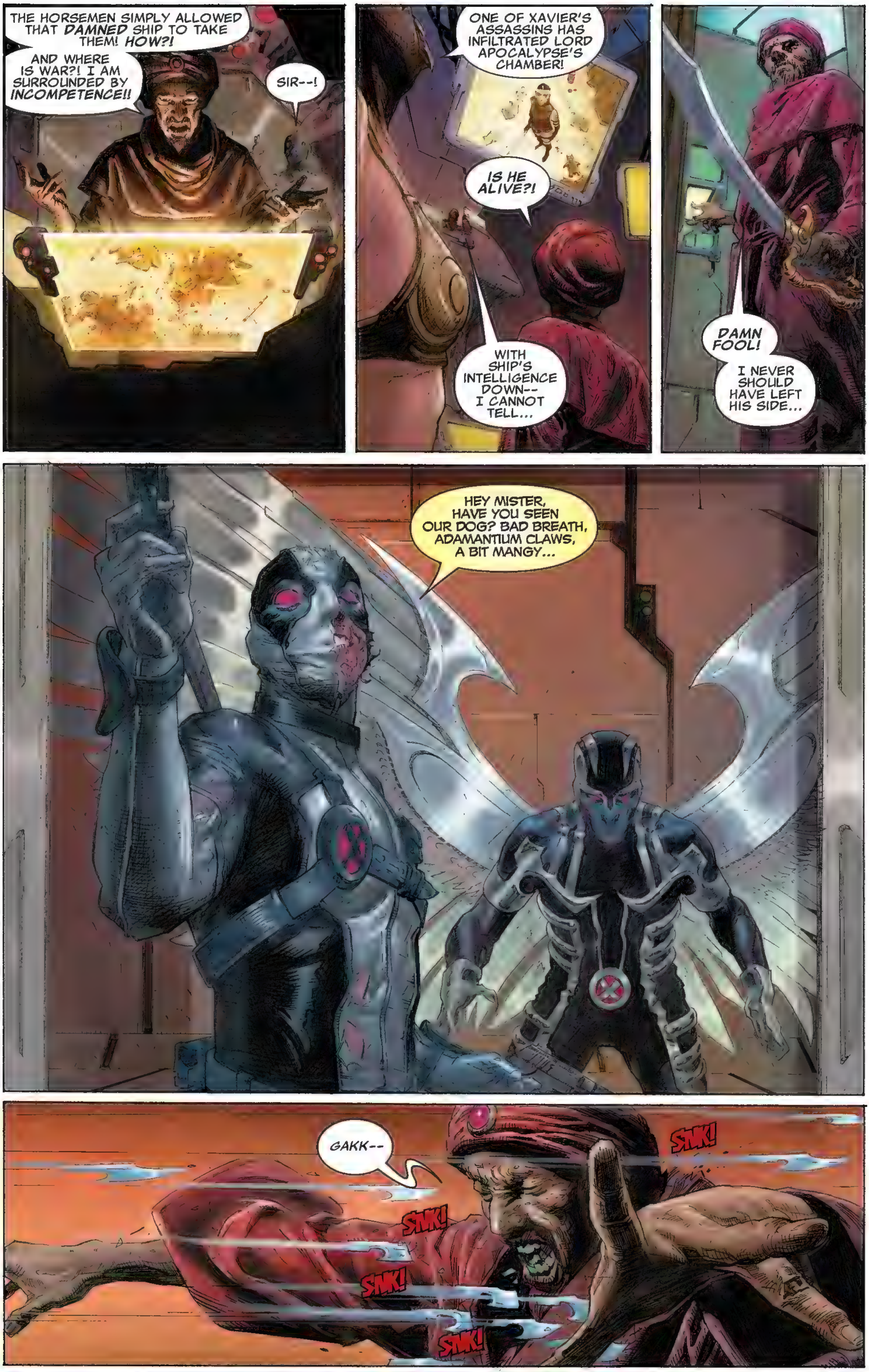

WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU? JUMP! NOW!
MATTER TRANSFER TO THE NEXT STRONGHOLD!
ORDER COMPLETED. WE ARE ARRIVED AT NEPTUNE STATION.
NO! WE--
THERE IS A MORE URGENT MATTER, LORD. WE HAVE AN INTRUDER IN--
I KNOW WE HAVE INTRUDERS, IDIOT!
YOU. DISCONNECT SHIP'S INTELLIGENCE.
BUT LORD, I NNNEEE-- ZERP-
HOW LONG WILL A MANUAL OVERRIDE OF THE MATTER DRIVE TAKE?!
FOUR MINUTES.
GET TO IT.
THIS IDIOT SHIP IS MALFUNCTIONING. WE'RE IMMOBILIZED.
EXPECT XAVIER'S WHORES TO BE UPON YOU SOON.
WE ARE IN THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR AND CAN RELOCATE TO ANY AREA OF THE SHIP WITH HASTE.
NO ONE HAS ATTEMPTED TO ENTER AS OF YET, LORD.
IF THEY DO, WE ARE MORE THAN READY FOR THEM.
I ENJOY HYPERBOLE AS MUCH AS THE NEXT GUY--

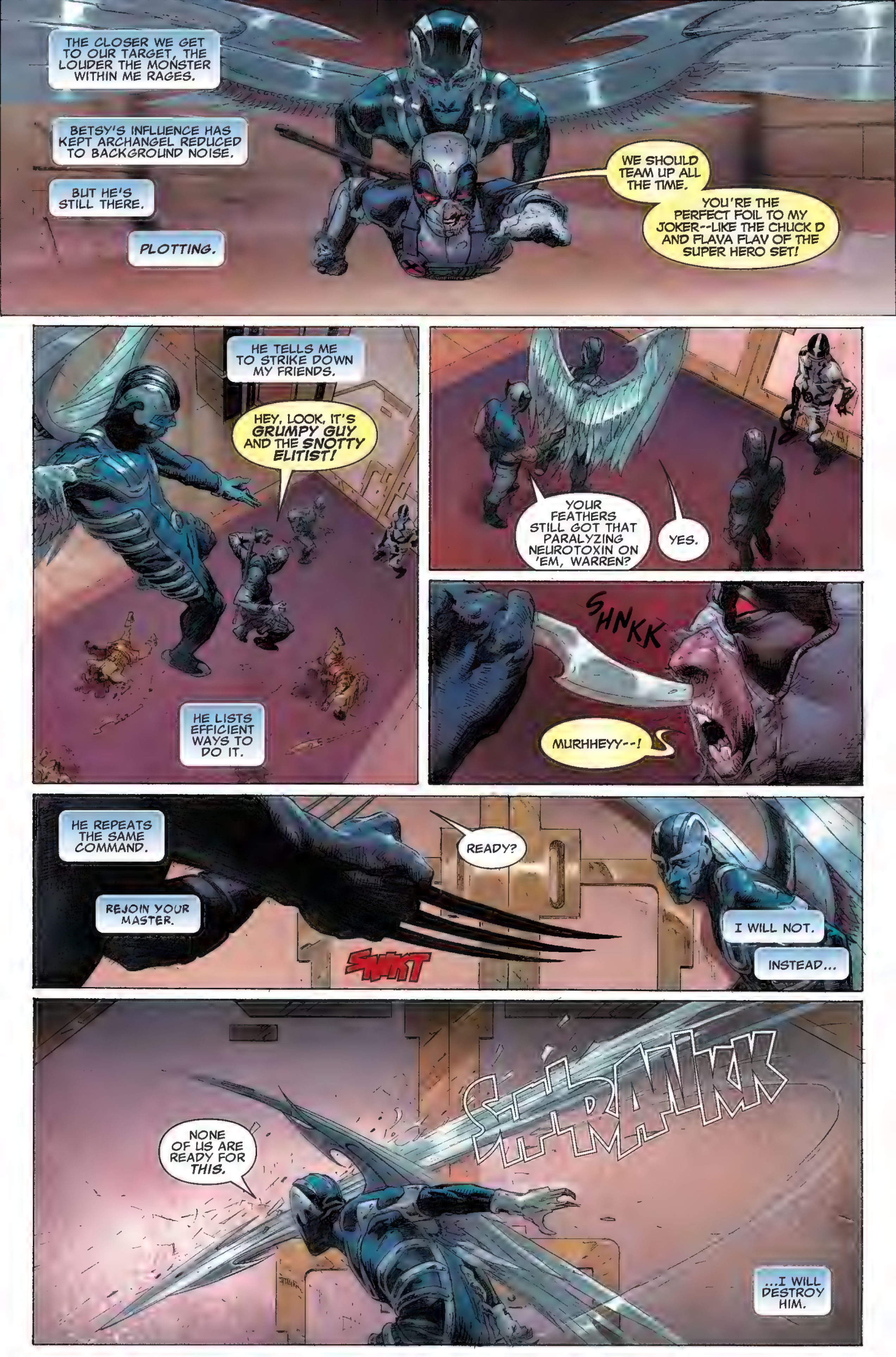

--BUT AIN'T *NO ONE* BUYING *THAT* SONG, CHUMP.
BLAM
HMM, I WAS ALMOST CONVINCED.
PLUNKK
WHICH IS WHY I LEFT *"BRAINS"* OFF YOUR *"PROS"* LIST.
BLAM BLAM
SLNKK
GRHH--
GHRRAAHH--
SKREENKK
GREEERRRTCHHH
SAYS THE MAN CUTTING THE *SUPPORT CABLES.*
DARE I INSINUATE YOU ERRED?
BLAM
SHUNKK
WOULDN'T RECOMMEND IT.
TOOOM

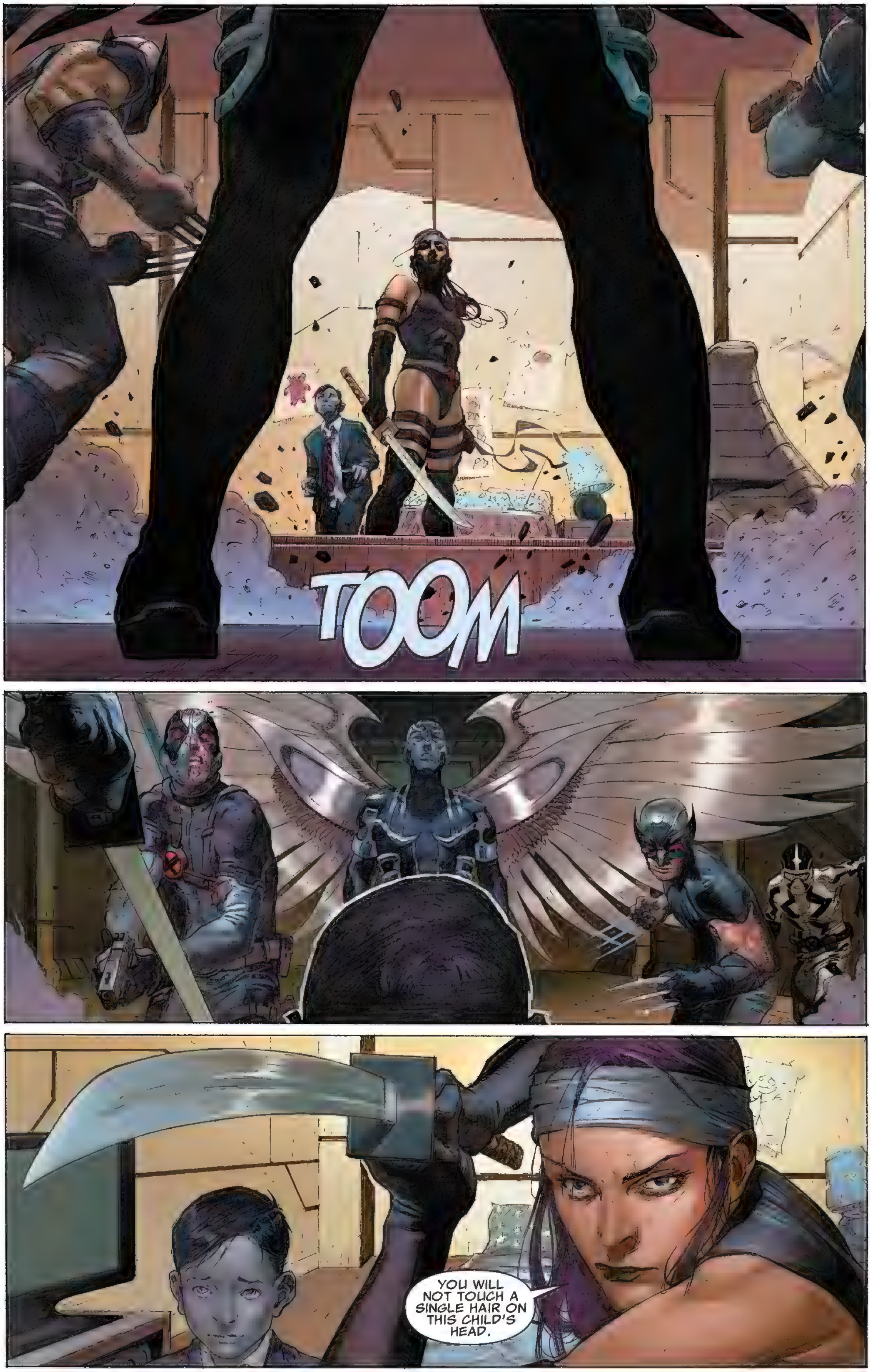

ESTIMATED TIME TO IMPACT: 4 SECONDS.
NUMBER OF REMAINING TARGETS: FIVE.
BLAM
FOUR.
YERAGHH!!
SKUKK
RACE TRAITOR, SWINE!
BLAM
THREE.
AIN'T ABOUT RACE, DARLIN'--
FRWOOOH
TWO.
BLAM
I LEAVE THE LAST FOR MY SCRUFFY LITTLE BADGER-FRIEND.
SUCH THE DELICATE EGO.
--I'M AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY KILLER.
SKRUUKNK
GADS! EVIL FODDER TYPES EAGERLY SPIRITING TOWARDS CERTAIN DEMISE.
HOW GAUCHE.

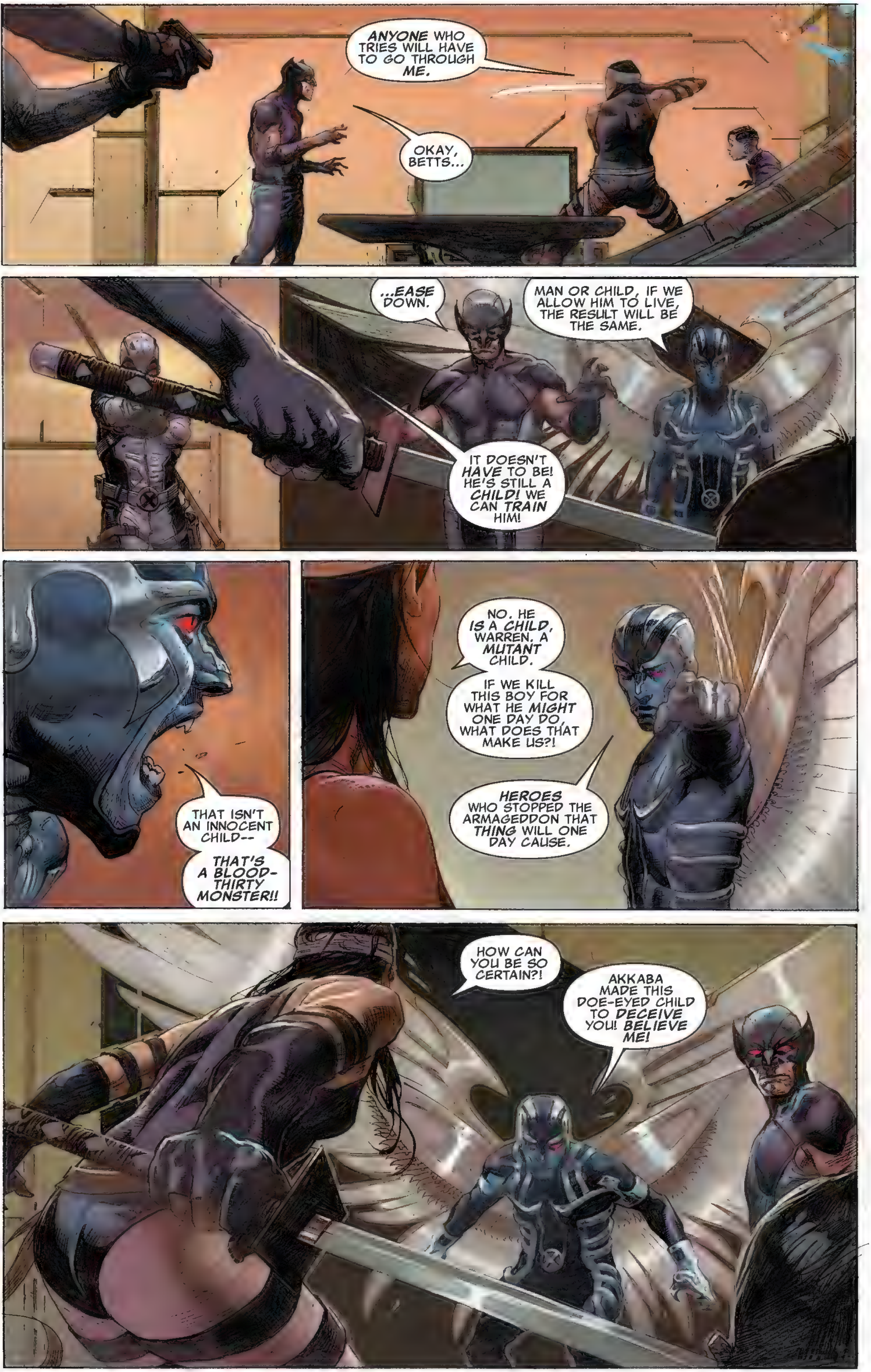

YA NEVER KNOW--
--MIGHT JUST BE--
--THIS IS THE BAND OF FACELESS GOONS THAT FINALLY TAKE US OUT.
SCHKK
GAA--
GLSHH
BUT I WOULDN'T BET ON IT.
CHOKK
AKK--
IT'S BOUND TO HAPPEN AT SOME POINT THOUGH, FELLAS--SO DON'T GIVE UP.
LOGAN--!
BEHIND Y--AKK!!
GAA-- YERAGHH!!!
OFF-- GET 'EM THE HELL OFF!!
GHHOKK--!!!
THUDD

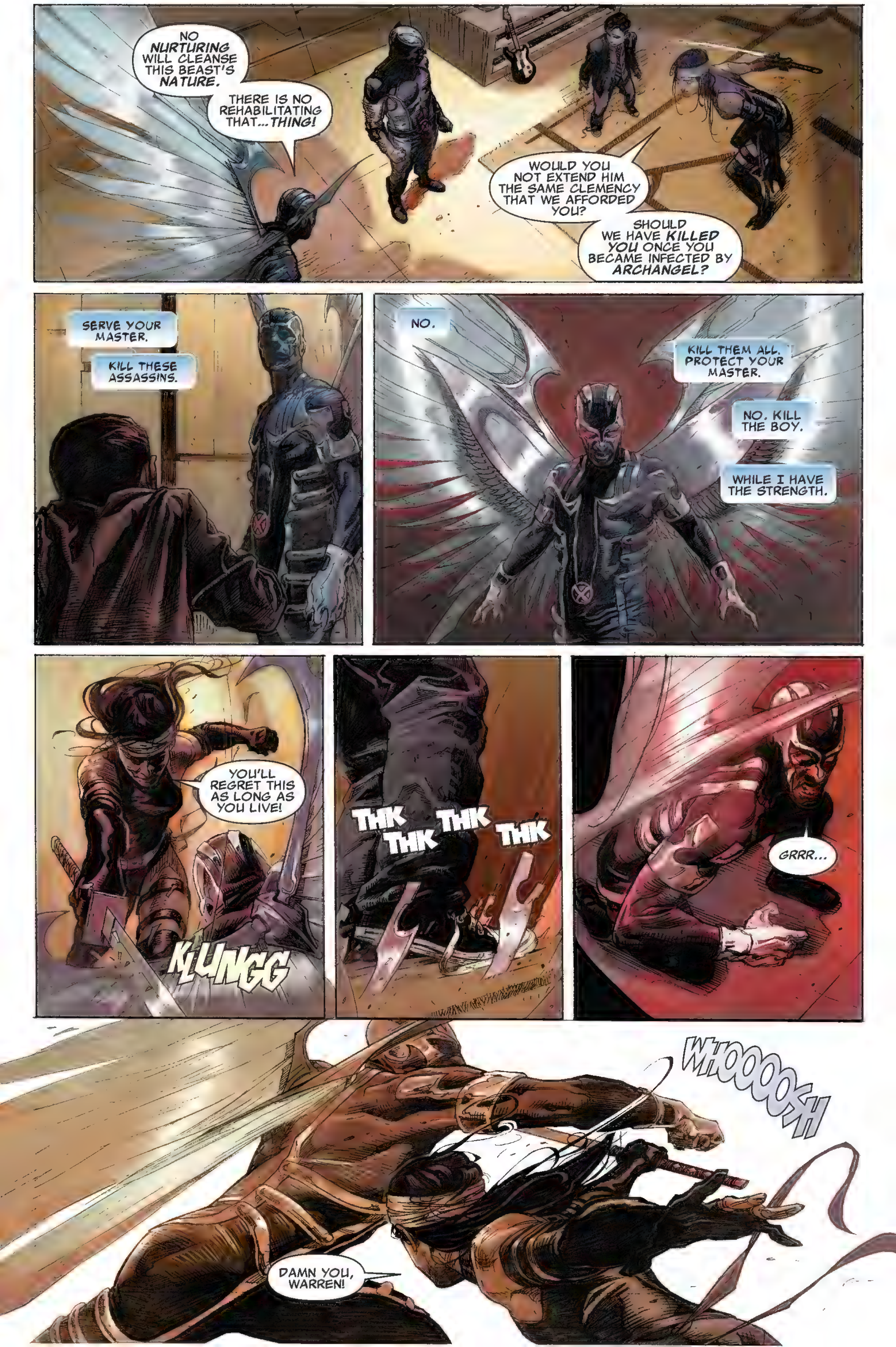

PESTILENCE, MY BELOVED, *SAVOR* THIS MEMORY. YOUR BEETLES HAVE DEVOURED THE BRAINS OF A MAN LONG THOUGHT *IMPOSSIBLE* TO KILL.
NOT *ALL* ACCOMPLISHMENTS MUST BE HARD-WON TO HAVE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE.
IT WAS OVERLY SIMPLE, SANJAR. THE VICTORY HOLDS NO SATISFACTION.
INFORM OZYMANDIAS THESE TWO TRESPASSERS HAVE BEEN OVERCOME AND WE SET OUT TO HUNT THE OTHER--
ENJOY YOUR STAY.
WHAT? WHO IS THERE?
FORGIVE ME... THE MISDIRECTION HASN'T ENDED YET.
THERE, NOW YOU CAN SEE.
HELL! THAT DAMNED ILLUSIONIST HAS PAINTED US ANOTHER LIE!
THE PLANET IS INHABITABLE, BUT I'M AFRAID THE INDIGENOUS LIFE IS, WELL-- *LESS* THAN CORDIAL.
BEST OF LUCK.
DID IT WORK?
YES, E.V.A. HAS DEPOSITED THEM ON A PLANET FAR, FAR AWAY.
TELL YOUR FLYING NERVOUS SYSTEM I OWE HER A DRINK.
NEVER ATTEMPTED MISDIRECTION OF SUCH MAGNITUDE... OR FOR SO LONG.
YOU WAITIN' FOR A *GOLD STAR?* WE AIN'T OUTTA THE WOODS YET. *WAR'S* STILL RATTLIN' AROUND SOMEWHERE.
NO... FOR E.V.A. TO BE FREE OF HIS INFLUENCE HE MUST BE OUT OF COMMISSION.
MY GUESS, BETSY TOOK THE MONSTER DOWN AND SEVERED HIS CONNECTION.
THAT OL' GAL'S THE *REAL DEAL.*
INDEED SHE IS.
C'MON, TIME FOR APOCALYPSE.
YES, GIVEN OUR CONDITION THAT SHOULDN'T PROVE TOO ARDUOUS A TASK.
I LIKE THE OPTIMISM.
DID I FAIL TO SELL THE *SARCASM?*

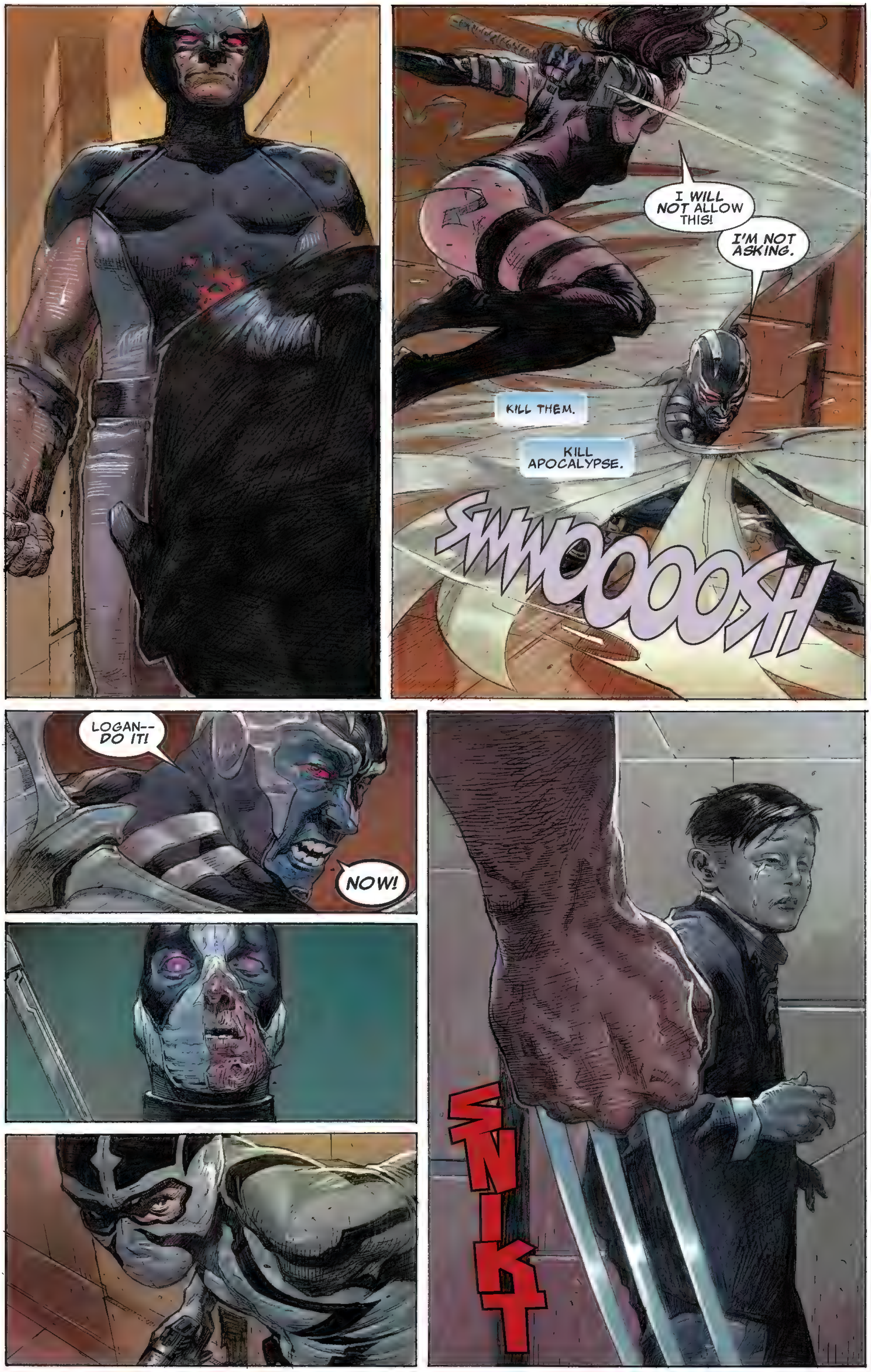

THE HORSEMEN SIMPLY ALLOWED THAT *DAMNED* SHIP TO TAKE THEM! *HOW?!*
AND WHERE IS WAR?! I AM SURROUNDED BY *INCOMPETENCE!!*
SIR--!
ONE OF XAVIER'S ASSASSINS HAS INFILTRATED LORD APOCALYPSE'S CHAMBER!
IS HE ALIVE?!
WITH SHIP'S INTELLIGENCE DOWN-- I CANNOT TELL...
DAMN FOOL!
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LEFT HIS SIDE...
HEY MISTER, HAVE YOU SEEN OUR DOG? BAD BREATH, ADAMANTIUM CLAWS, A BIT MANGY...
GAKK--
SNIK!
SNIK!
SNIK!
SNIK!

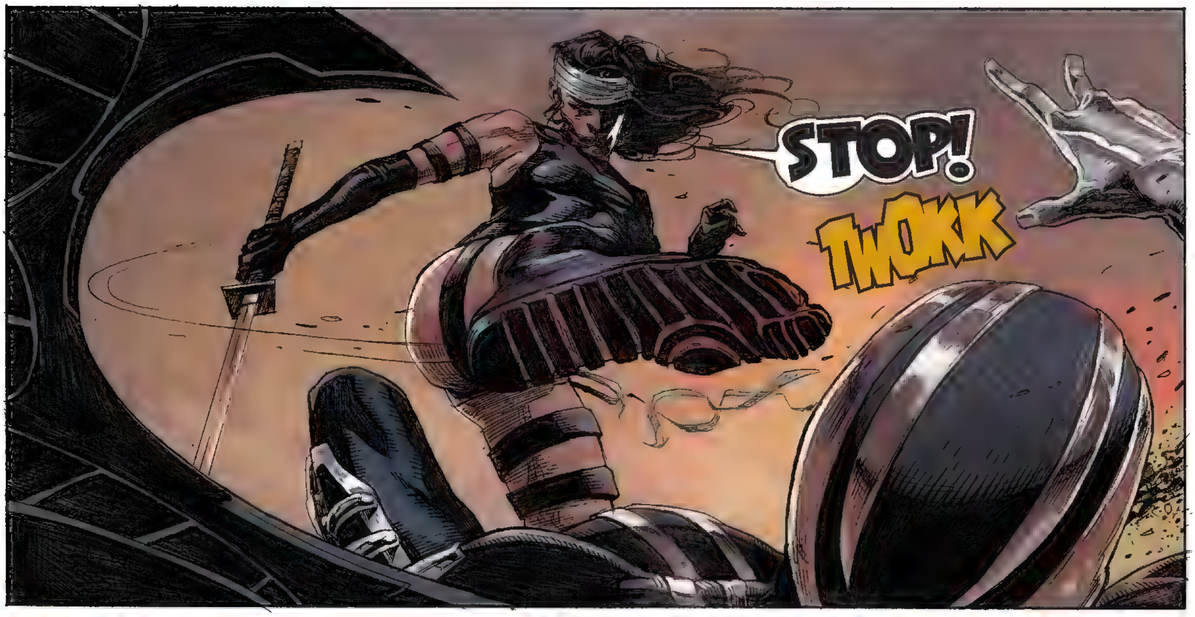

THE CLOSER WE GET TO OUR TARGET, THE LOUDER THE MONSTER WITHIN ME RAGES.
BETSY'S INFLUENCE HAS KEPT ARCHANGEL REDUCED TO BACKGROUND NOISE.
BUT HE'S STILL THERE.
PLOTTING.
WE SHOULD TEAM UP ALL THE TIME.
YOU'RE THE PERFECT FOIL TO MY JOKER--LIKE THE CHUCK D AND FLAVA FLAV OF THE SUPER HERO SET!
HE TELLS ME TO STRIKE DOWN MY FRIENDS.
HEY, LOOK, IT'S GRUMPY GUY AND THE SNOTTY ELITIST!
HE LISTS EFFICIENT WAYS TO DO IT.
YOUR FEATHERS STILL GOT THAT PARALYZING NEUROTOXIN ON 'EM, WARREN?
YES.
SHNKK
MURHHEYY--!
HE REPEATS THE SAME COMMAND.
READY?
REJOIN YOUR MASTER.
SNIKT
I WILL NOT.
INSTEAD...
SHHRAKK
NONE OF US ARE READY FOR THIS.
...I WILL DESTROY HIM.

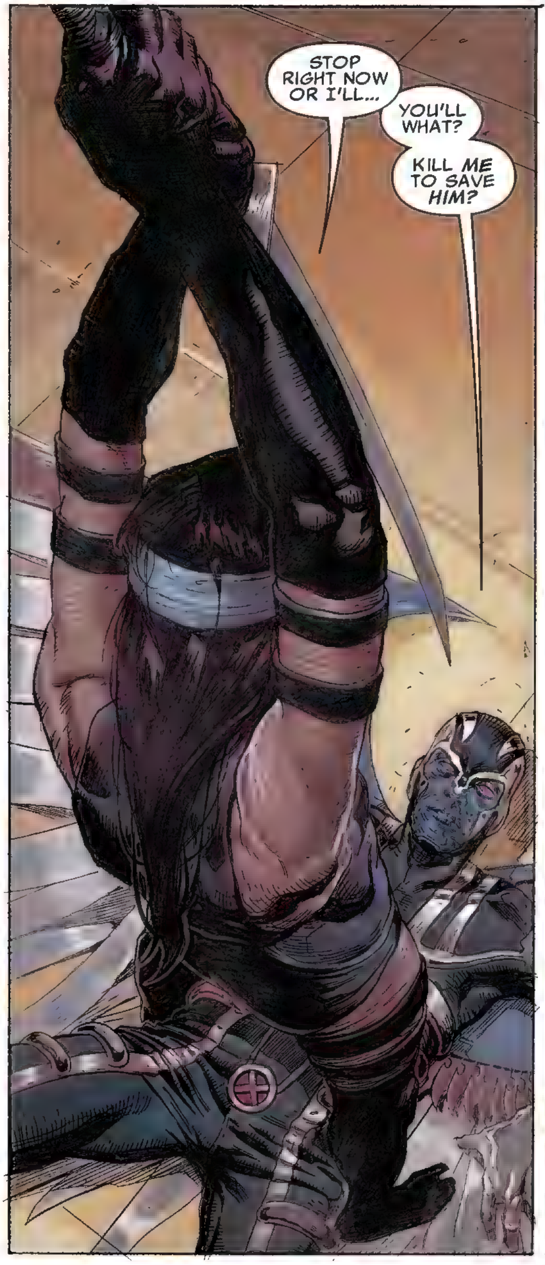

TOOM
YOU WILL NOT TOUCH A SINGLE HAIR ON THIS CHILD'S HEAD.

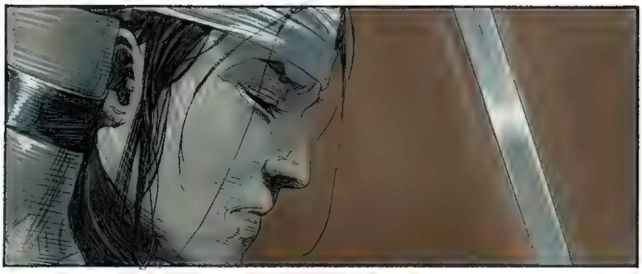

ANYONE WHO TRIES WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH ME.
OKAY, BETTS...
...EASE DOWN.
MAN OR CHILD, IF WE ALLOW HIM TO LIVE, THE RESULT WILL BE THE SAME.
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE! HE'S STILL A CHILD! WE CAN TRAIN HIM!
THAT ISN'T AN INNOCENT CHILD--
THAT'S A BLOOD-THIRTY MONSTER!!
NO. HE IS A CHILD, WARREN. A MUTANT CHILD.
IF WE KILL THIS BOY FOR WHAT HE MIGHT ONE DAY DO, WHAT DOES THAT MAKE US?!
HEROES WHO STOPPED THE ARMAGEDDON THAT THING WILL ONE DAY CAUSE.
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CERTAIN?!
AKKABA MADE THIS DOE-EYED CHILD TO DECEIVE YOU! BELIEVE ME!

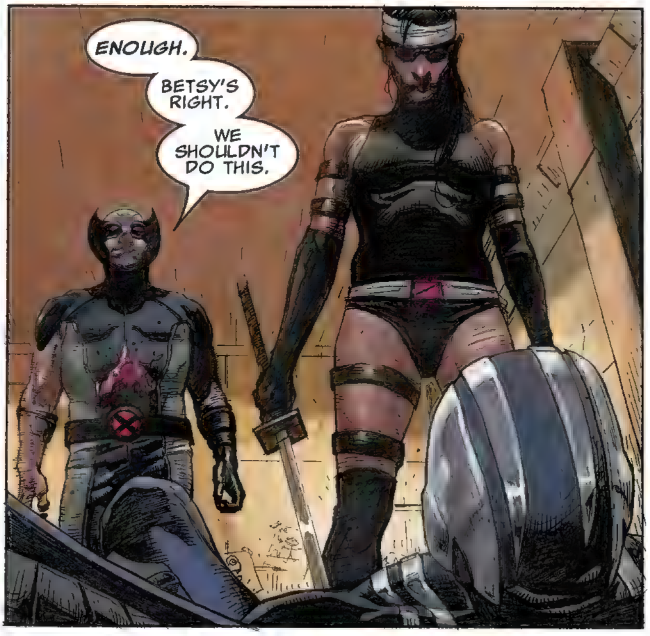

NO *NURTURING* WILL CLEANSE THIS BEAST'S *NATURE.*
THERE IS NO REHABILITATING THAT... *THING!*
WOULD YOU NOT EXTEND HIM THE SAME CLEMENCY THAT WE AFFORDED YOU?
SHOULD WE HAVE *KILLED YOU* ONCE YOU BECAME INFECTED BY *ARCHANGEL?*
SERVE YOUR MASTER.
KILL THESE ASSASSINS.
NO.
KILL THEM ALL. PROTECT YOUR MASTER.
NO. KILL THE BOY.
WHILE I HAVE THE STRENGTH.
YOU'LL REGRET THIS AS LONG AS YOU LIVE!
KLUNGG
THK THK THK THK
GRRR...
WHOOOOOSH
DAMN YOU, WARREN!

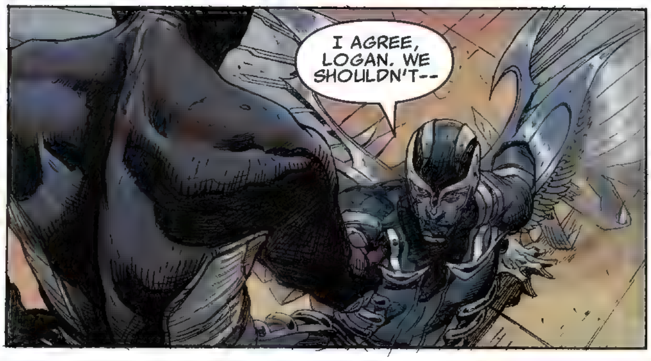

I WILL NOT ALLOW THIS!
I'M NOT ASKING.
KILL THEM.
KILL APOCALYPSE.
SWOOOOOSH
LOGAN-- DO IT!
NOW!
SNIKT

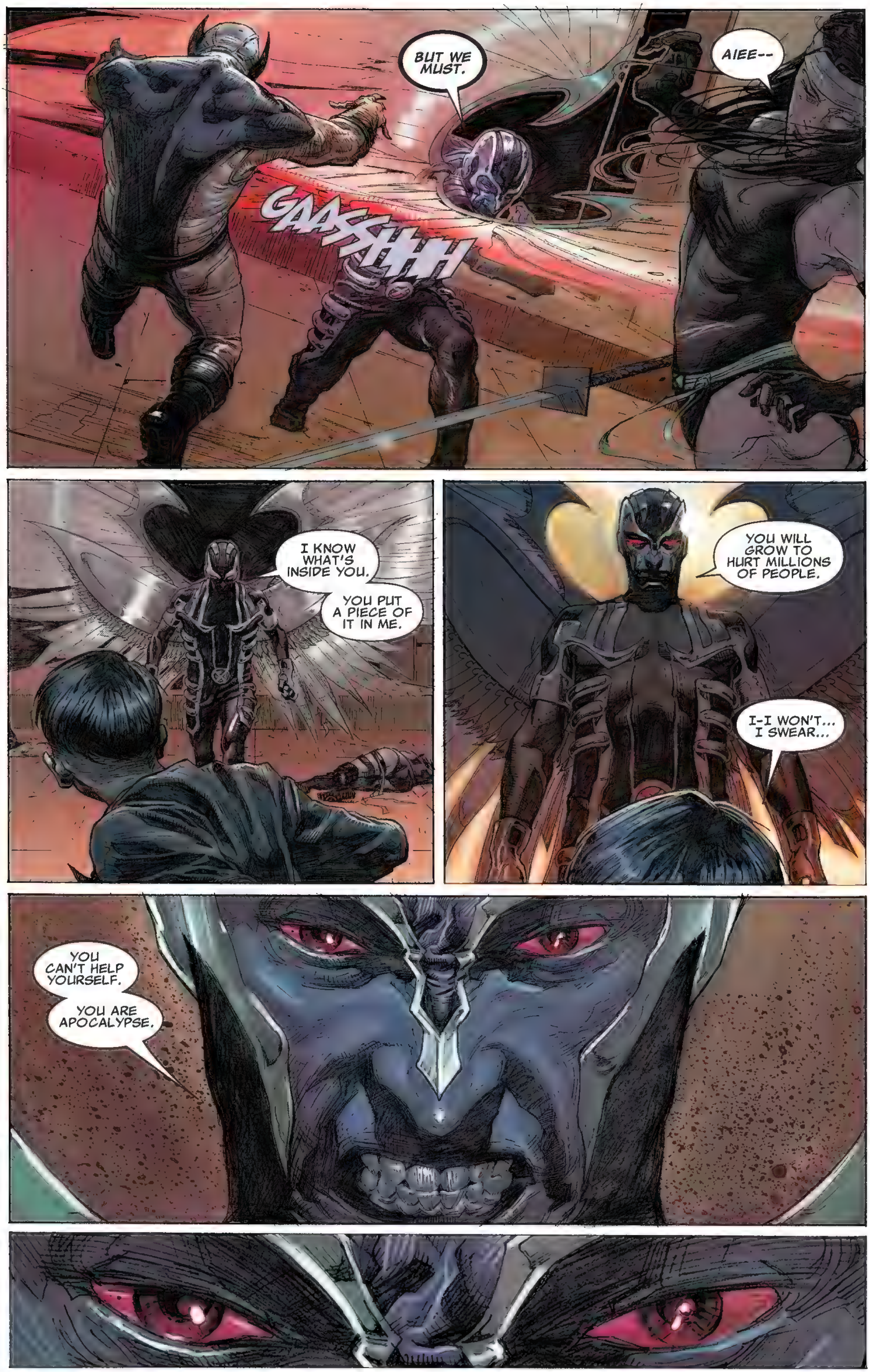

STOP!
TWOKK

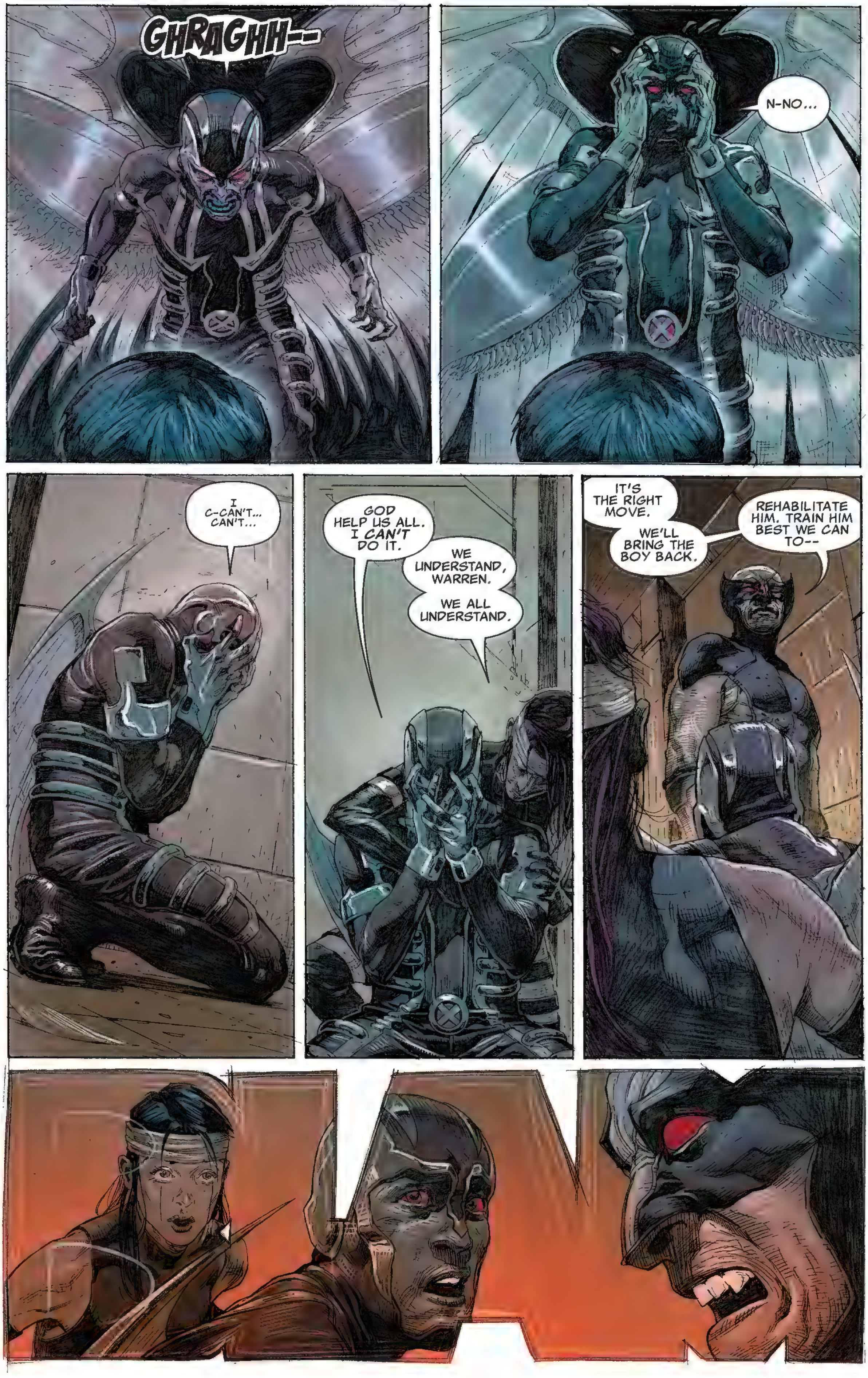

STOP RIGHT NOW OR I'LL...
YOU'LL WHAT?
KILL *ME* TO SAVE *HIM?*

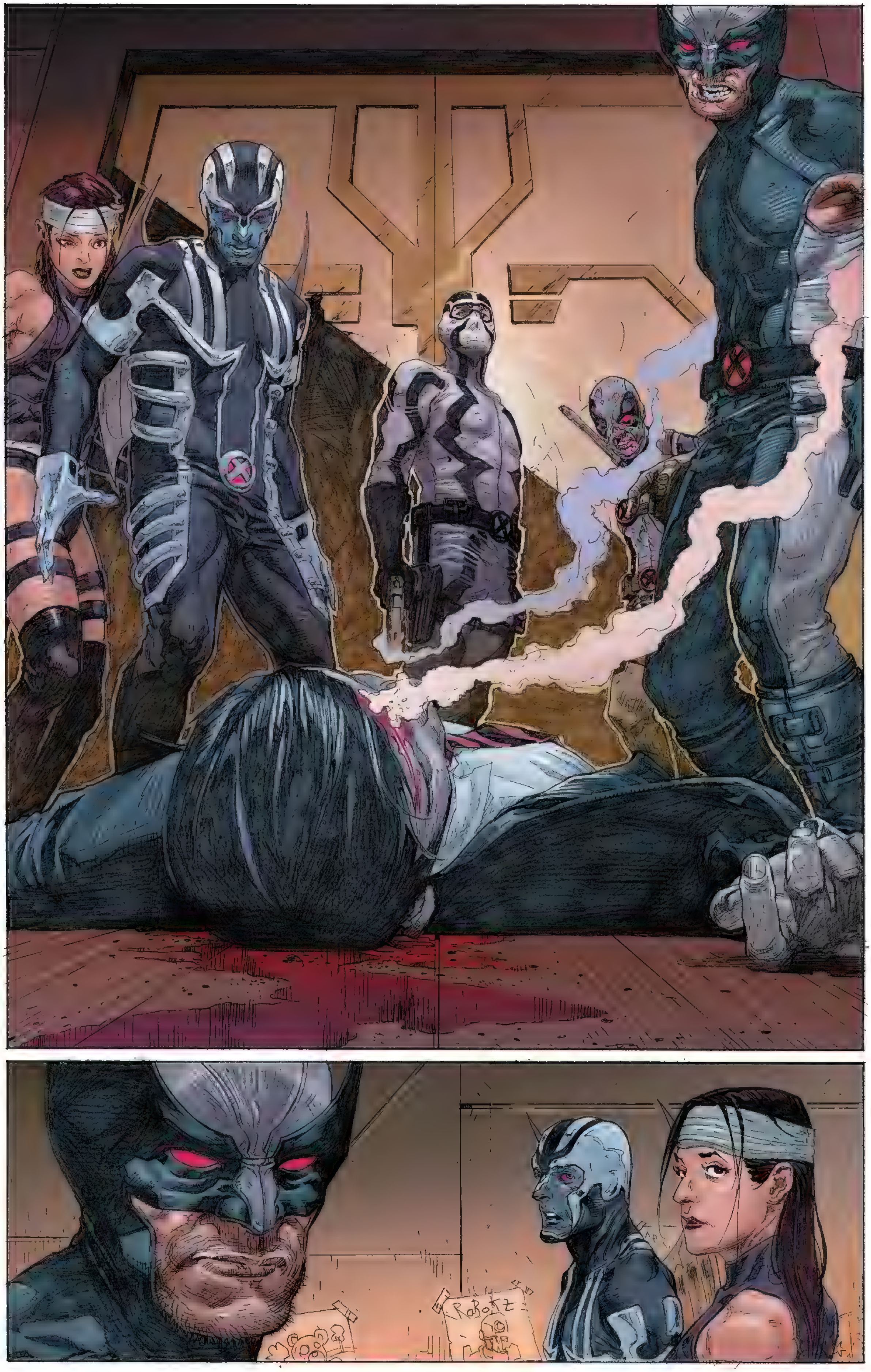


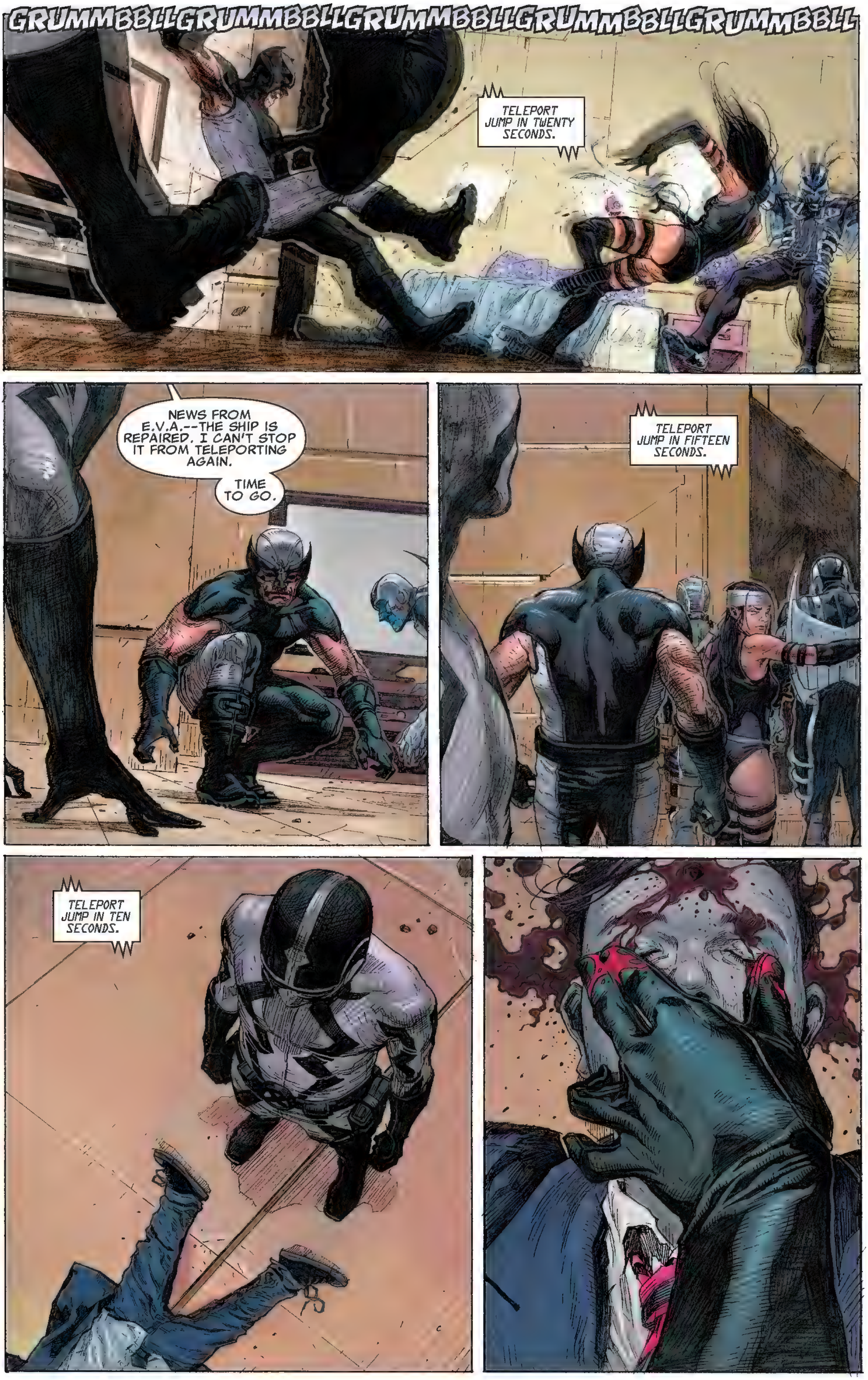

ENOUGH.
BETSY'S RIGHT.
WE SHOULDN'T DO THIS.

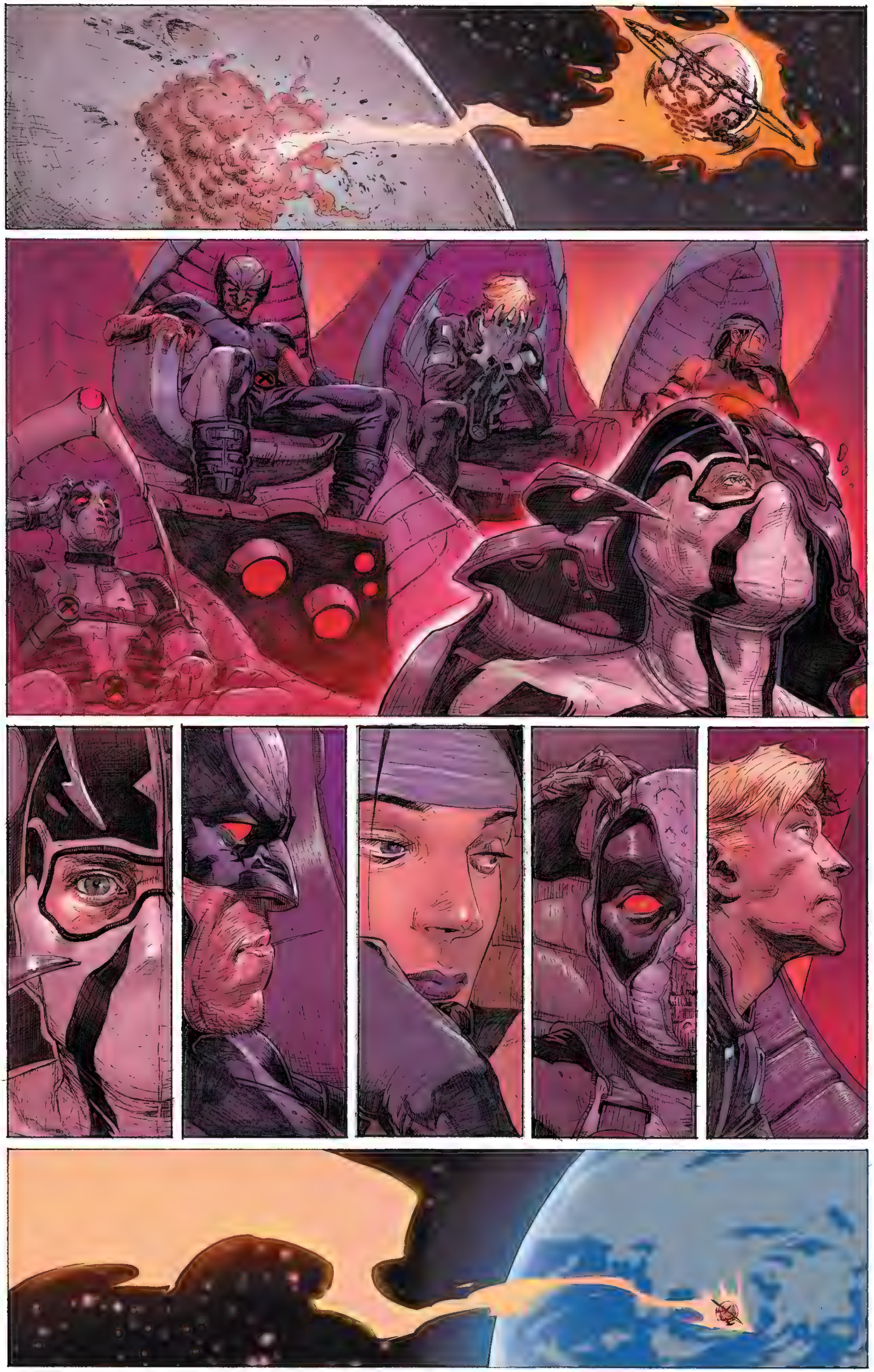

I AGREE, LOGAN. WE SHOULDN'T--


BUT WE MUST.
AIEE--
GAASHHH
I KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE YOU.
YOU PUT A PIECE OF IT IN ME.
YOU WILL GROW TO HURT MILLIONS OF PEOPLE.
I-I WON'T... I SWEAR...
YOU CAN'T HELP YOURSELF.
YOU ARE APOCALYPSE.

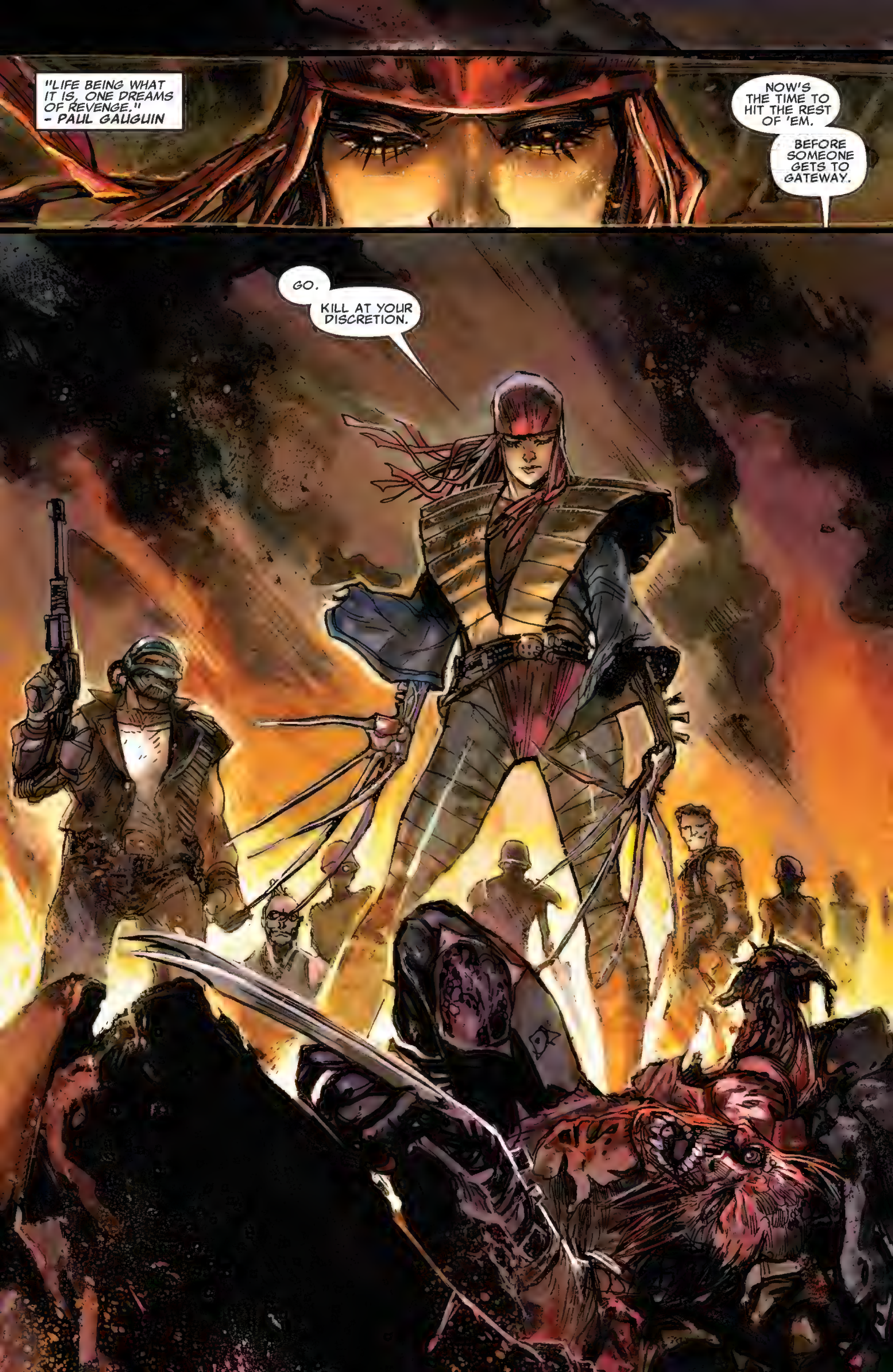

GHRAGHH--
N-NO...
I C-CAN'T... CAN'T...
GOD HELP US ALL. I *CAN'T* DO IT.
WE UNDERSTAND, WARREN.
WE ALL UNDERSTAND.
IT'S THE RIGHT MOVE.
WE'LL BRING THE BOY BACK.
REHABILITATE HIM. TRAIN HIM BEST WE CAN TO--

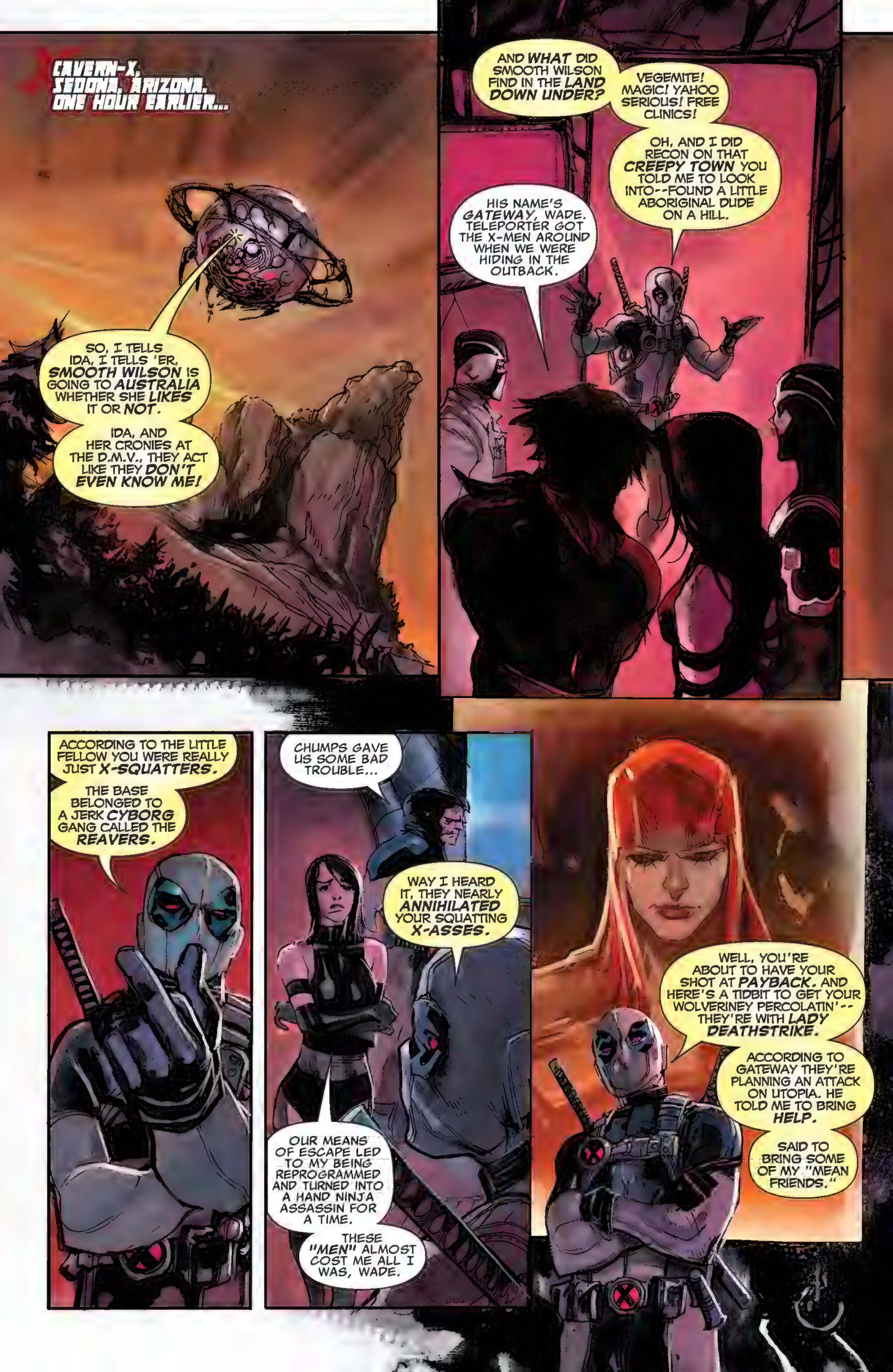

ROBOTZ

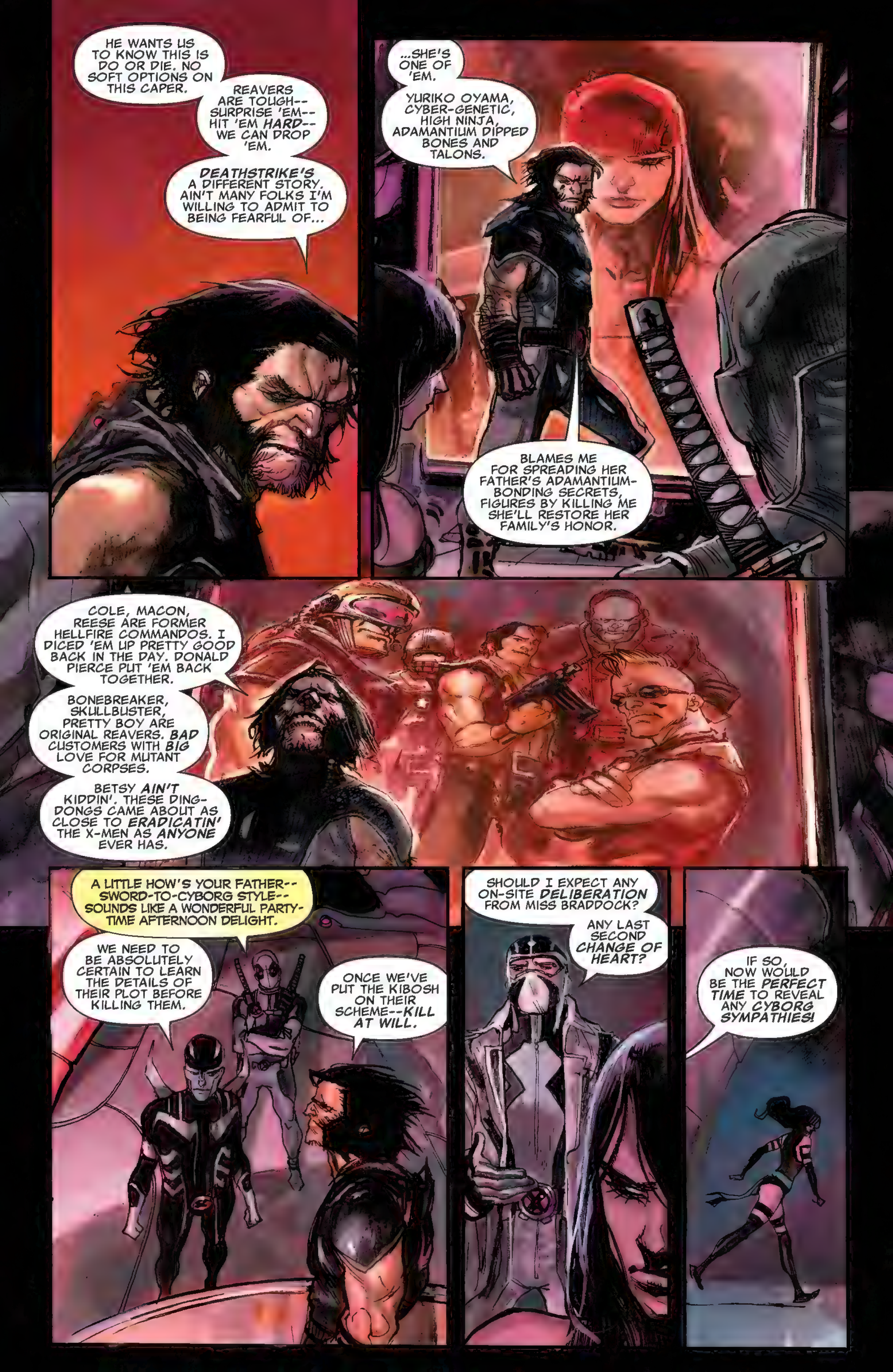

GRUMMBBLLGRUMMBBLLGRUMMBBLLGRUMMBBLLGRUMMBBLL
TELEPORT JUMP IN TWENTY SECONDS.
NEWS FROM E.V.A.--THE SHIP IS REPAIRED. I CAN'T STOP IT FROM TELEPORTING AGAIN.
TIME TO GO.
TELEPORT JUMP IN FIFTEEN SECONDS.
TELEPORT JUMP IN TEN SECONDS.

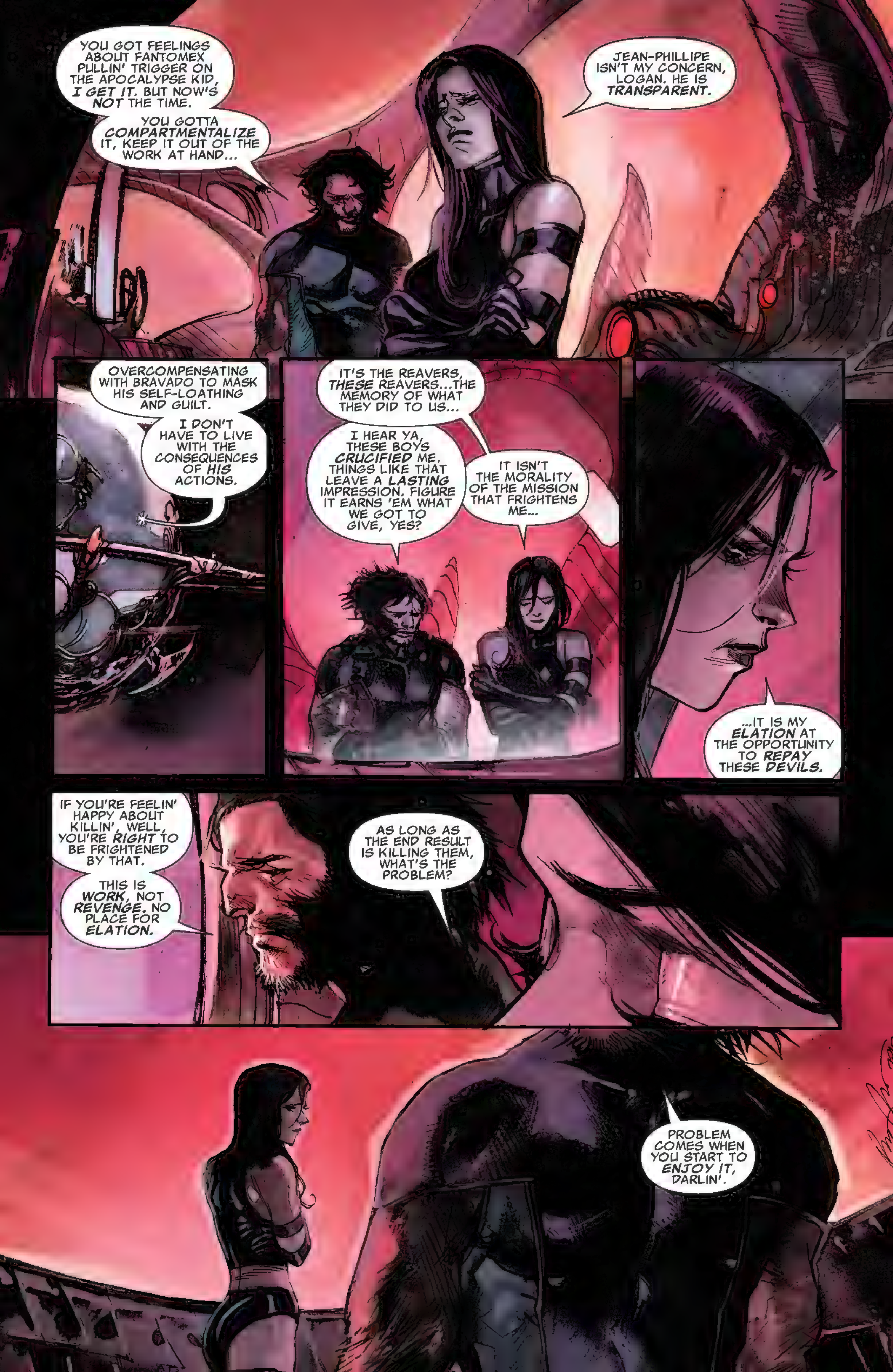


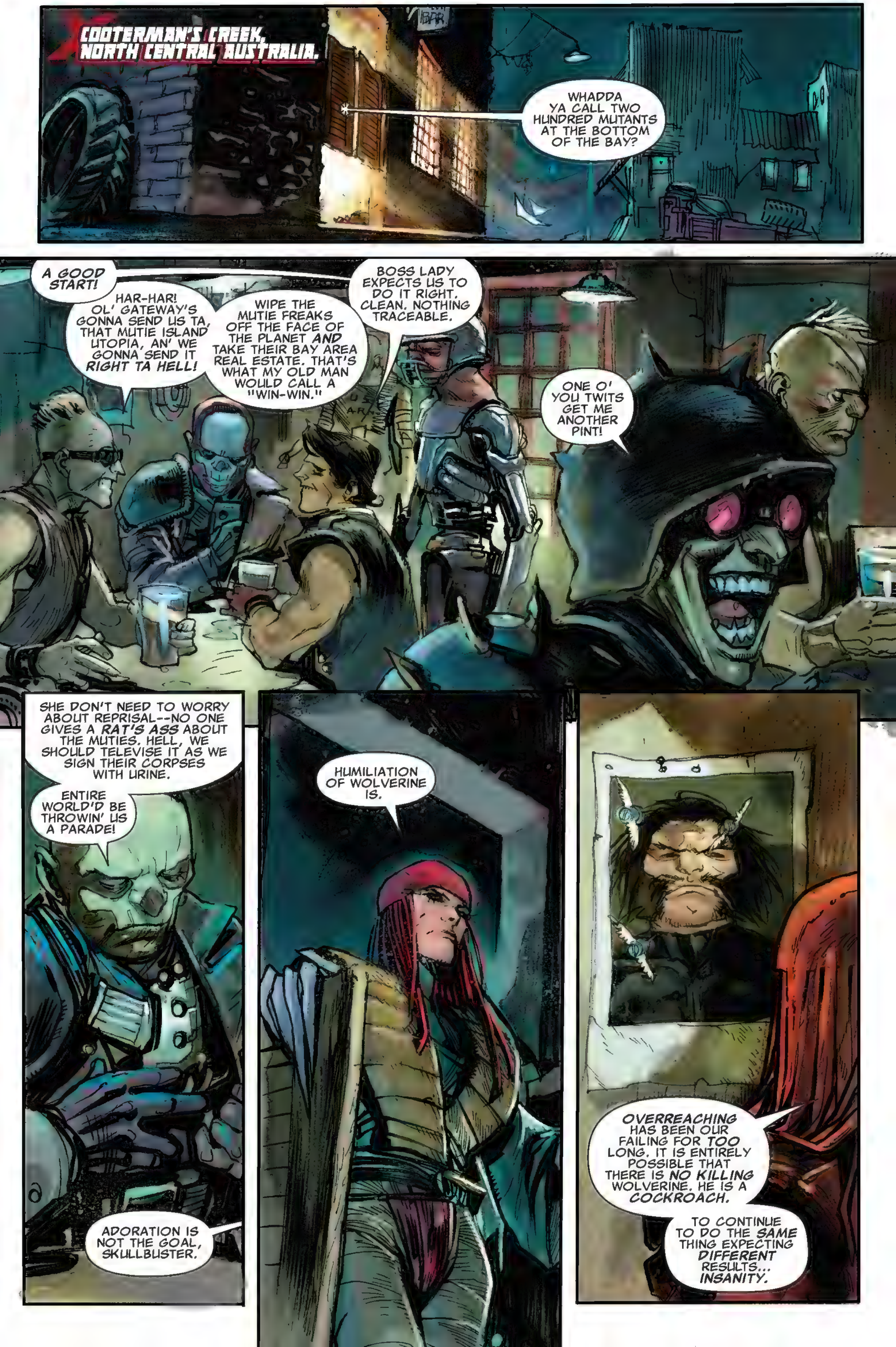
5.1 DESCENDANTS

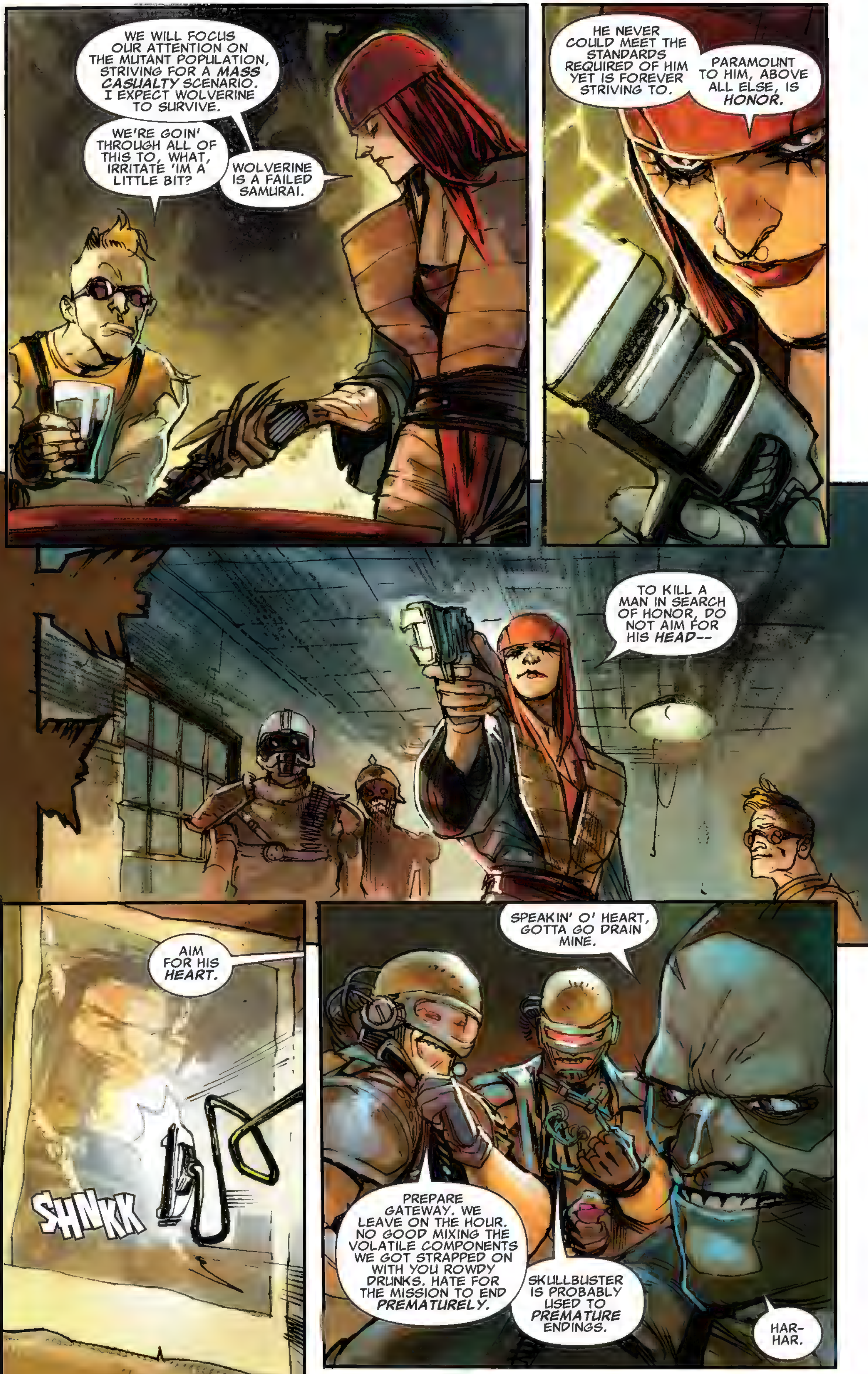

"LIFE BEING WHAT IT IS, ONE DREAMS OF REVENGE."
- PAUL GAUGUIN
NOW'S THE TIME TO HIT THE REST OF 'EM.
BEFORE SOMEONE GETS TO GATEWAY.
GO.
KILL AT YOUR DISCRETION.

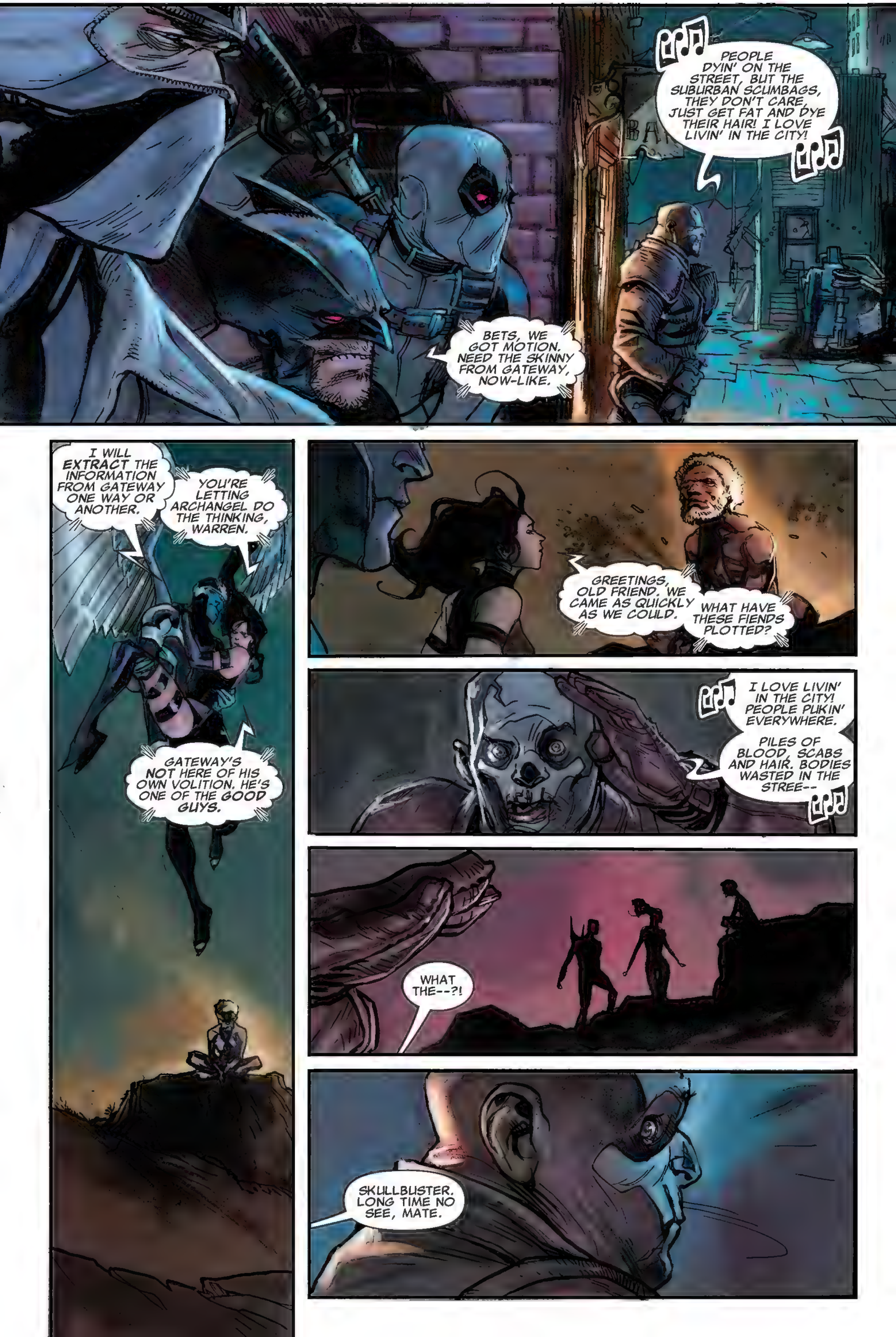

CAVERN-X, SEDONA, ARIZONA. ONE HOUR EARLIER...
SO, I TELLS IDA, I TELLS 'ER, SMOOTH WILSON IS GOING TO AUSTRALIA WHETHER SHE LIKES IT OR NOT.
IDA, AND HER CRONIES AT THE D.M.V., THEY ACT LIKE THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW ME!
AND WHAT DID SMOOTH WILSON FIND IN THE LAND DOWN UNDER?
VEGEMITE! MAGIC! YAHOO SERIOUS! FREE CLINICS!
OH, AND I DID RECON ON THAT CREEPY TOWN YOU TOLD ME TO LOOK INTO--FOUND A LITTLE ABORIGINAL DUDE ON A HILL.
HIS NAME'S GATEWAY, WADE. TELEPORTER GOT THE X-MEN AROUND WHEN WE WERE HIDING IN THE OUTBACK.
ACCORDING TO THE LITTLE FELLOW YOU WERE REALLY JUST X-SQUATTERS.
THE BASE BELONGED TO A JERK CYBORG GANG CALLED THE REAVERS.
CHUMPS GAVE US SOME BAD TROUBLE...
WAY I HEARD IT, THEY NEARLY ANNIHILATED YOUR SQUATTING X-ASSES.
OUR MEANS OF ESCAPE LED TO MY BEING REPROGRAMMED AND TURNED INTO A HAND NINJA ASSASSIN FOR A TIME.
THESE "MEN" ALMOST COST ME ALL I WAS, WADE.
WELL, YOU'RE ABOUT TO HAVE YOUR SHOT AT PAYBACK. AND HERE'S A TIDBIT TO GET YOUR WOLVERINEY PERCOLATIN'-- THEY'RE WITH LADY DEATHSTRIKE.
ACCORDING TO GATEWAY THEY'RE PLANNING AN ATTACK ON UTOPIA. HE TOLD ME TO BRING HELP.
SAID TO BRING SOME OF MY "MEAN FRIENDS."

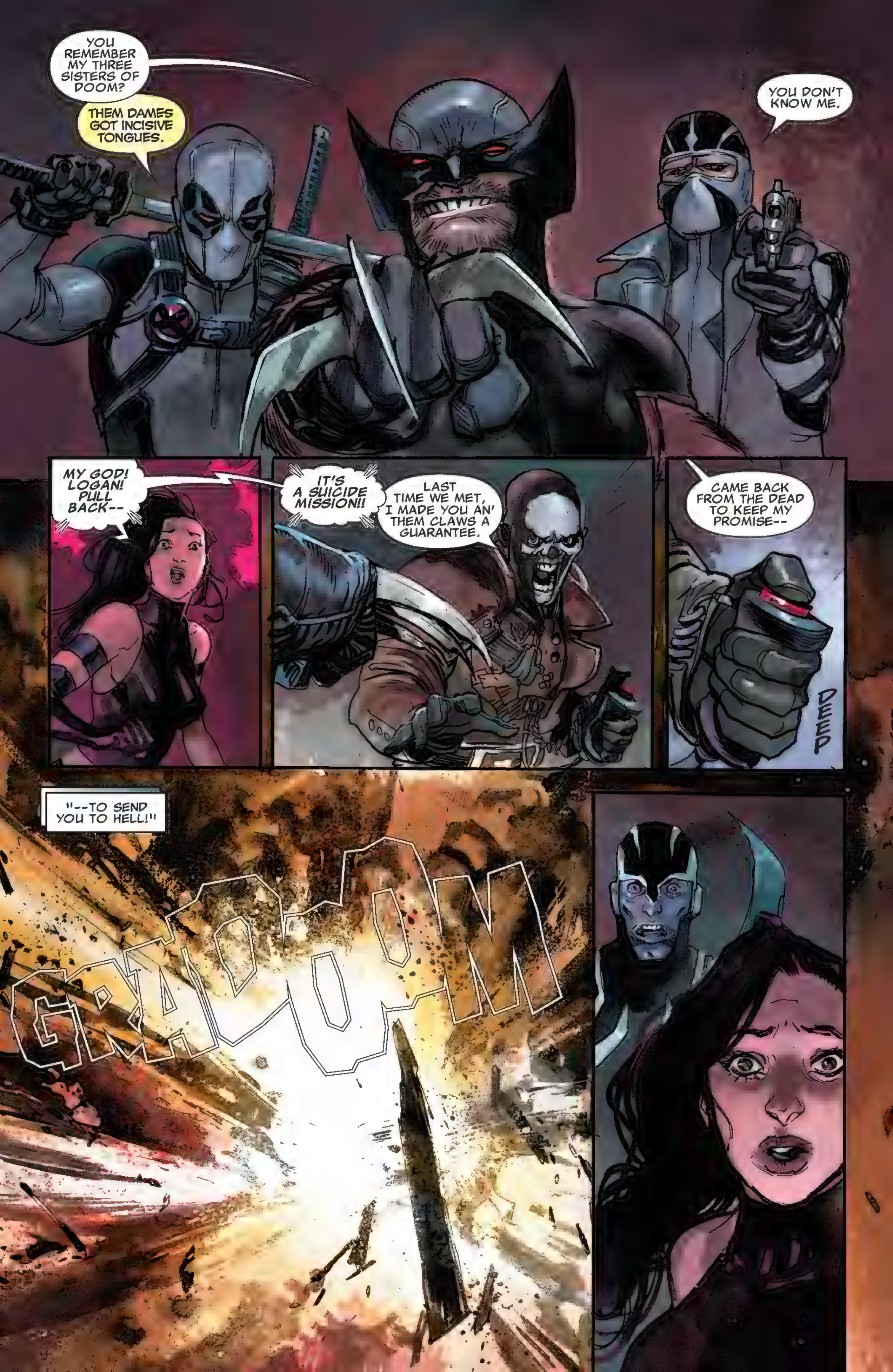

HE WANTS US TO KNOW THIS IS DO OR DIE. NO SOFT OPTIONS ON THIS CAPER.
REAVERS ARE TOUGH-- SURPRISE 'EM-- HIT 'EM *HARD*-- WE CAN DROP 'EM.
DEATHSTRIKE'S A DIFFERENT STORY. AIN'T MANY FOLKS I'M WILLING TO ADMIT TO BEING FEARFUL OF...
...SHE'S ONE OF 'EM.
YURIKO OYAMA, CYBER-GENETIC, HIGH NINJA, ADAMANTIUM DIPPED BONES AND TALONS.
BLAMES ME FOR SPREADING HER FATHER'S ADAMANTIUM-BONDING SECRETS, FIGURES BY KILLING ME SHE'LL RESTORE HER FAMILY'S HONOR.
COLE, MACON, REESE ARE FORMER HELLFIRE COMMANDOS. I DICED 'EM UP PRETTY GOOD BACK IN THE DAY. DONALD PIERCE PUT 'EM BACK TOGETHER.
BONEBREAKER, SKULLBUSTER, PRETTY BOY ARE ORIGINAL REAVERS. *BAD* CUSTOMERS WITH *BIG* LOVE FOR MUTANT CORPSES.
BETSY *AIN'T* KIDDIN'. THESE DING-DONGS CAME ABOUT AS CLOSE TO *ERADICATIN'* THE X-MEN AS *ANYONE* EVER HAS.
A LITTLE HOW'S YOUR FATHER-- SWORD-TO-CYBORG STYLE-- SOUNDS LIKE A WONDERFUL PARTY-TIME AFTERNOON DELIGHT.
WE NEED TO BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN TO LEARN THE DETAILS OF THEIR PLOT BEFORE KILLING THEM.
ONCE WE'VE PUT THE KIBOSH ON THEIR SCHEME--*KILL AT WILL.*
SHOULD I EXPECT ANY ON-SITE *DELIBERATION* FROM MISS BRADDOCK?
ANY LAST SECOND *CHANGE OF HEART?*
IF SO, NOW WOULD BE THE *PERFECT TIME* TO REVEAL ANY *CYBORG SYMPATHIES!*

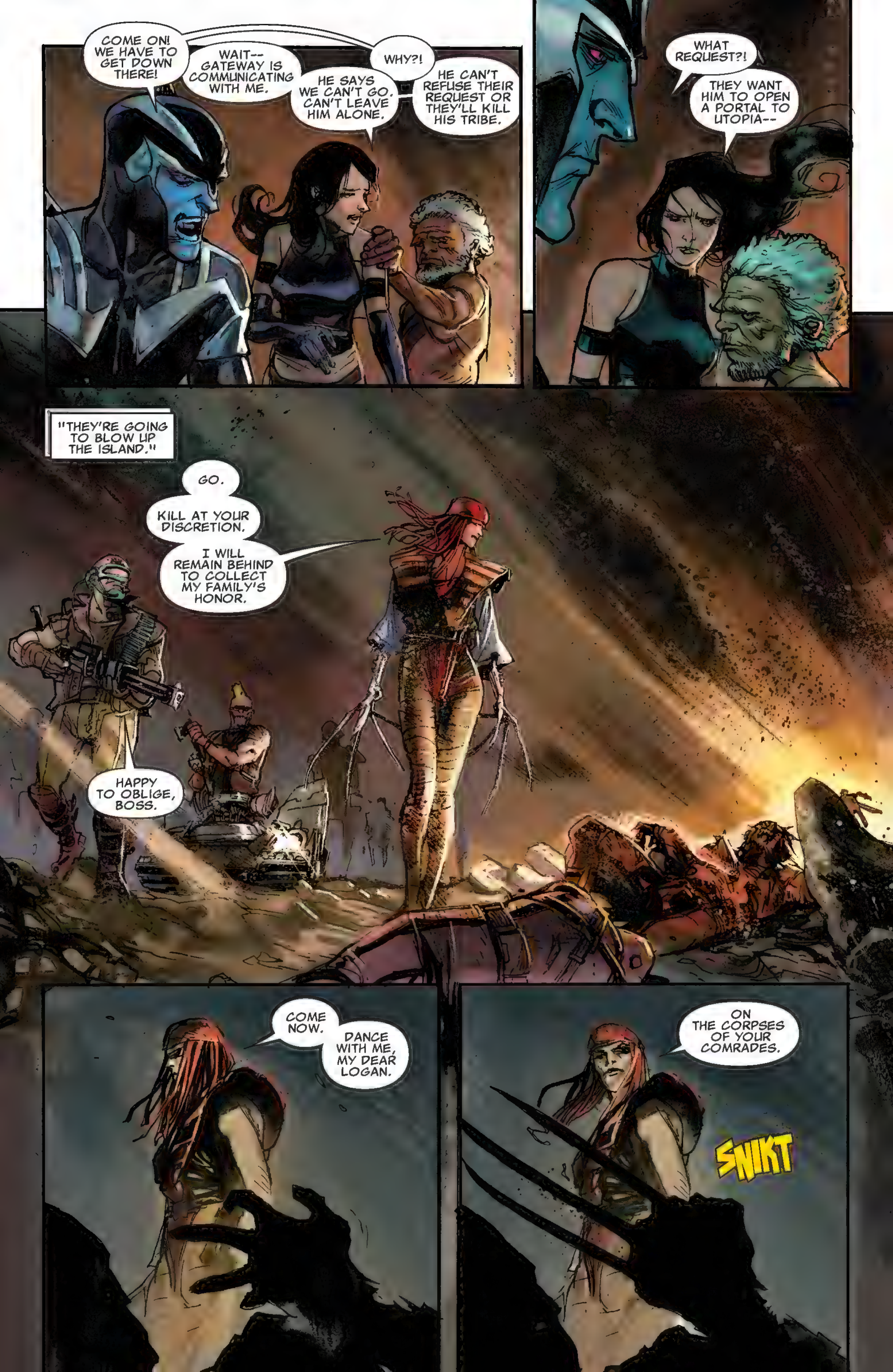

YOU GOT FEELINGS ABOUT FANTOMEX PULLIN' TRIGGER ON THE APOCALYPSE KID, *I GET IT*. BUT NOW'S *NOT* THE TIME.
YOU GOTTA *COMPARTMENTALIZE* IT, KEEP IT OUT OF THE WORK AT HAND...
JEAN-PHILLIPE ISN'T MY CONCERN, LOGAN. HE IS *TRANSPARENT*.
OVERCOMPENSATING WITH BRAVADO TO MASK HIS SELF-LOATHING AND GUILT.
I DON'T HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF *HIS* ACTIONS.
IT'S THE REAVERS, *THESE* REAVERS...THE MEMORY OF WHAT THEY DID TO US...
I HEAR YA, THESE BOYS *CRUCIFIED* ME. THINGS LIKE THAT LEAVE A *LASTING* IMPRESSION. FIGURE IT EARNS 'EM WHAT WE GOT TO GIVE, YES?
IT ISN'T THE MORALITY OF THE MISSION THAT FRIGHTENS ME...
...IT IS MY *ELATION* AT THE OPPORTUNITY TO *REPAY* THESE *DEVILS*.
IF YOU'RE FEELIN' HAPPY ABOUT KILLIN', WELL, YOU'RE *RIGHT* TO BE FRIGHTENED BY THAT.
THIS IS *WORK*, NOT *REVENGE*. NO PLACE FOR *ELATION*.
AS LONG AS THE END RESULT IS KILLING THEM, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
PROBLEM COMES WHEN YOU START TO *ENJOY IT*, DARLIN'.

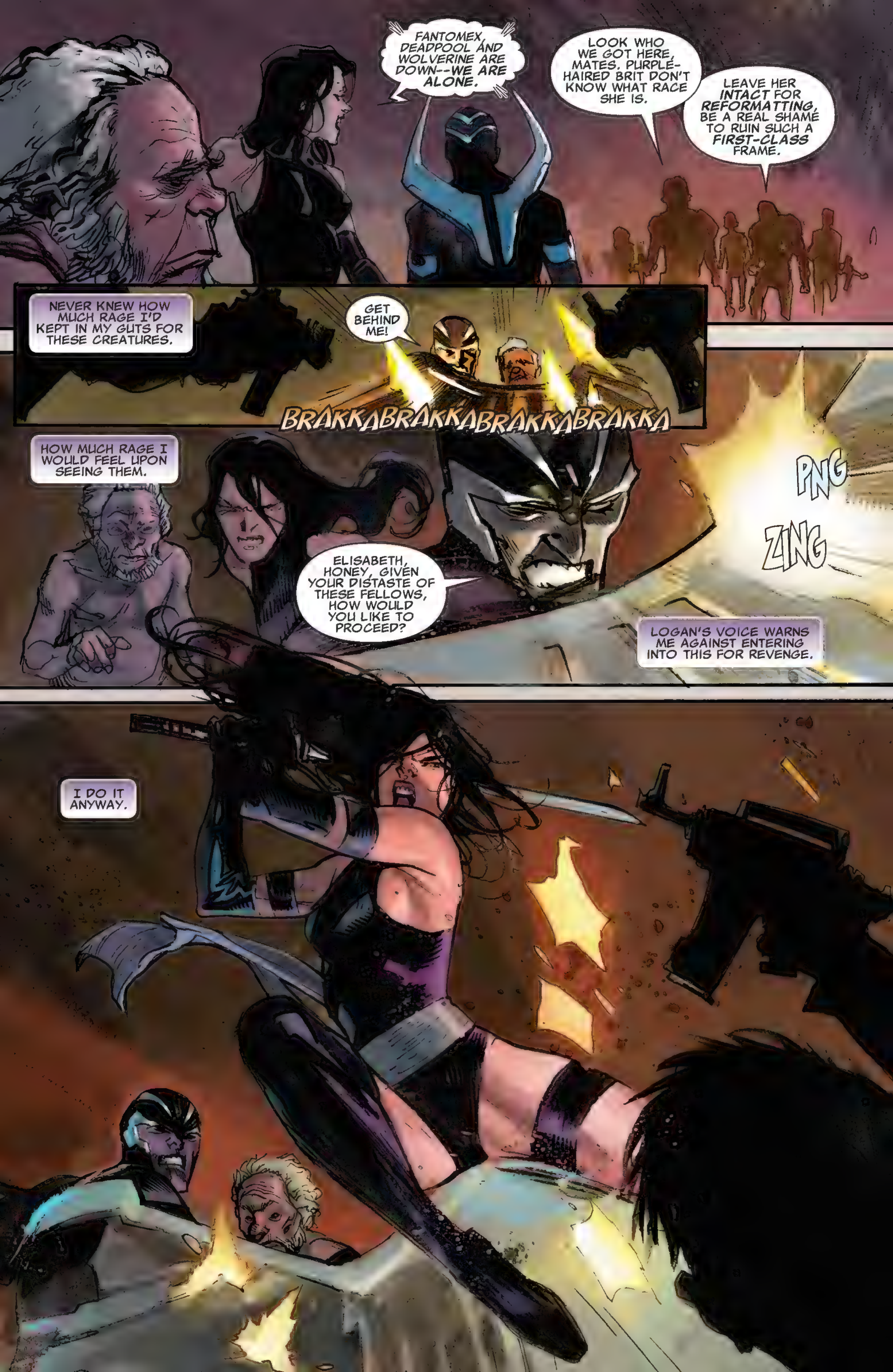

COOTERMAN'S CREEK, NORTH CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.
WHADDA YA CALL TWO HUNDRED MUTANTS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BAY?
A GOOD START!
HAR-HAR! OL' GATEWAY'S GONNA SEND US TA, THAT MUTIE ISLAND UTOPIA, AN' WE GONNA SEND IT RIGHT TA HELL!
WIPE THE MUTIE FREAKS OFF THE FACE OF THE PLANET AND TAKE THEIR BAY AREA REAL ESTATE. THAT'S WHAT MY OLD MAN WOULD CALL A "WIN-WIN."
BOSS LADY EXPECTS US TO DO IT RIGHT. CLEAN. NOTHING TRACEABLE.
ONE O' YOU TWITS GET ME ANOTHER PINT!
SHE DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT REPRISAL--NO ONE GIVES A RAT'S ASS ABOUT THE MUTIES. HELL, WE SHOULD TELEVISE IT AS WE SIGN THEIR CORPSES WITH URINE.
ENTIRE WORLD'D BE THROWIN' US A PARADE!
ADORATION IS NOT THE GOAL, SKULLBUSTER.
HUMILIATION OF WOLVERINE IS.
OVERREACHING HAS BEEN OUR FAILING FOR TOO LONG. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THERE IS NO KILLING WOLVERINE. HE IS A COCKROACH.
TO CONTINUE TO DO THE SAME THING EXPECTING DIFFERENT RESULTS... INSANITY.

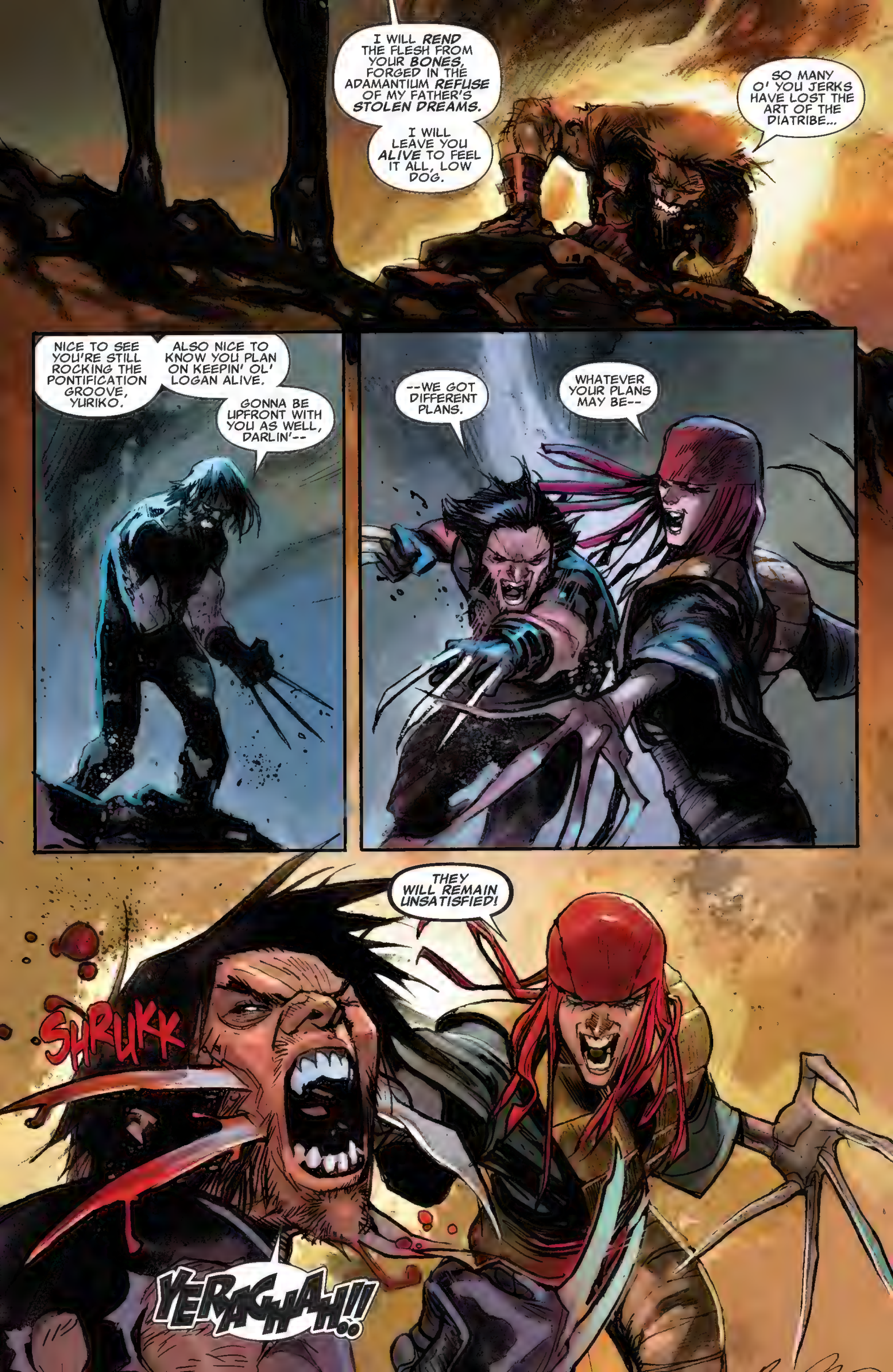

WE WILL FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON THE MUTANT POPULATION, STRIVING FOR A *MASS CASUALTY* SCENARIO. I EXPECT WOLVERINE TO SURVIVE.
WE'RE GOIN' THROUGH ALL OF THIS TO, WHAT, IRRITATE 'IM A LITTLE BIT?
WOLVERINE IS A FAILED SAMURAI.
HE NEVER COULD MEET THE STANDARDS REQUIRED OF HIM YET IS FOREVER STRIVING TO.
PARAMOUNT TO HIM, ABOVE ALL ELSE, IS *HONOR.*
TO KILL A MAN IN SEARCH OF HONOR, DO NOT AIM FOR HIS *HEAD--*
AIM FOR HIS *HEART.*
SHNKK
SPEAKIN' O' HEART, GOTTA GO DRAIN MINE.
PREPARE GATEWAY. WE LEAVE ON THE HOUR. NO GOOD MIXING THE VOLATILE COMPONENTS WE GOT STRAPPED ON WITH YOU ROWDY DRUNKS. HATE FOR THE MISSION TO END *PREMATURELY.*
SKULLBUSTER IS PROBABLY USED TO *PREMATURE* ENDINGS.
HAR-HAR.

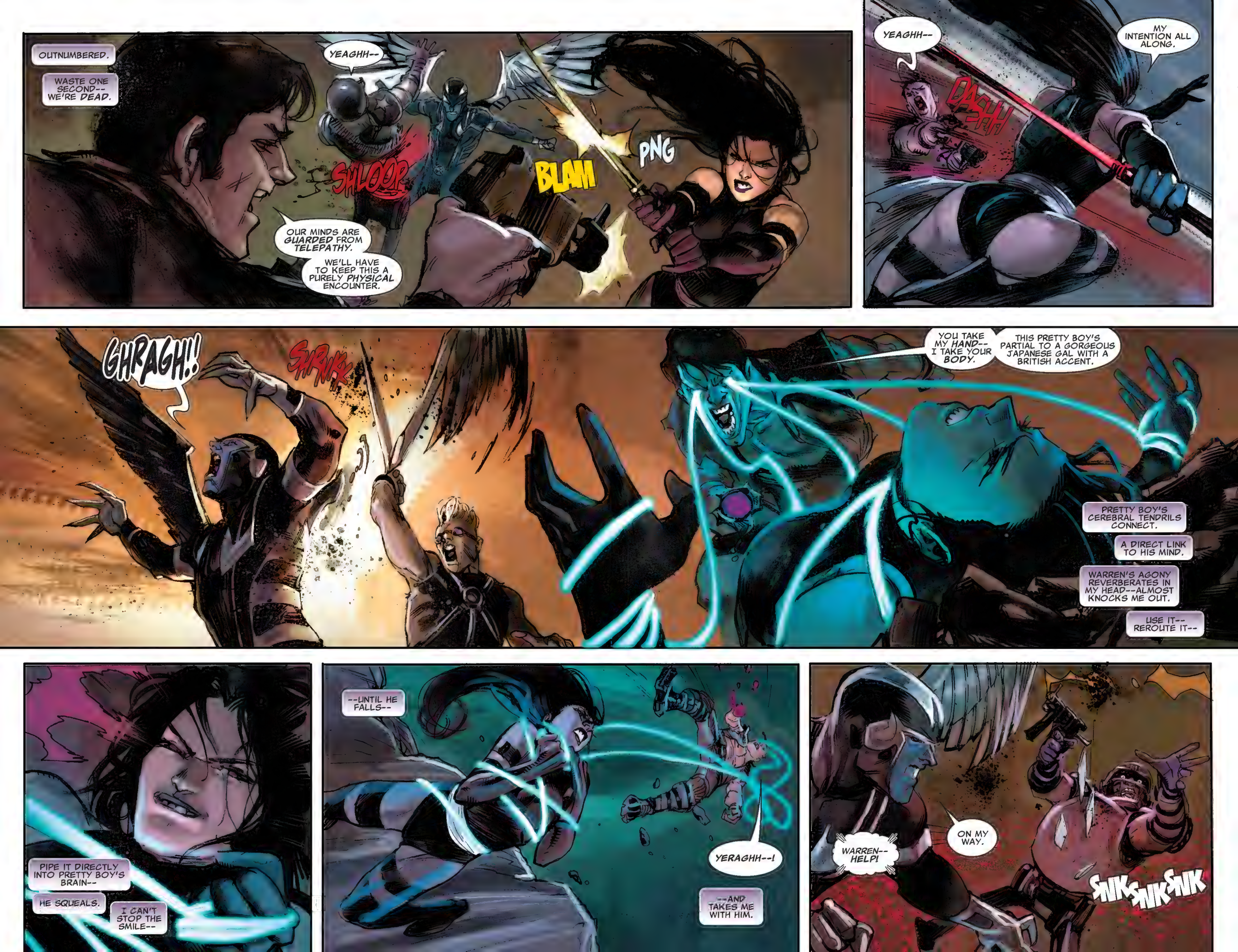

PEOPLE DYIN' ON THE STREET, BUT THE SUBURBAN SCUMBAGS, THEY DON'T CARE, JUST GET FAT AND DYE THEIR HAIR! I LOVE LIVIN' IN THE CITY!
BETS, WE GOT MOTION. NEED THE SKINNY FROM GATEWAY, NOW-LIKE.
I WILL **EXTRACT** THE INFORMATION FROM GATEWAY ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.
YOU'RE LETTING ARCHANGEL DO THE THINKING, WARREN.
GATEWAY'S **NOT** HERE OF HIS OWN VOLITION. HE'S ONE OF THE **GOOD** GUYS.
GREETINGS, OLD FRIEND. WE CAME AS QUICKLY AS WE COULD.
WHAT HAVE THESE FIENDS PLOTTED?
I LOVE LIVIN' IN THE CITY! PEOPLE PUKIN' EVERYWHERE.
PILES OF BLOOD, SCABS AND HAIR. BODIES WASTED IN THE STREE--
WHAT THE--?!
SKULLBUSTER. LONG TIME NO SEE, MATE.

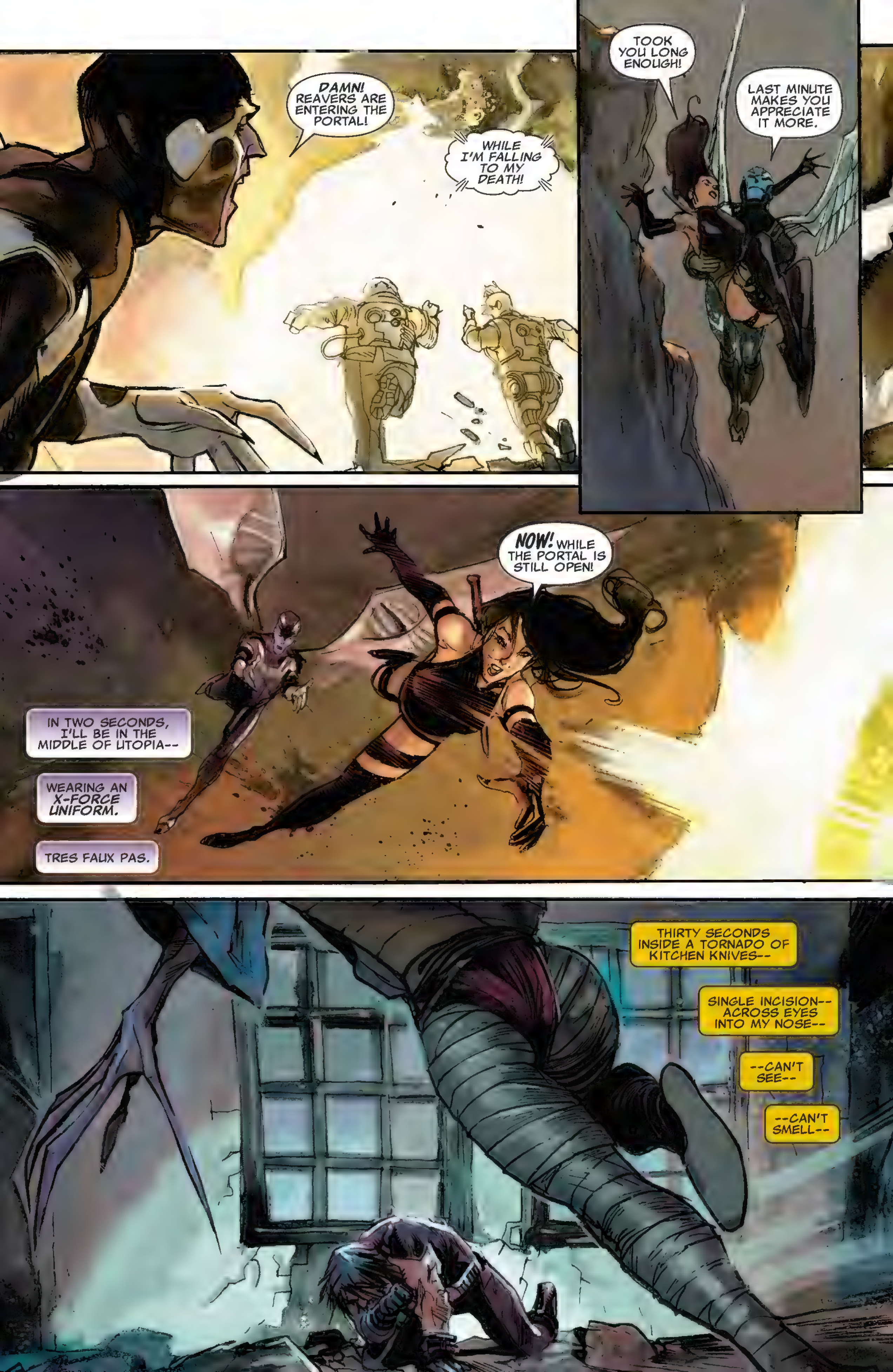

YOU REMEMBER MY THREE SISTERS OF DOOM?
THEM DAMES GOT INCISIVE TONGUES.
YOU DON'T KNOW ME.
MY GOD! LOGAN! PULL BACK--
IT'S A SUICIDE MISSION!!
LAST TIME WE MET, I MADE YOU AN' THEM CLAWS A GUARANTEE.
CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD TO KEEP MY PROMISE--
DEEP
"--TO SEND YOU TO HELL!"
GRADOOOM

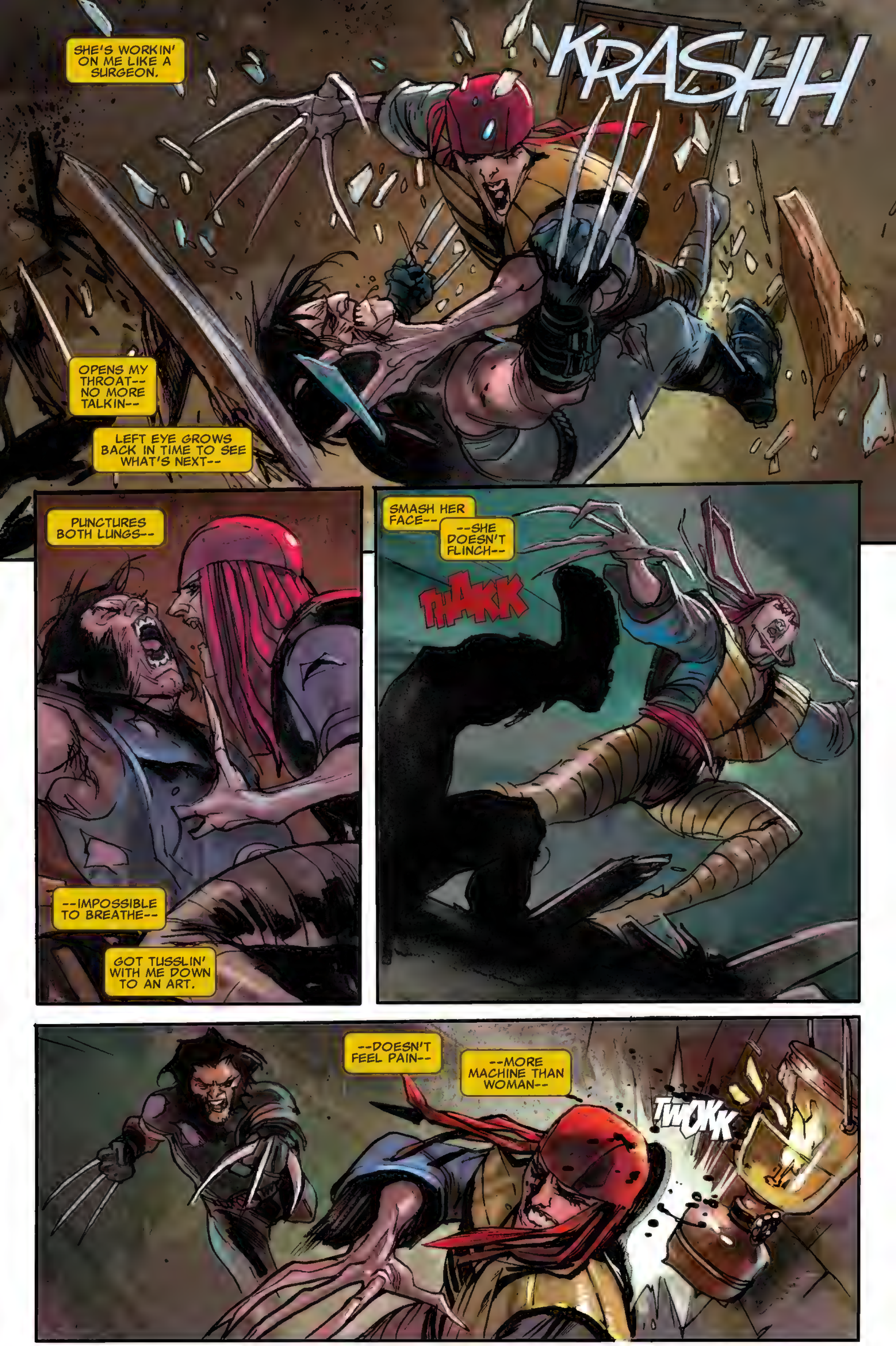

COME ON! WE HAVE TO GET DOWN THERE!
WAIT-- GATEWAY IS COMMUNICATING WITH ME.
WHY?!
HE SAYS WE CAN'T GO. CAN'T LEAVE HIM ALONE.
HE CAN'T REFUSE THEIR REQUEST OR THEY'LL KILL HIS TRIBE.
WHAT REQUEST?!
THEY WANT HIM TO OPEN A PORTAL TO UTOPIA--
"THEY'RE GOING TO BLOW UP THE ISLAND."
GO.
KILL AT YOUR DISCRETION.
I WILL REMAIN BEHIND TO COLLECT MY FAMILY'S HONOR.
HAPPY TO OBLIGE, BOSS.
COME NOW.
DANCE WITH ME, MY DEAR LOGAN.
ON THE CORPSES OF YOUR COMRADES.
SNIKT

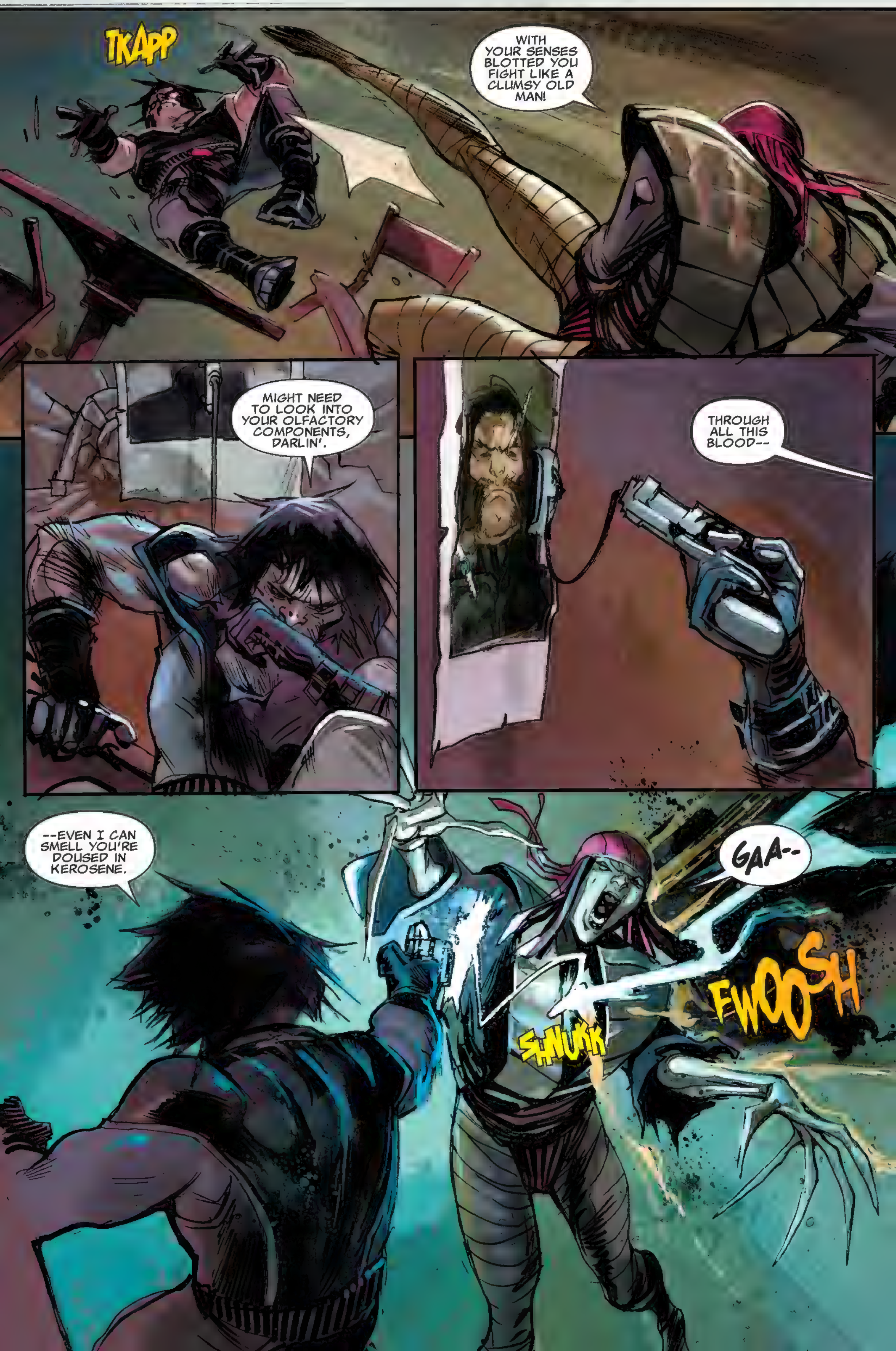

FANTOMEX, DEADPOOL AND WOLVERINE ARE DOWN--WE ARE ALONE.
LOOK WHO WE GOT HERE, MATES. PURPLE-HAIRED BRIT DON'T KNOW WHAT RACE SHE IS.
LEAVE HER INTACT FOR REFORMATTING, BE A REAL SHAME TO RUIN SUCH A FIRST-CLASS FRAME.
NEVER KNEW HOW MUCH RAGE I'D KEPT IN MY GUTS FOR THESE CREATURES.
GET BEHIND ME!
BRAKKABRAKKABRAKKABRAKKA
HOW MUCH RAGE I WOULD FEEL UPON SEEING THEM.
PNG
ZING
ELISABETH, HONEY, GIVEN YOUR DISTASTE OF THESE FELLOWS, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO PROCEED?
LOGAN'S VOICE WARNS ME AGAINST ENTERING INTO THIS FOR REVENGE.
I DO IT ANYWAY.

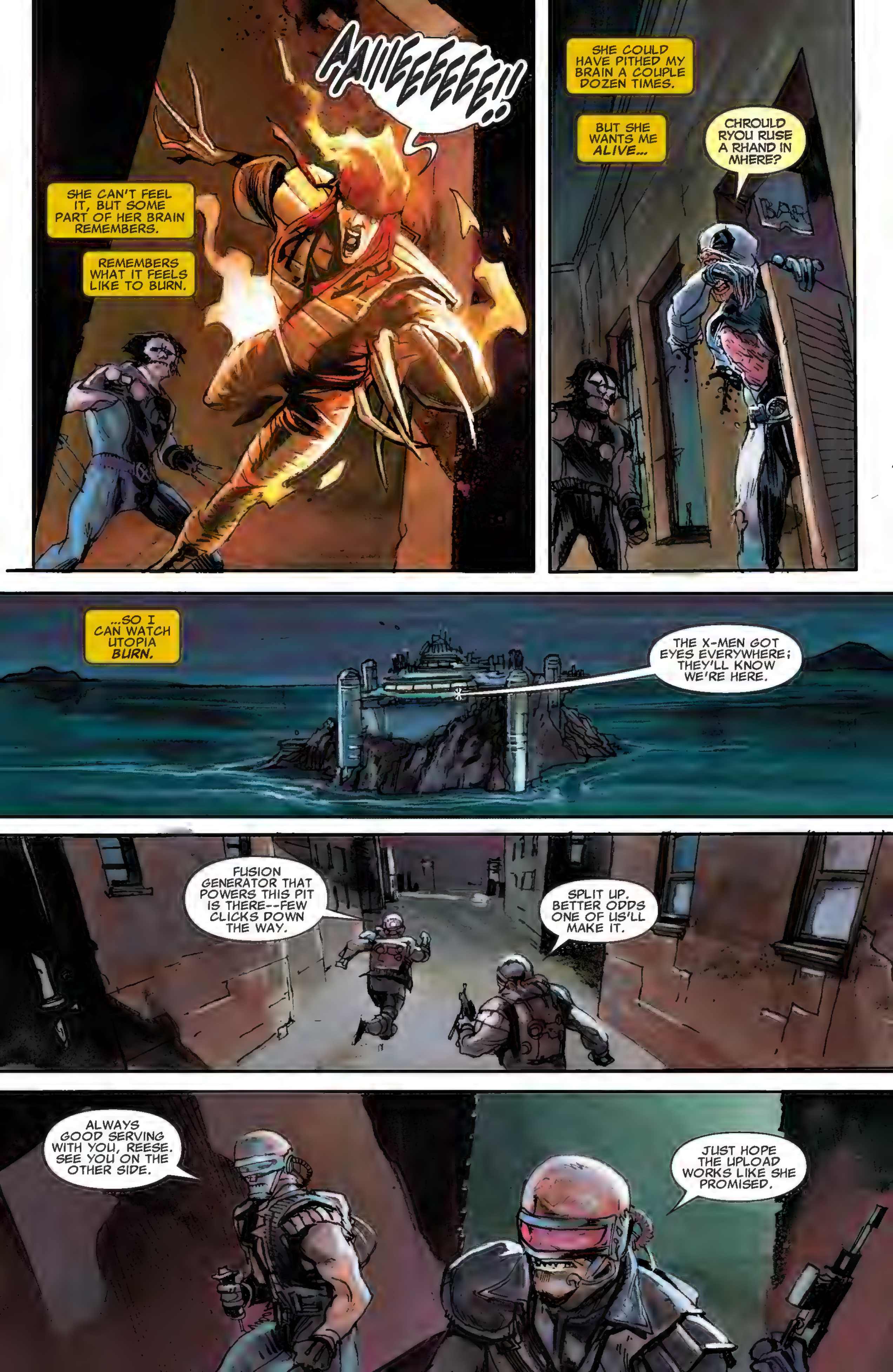

I WILL *REND* THE FLESH FROM YOUR *BONES*, FORGED IN THE ADAMANTIUM *REFUSE* OF MY FATHER'S *STOLEN DREAMS.*
I WILL LEAVE YOU *ALIVE* TO FEEL IT ALL, LOW DOG.
SO MANY O' YOU JERKS HAVE LOST THE ART OF THE DIATRIBE...
NICE TO SEE YOU'RE STILL ROCKING THE PONTIFICATION GROOVE, YURIKO.
ALSO NICE TO KNOW YOU PLAN ON KEEPIN' OL' LOGAN ALIVE.
GONNA BE UPFRONT WITH YOU AS WELL, DARLIN'--
WHATEVER YOUR PLANS MAY BE--
--WE GOT DIFFERENT PLANS.
THEY WILL REMAIN UNSATISFIED!
SHRUKK
YERAGHAH!!

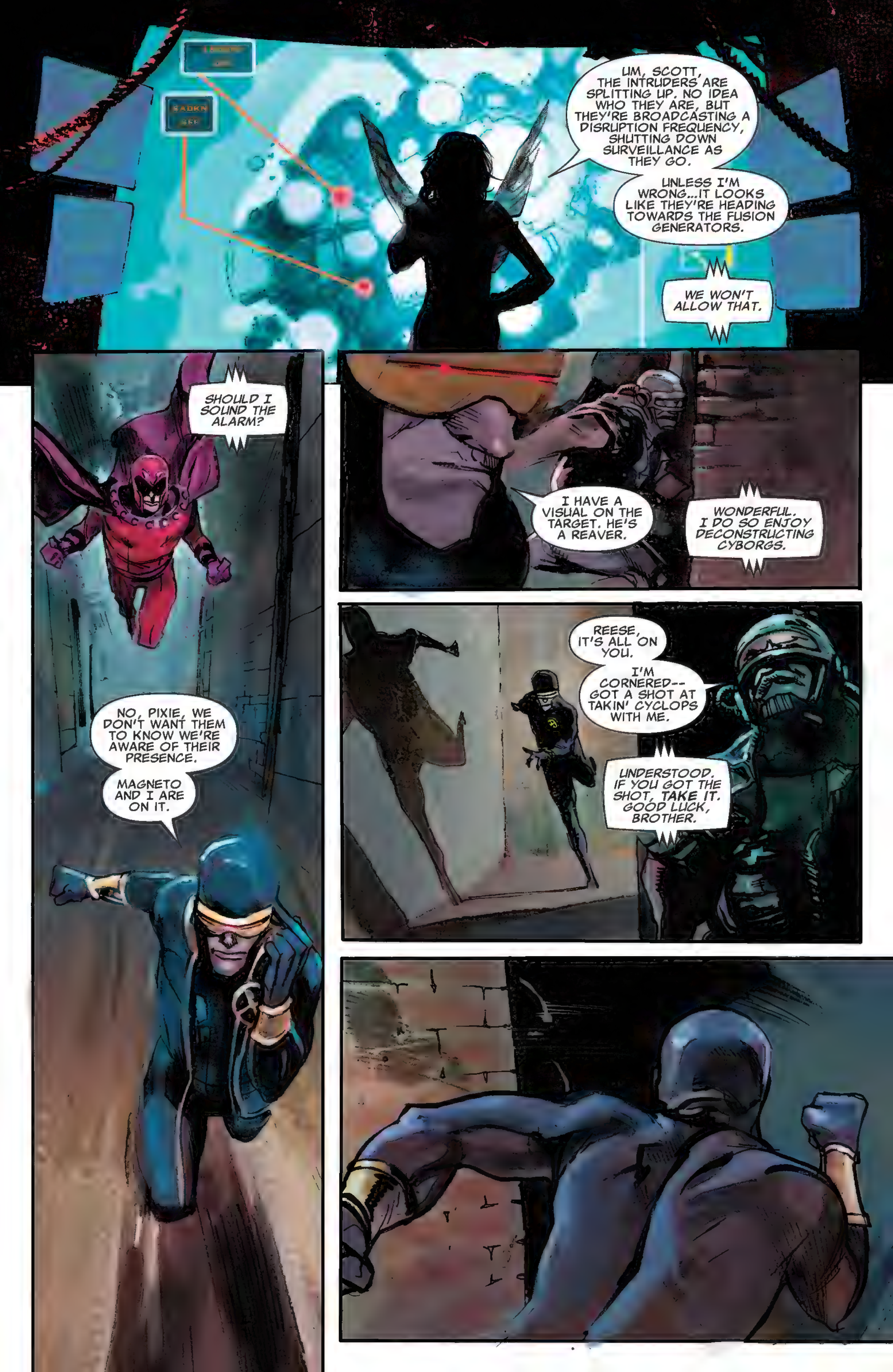

OUTNUMBERED.
WASTE ONE SECOND-- WE'RE *DEAD*.
YEAGHH--
SHLOOP
BLAM
PNG
OUR MINDS ARE *GUARDED* FROM *TELEPATHY*.
WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP THIS A PURELY *PHYSICAL* ENCOUNTER.
YEAGHH--
MY INTENTION ALL ALONG.
DASHH
GHRAGH!!
SHRIKK
YOU TAKE MY *HAND*-- I TAKE YOUR *BODY*.
THIS PRETTY BOY'S PARTIAL TO A GORGEOUS JAPANESE GAL WITH A BRITISH ACCENT.
PRETTY BOY'S CEREBRAL TENDRILS CONNECT.
A DIRECT LINK TO HIS MIND.
WARREN'S AGONY REVERBERATES IN MY HEAD--ALMOST KNOCKS ME OUT.
USE IT-- REROUTE IT--
PIPE IT DIRECTLY INTO PRETTY BOY'S BRAIN--
HE SQUEALS.
I CAN'T STOP THE SMILE--
--UNTIL HE FALLS--
YERAGHH--!
--AND TAKES ME WITH HIM.
WARREN-- HELP!
ON MY WAY.
SNKSNKSNK

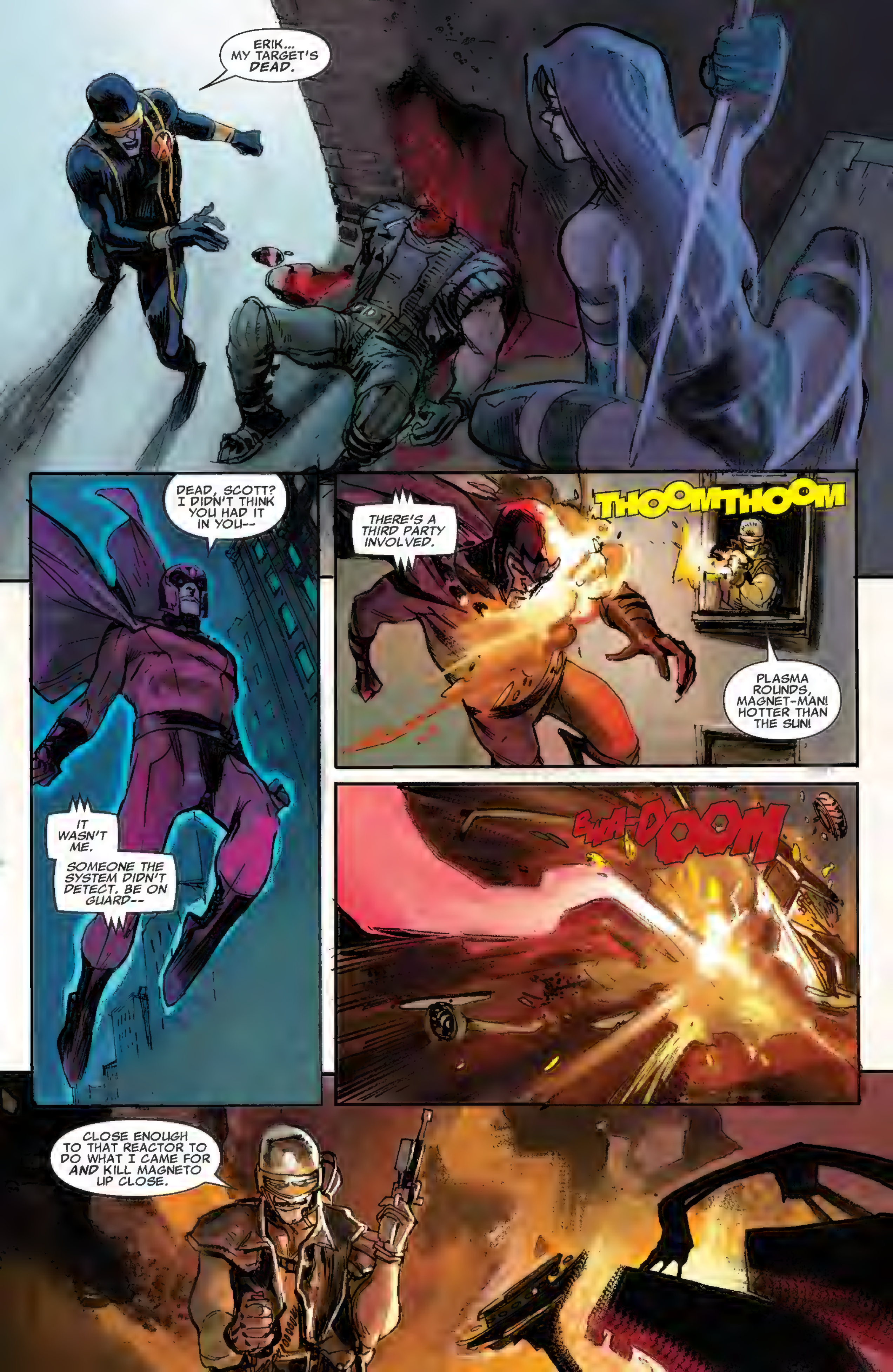

DAMN! REAVERS ARE ENTERING THE PORTAL!
WHILE I'M FALLING TO MY DEATH!
TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH!
LAST MINUTE MAKES YOU APPRECIATE IT MORE.
NOW! WHILE THE PORTAL IS STILL OPEN!
IN TWO SECONDS, I'LL BE IN THE MIDDLE OF UTOPIA--
WEARING AN X-FORCE UNIFORM.
TRES FAUX PAS.
THIRTY SECONDS INSIDE A TORNADO OF KITCHEN KNIVES--
SINGLE INCISION-- ACROSS EYES INTO MY NOSE--
--CAN'T SEE--
--CAN'T SMELL--

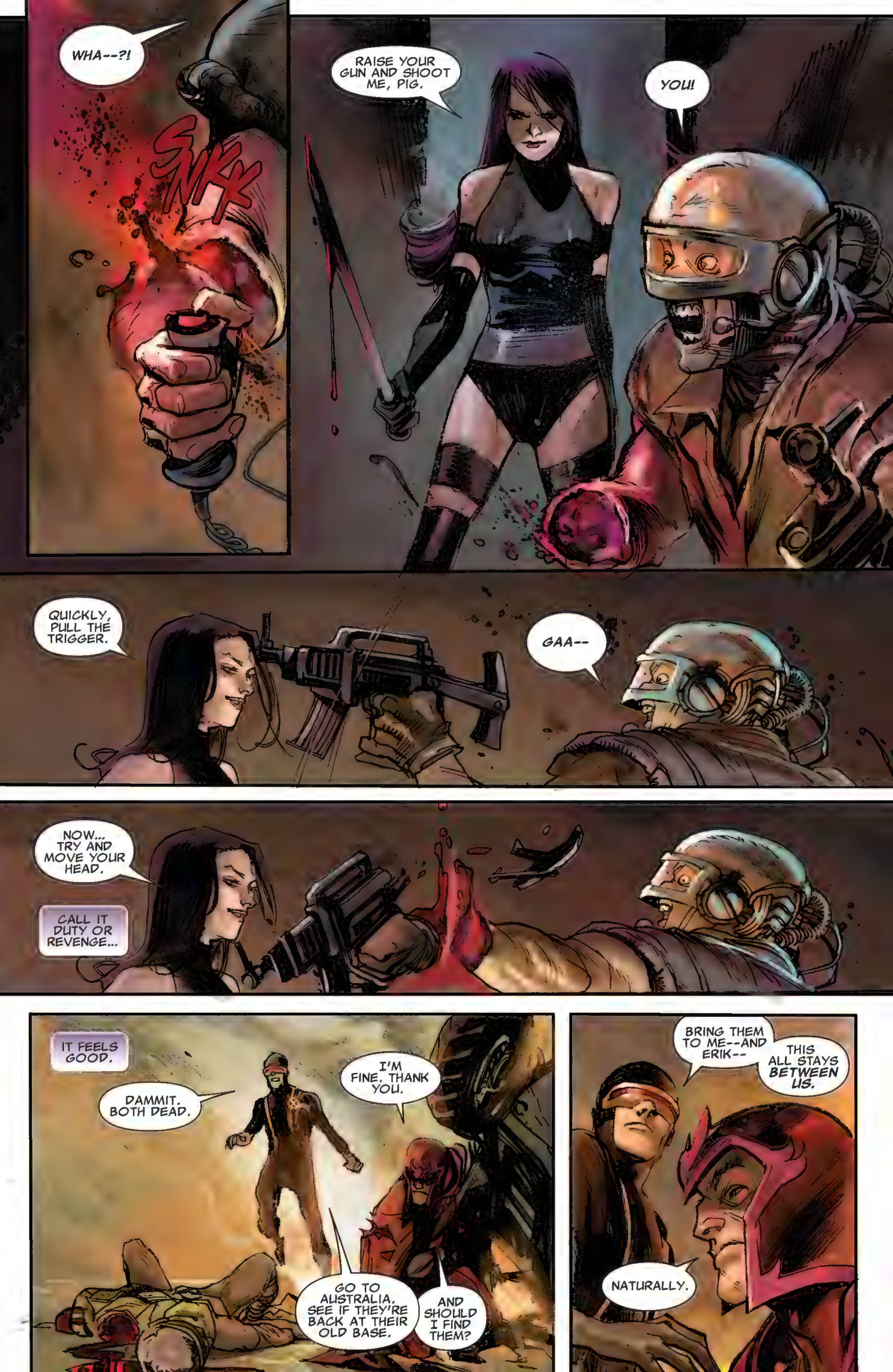

SHE'S WORKIN' ON ME LIKE A SURGEON.
KRASHH
OPENS MY THROAT-- NO MORE TALKIN--
LEFT EYE GROWS BACK IN TIME TO SEE WHAT'S NEXT--
PUNCTURES BOTH LUNGS--
--IMPOSSIBLE TO BREATHE--
GOT TUSSLIN' WITH ME DOWN TO AN ART.
SMASH HER FACE--
--SHE DOESN'T FLINCH--
THAKK
--DOESN'T FEEL PAIN--
--MORE MACHINE THAN WOMAN--
TWOKK

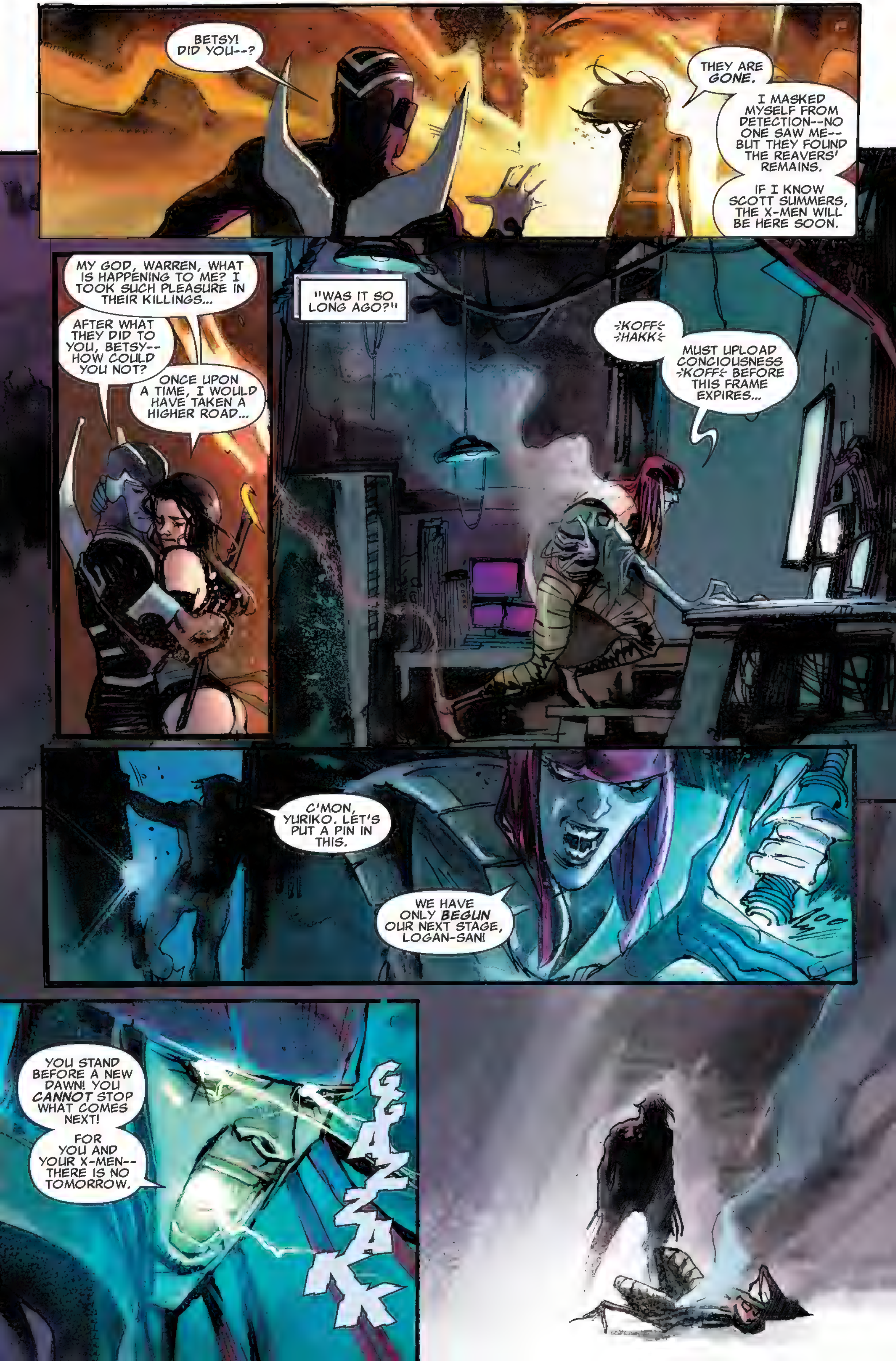

TKAPP
WITH YOUR SENSES BLOTTED YOU FIGHT LIKE A CLUMSY OLD MAN!
MIGHT NEED TO LOOK INTO YOUR OLFACTORY COMPONENTS, DARLIN'.
THROUGH ALL THIS BLOOD--
--EVEN I CAN SMELL YOU'RE DOUSED IN KEROSENE.
GAA--
SHNUKK
FWOOSH

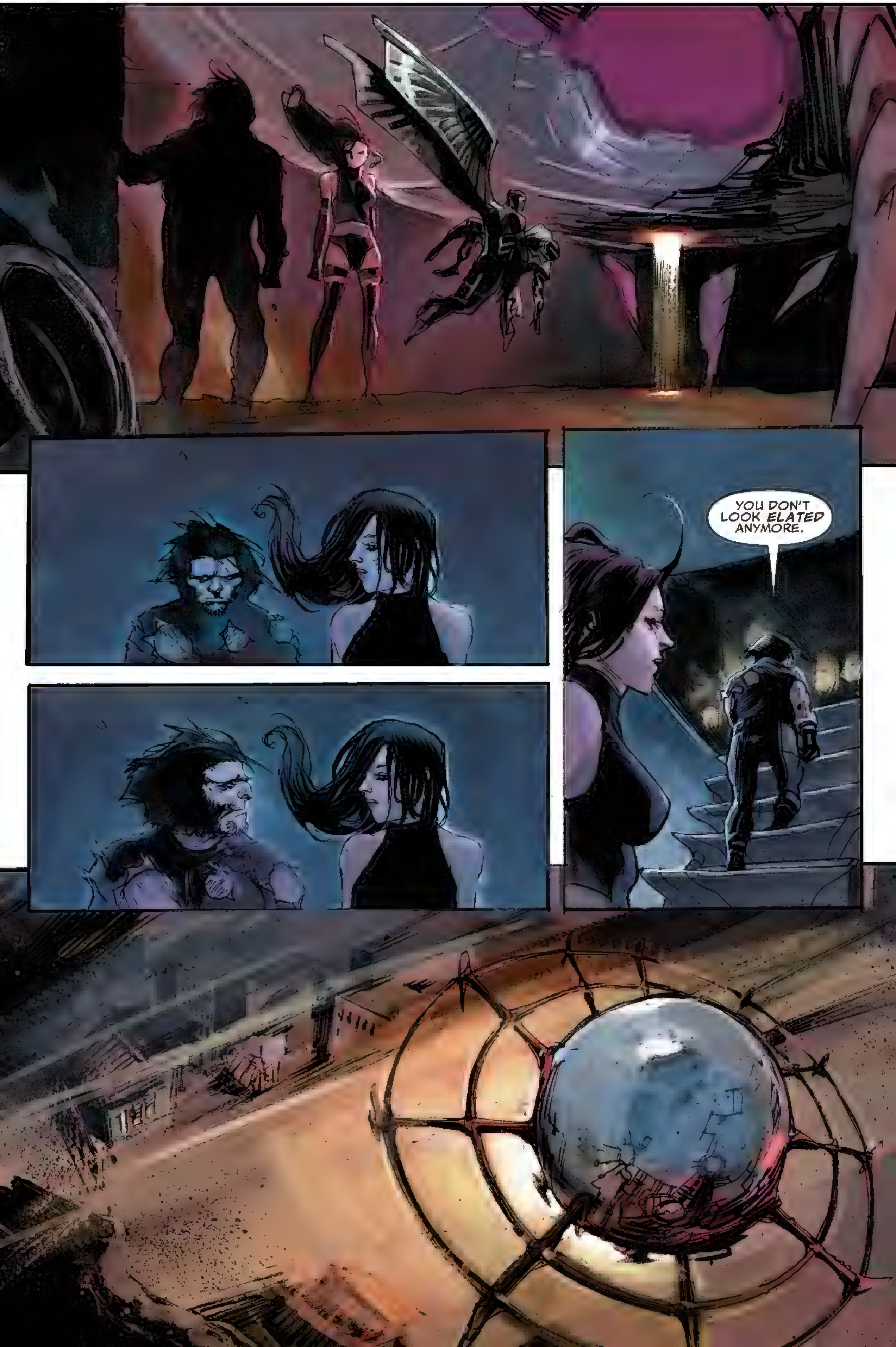

AAIIIEEEEEE!!
SHE CAN'T FEEL IT, BUT SOME PART OF HER BRAIN REMEMBERS.
REMEMBERS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BURN.
SHE COULD HAVE PITHED MY BRAIN A COUPLE DOZEN TIMES.
BUT SHE WANTS ME ALIVE...
CHROULD RYOU RUSE A RHAND IN MHERE?
BAR
...SO I CAN WATCH UTOPIA BURN.
THE X-MEN GOT EYES EVERYWHERE; THEY'LL KNOW WE'RE HERE.
FUSION GENERATOR THAT POWERS THIS PIT IS THERE--FEW CLICKS DOWN THE WAY.
SPLIT UP. BETTER ODDS ONE OF US'LL MAKE IT.
ALWAYS GOOD SERVING WITH YOU, REESE. SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE.
JUST HOPE THE UPLOAD WORKS LIKE SHE PROMISED.


UM, SCOTT, THE INTRUDERS ARE SPLITTING UP. NO IDEA WHO THEY ARE, BUT THEY'RE BROADCASTING A DISRUPTION FREQUENCY, SHUTTING DOWN SURVEILLANCE AS THEY GO.
UNLESS I'M WRONG...IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HEADING TOWARDS THE FUSION GENERATORS.
WE WON'T ALLOW THAT.
SHOULD I SOUND THE ALARM?
NO, PIXIE, WE DON'T WANT THEM TO KNOW WE'RE AWARE OF THEIR PRESENCE.
MAGNETO AND I ARE ON IT.
I HAVE A VISUAL ON THE TARGET. HE'S A REAVER.
WONDERFUL. I DO SO ENJOY DECONSTRUCTING CYBORGS.
REESE, IT'S ALL ON YOU.
I'M CORNERED-- GOT A SHOT AT TAKIN' CYCLOPS WITH ME.
UNDERSTOOD. IF YOU GOT THE SHOT, TAKE IT. GOOD LUCK, BROTHER.


ERIK... MY TARGET'S *DEAD.*
DEAD, SCOTT? I DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD IT IN YOU--
IT WASN'T ME.
SOMEONE THE SYSTEM DIDN'T DETECT. BE ON GUARD--
THERE'S A THIRD PARTY INVOLVED.
THOOMTHOOM
PLASMA ROUNDS, MAGNET-MAN! HOTTER THAN THE SUN!
BWA-DOOOM
CLOSE ENOUGH TO THAT REACTOR TO DO WHAT I CAME FOR *AND* KILL MAGNETO UP CLOSE.


WHA--?!
SNIKT
RAISE YOUR GUN AND SHOOT ME, PIG.
YOU!
QUICKLY, PULL THE TRIGGER.
GAA--
NOW... TRY AND MOVE YOUR HEAD.
CALL IT DUTY OR REVENGE...
IT FEELS GOOD.
DAMMIT. BOTH DEAD.
I'M FINE, THANK YOU.
GO TO AUSTRALIA. SEE IF THEY'RE BACK AT THEIR OLD BASE.
AND SHOULD I FIND THEM?
BRING THEM TO ME--AND ERIK--
THIS ALL STAYS BETWEEN US.
NATURALLY.

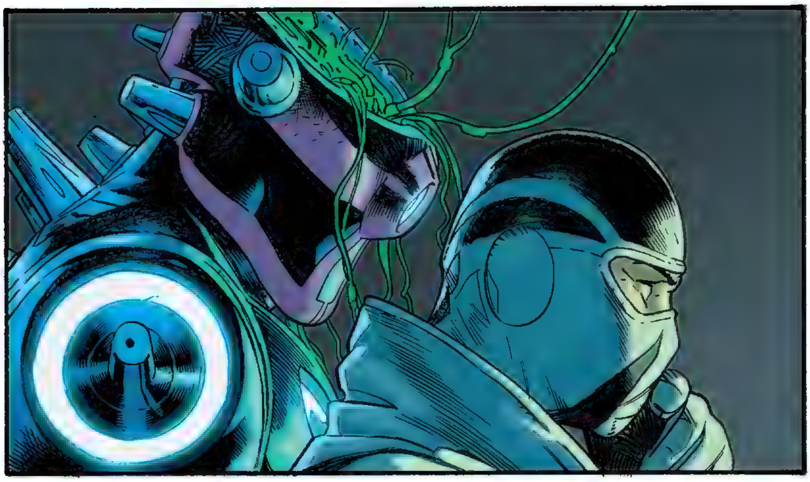

BETSY! DID YOU--?
THEY ARE *GONE*.
I MASKED MYSELF FROM DETECTION--NO ONE SAW ME--BUT THEY FOUND THE REAVERS' REMAINS.
IF I KNOW SCOTT SUMMERS, THE X-MEN WILL BE HERE SOON.
MY GOD, WARREN, WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME? I TOOK SUCH PLEASURE IN THEIR KILLINGS...
AFTER WHAT THEY DID TO YOU, BETSY--HOW COULD YOU NOT?
ONCE UPON A TIME, I WOULD HAVE TAKEN A HIGHER ROAD...
"WAS IT SO LONG AGO?"
KOFF HAKK
MUST UPLOAD CONCIOUSNESS KOFF BEFORE THIS FRAME EXPIRES...
C'MON, YURIKO. LET'S PUT A PIN IN THIS.
WE HAVE ONLY *BEGUN* OUR NEXT STAGE, LOGAN-SAN!
YOU STAND BEFORE A NEW DAWN! YOU *CANNOT* STOP WHAT COMES NEXT!
FOR YOU AND YOUR X-MEN--THERE IS NO TOMORROW.
GZZAKK


YOU DON'T LOOK ELATED ANYMORE.

05

DEATHLOK NATION

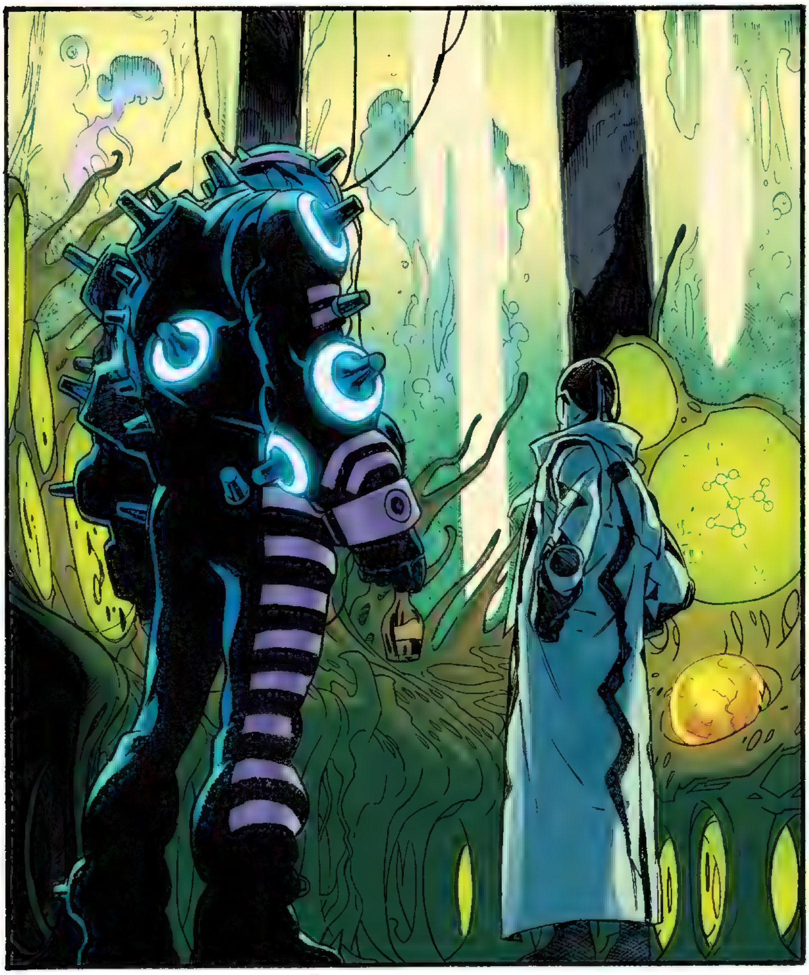
CHAPTER 1: THE TIME INFECTION OF WEAPON INFINITY



I, TOO, WAS BORN IN *THE WORLD*.

RAISED IN RAPIDLY ADVANCING UNNATURAL TIME.

WHILE I GREW TO ADULTHOOD-- ONLY A MONTH PASSED OUTSIDE.

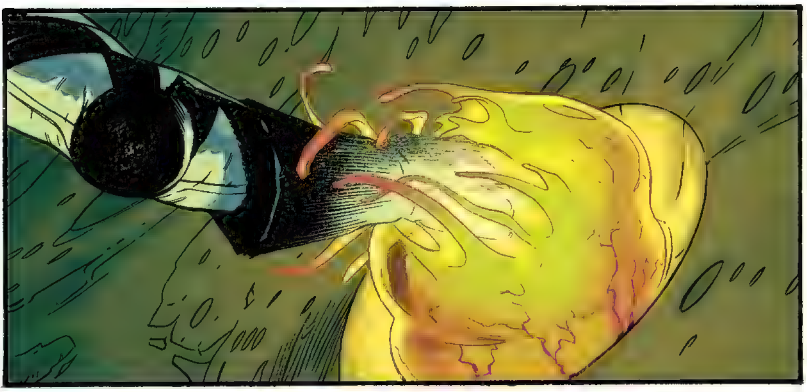


TIME IN THE WORLD IS ANALOGOUS TO WATER. A FISH TANK WHERE TIME'S TEMPERATURE IS CONTROLLED IN ORDER TO MANIPULATE THE EVOLUTION OF THE FISH.

IF HOT ENOUGH, TIME BOILS OVER,--FLOWING UNCONTROLLABLY IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

IN MY ABSENCE SOMEONE LEFT THE KETTLE ON.

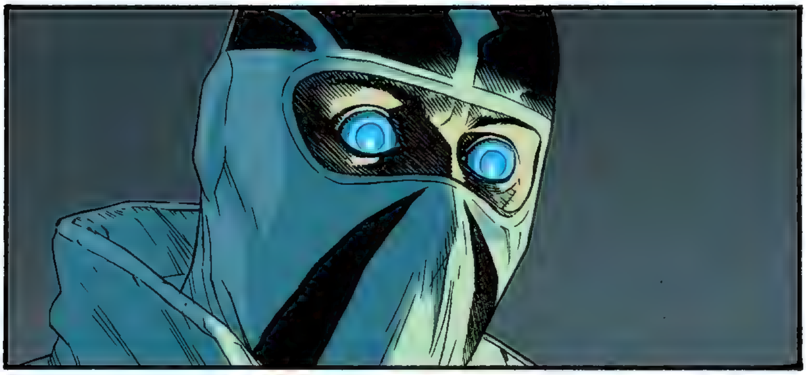
A MILLION YEARS HAVE PASSED HERE SINCE MY LAST VISIT.



AND A MILLION YEARS OF EVOLUTION TENDS TO DRASTICALLY CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE.

ONCE MY HOME, IT IS ALMOST COMPLETELY FOREIGN TO ME NOW.

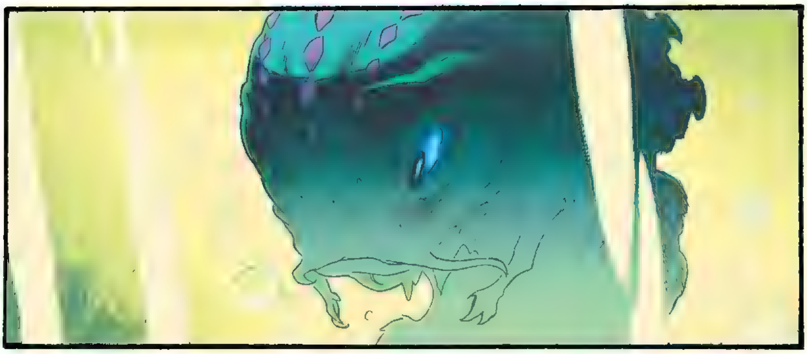
FORTUNATELY, ULTIMATON REMAINS TO GUARD MY LABS.



THE WORLD IS A MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENT DESIGNED TO CREATE SUPER-SOLDIERS USING SENTINEL TECHNOLOGY.

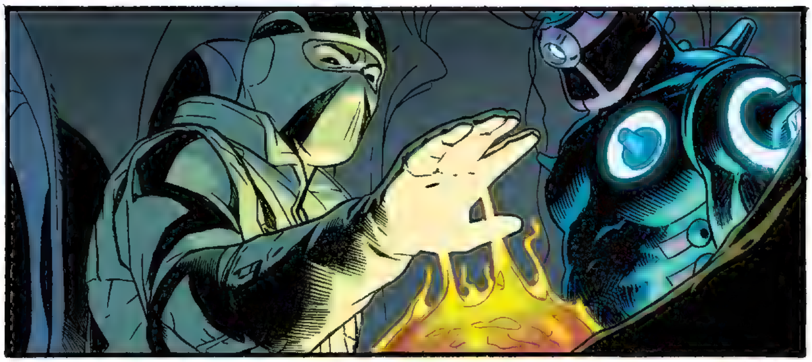
BUT SINCE I'VE BEEN GONE IT HAS BECOME...

...SOMETHING ELSE.



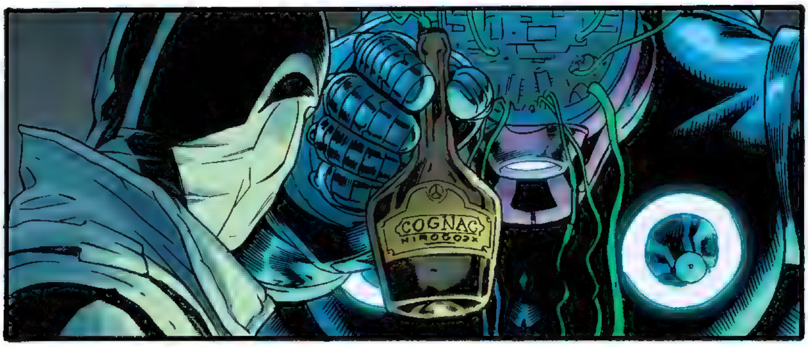
IT IS NOT SENTIENT--SUCH AN OUTCOME IS IMPOSSIBLE BY DESIGN--BUT THERE IS INTENTION BEHIND THE CHANGES I SEE.

LEADING ME TO THE NEXT LOGICAL CONCLUSION: THERE IS SOMEONE (THING) HERE CONTROLLING IT.



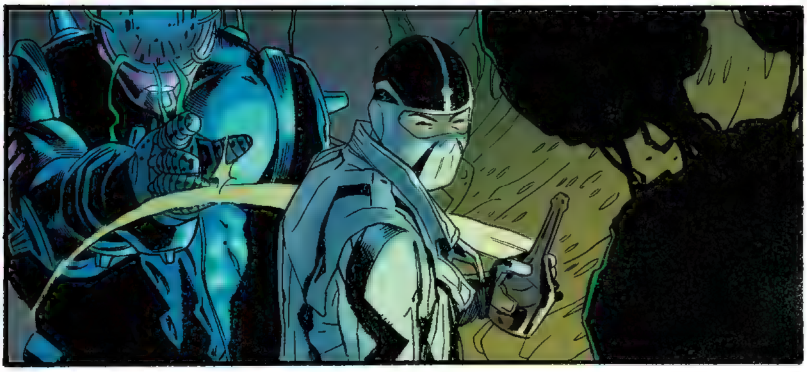
WHILE SEARCHING FOR THIS MYSTERIOUS TRESPASSER I UNCOVERED A GRAVEYARD OF CYBERLIFE.

NOT PHALANX, NOT TECHNARCHY, NOT REAVER. BUT A FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER WITH ELEMENTS OF ALL THREE, AMID OTHER, MORE FAMILIAR, MAN-MADE TECHNOLOGIES.



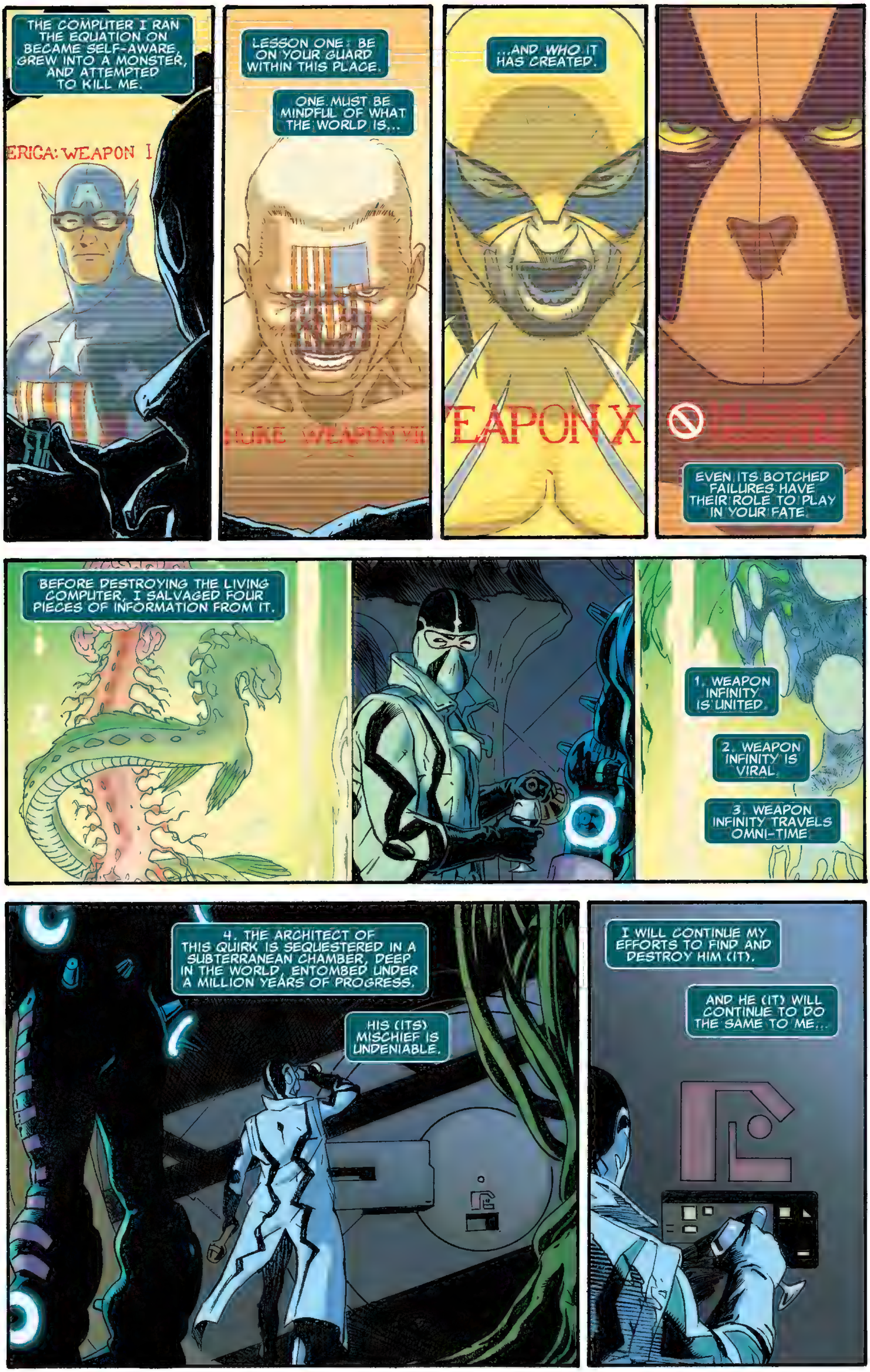
STARK.
ROXXON.
OSBORN.

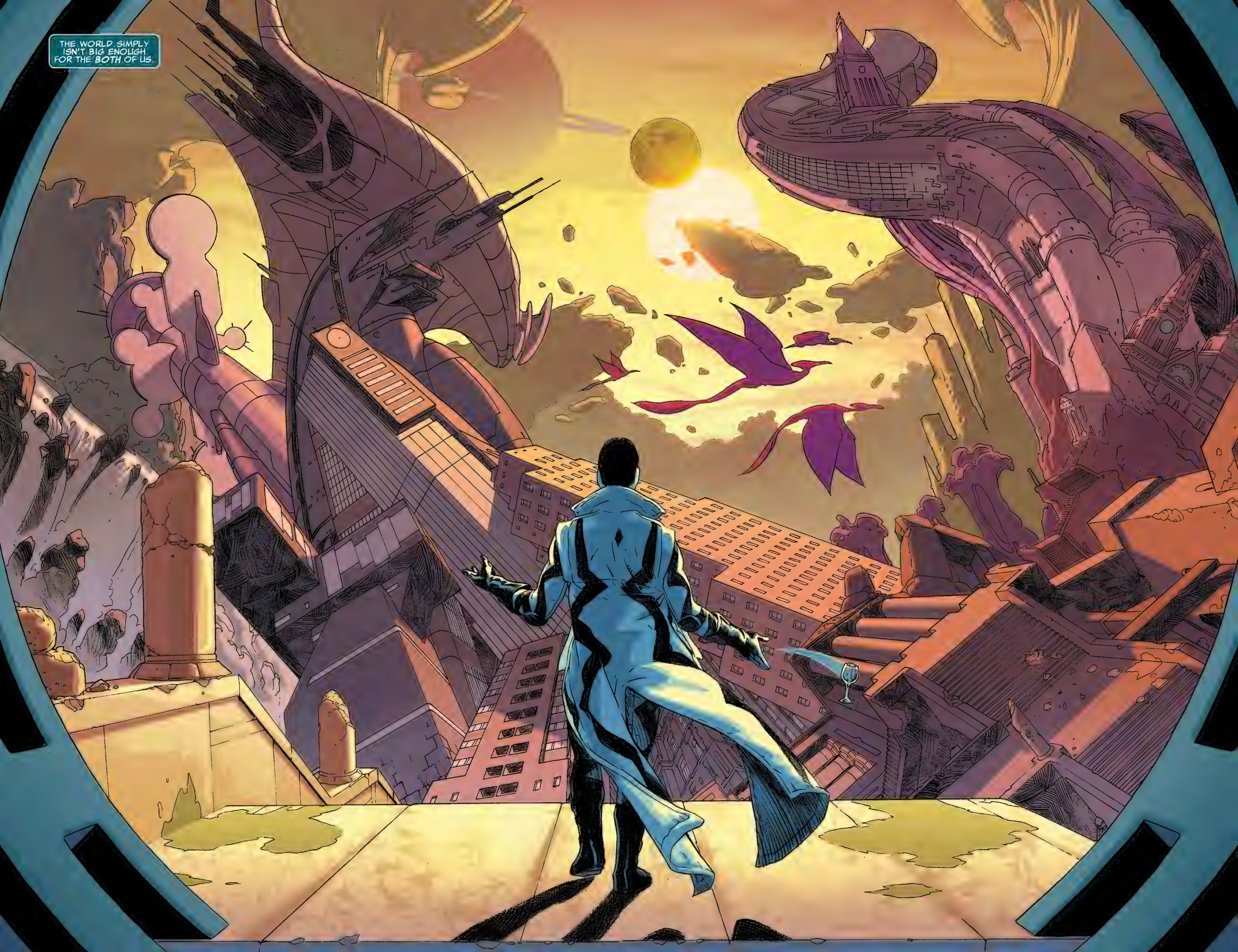
I SPENT MONTHS RECOMPOSITING SIDE FILES ON ZOMBIFIED BIO-COMPUTERS IN HOPES THEY WOULD REVEAL WHO (WHAT) HAD SET THIS PLACE TO FAST FORWARD.

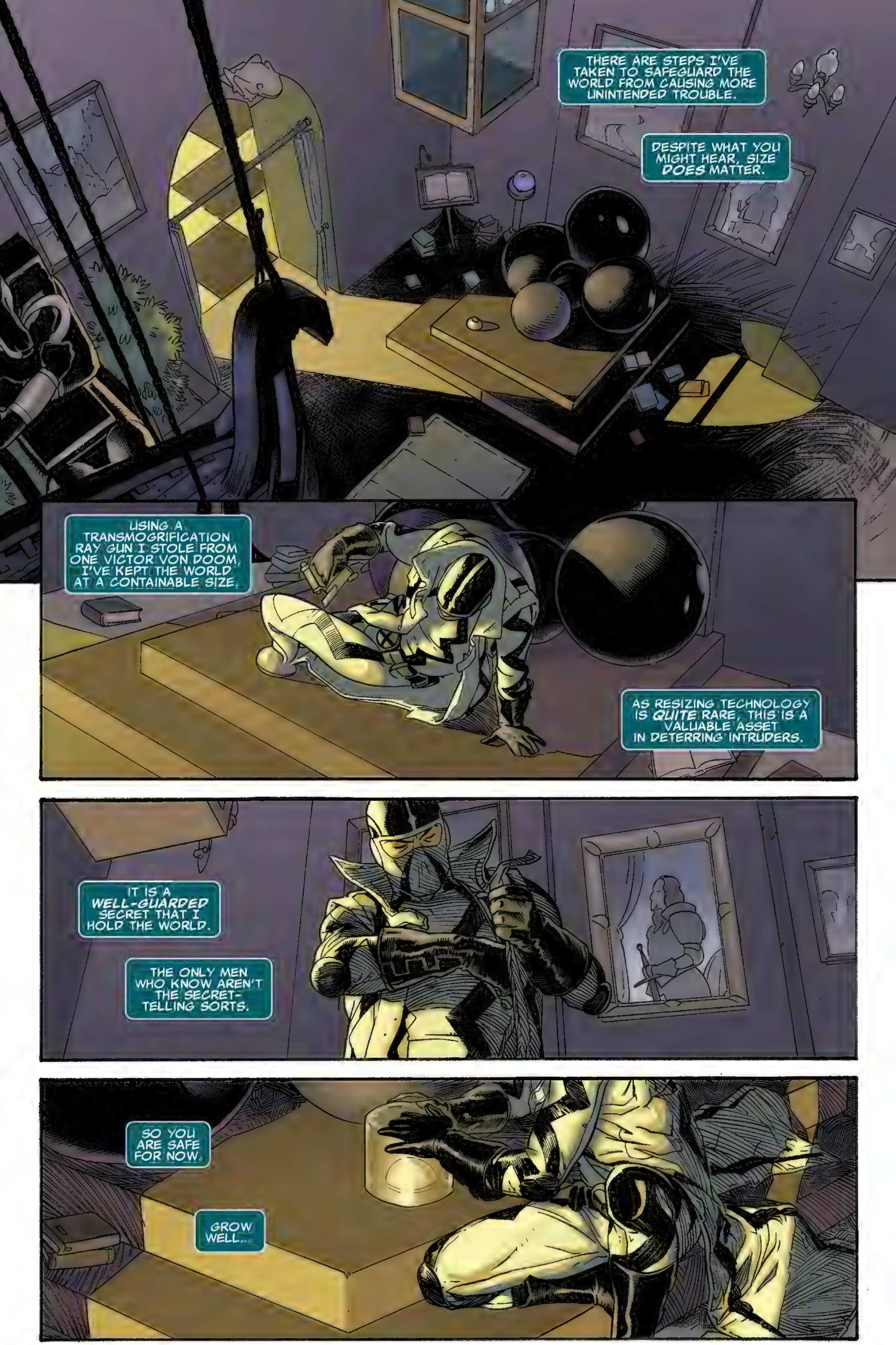


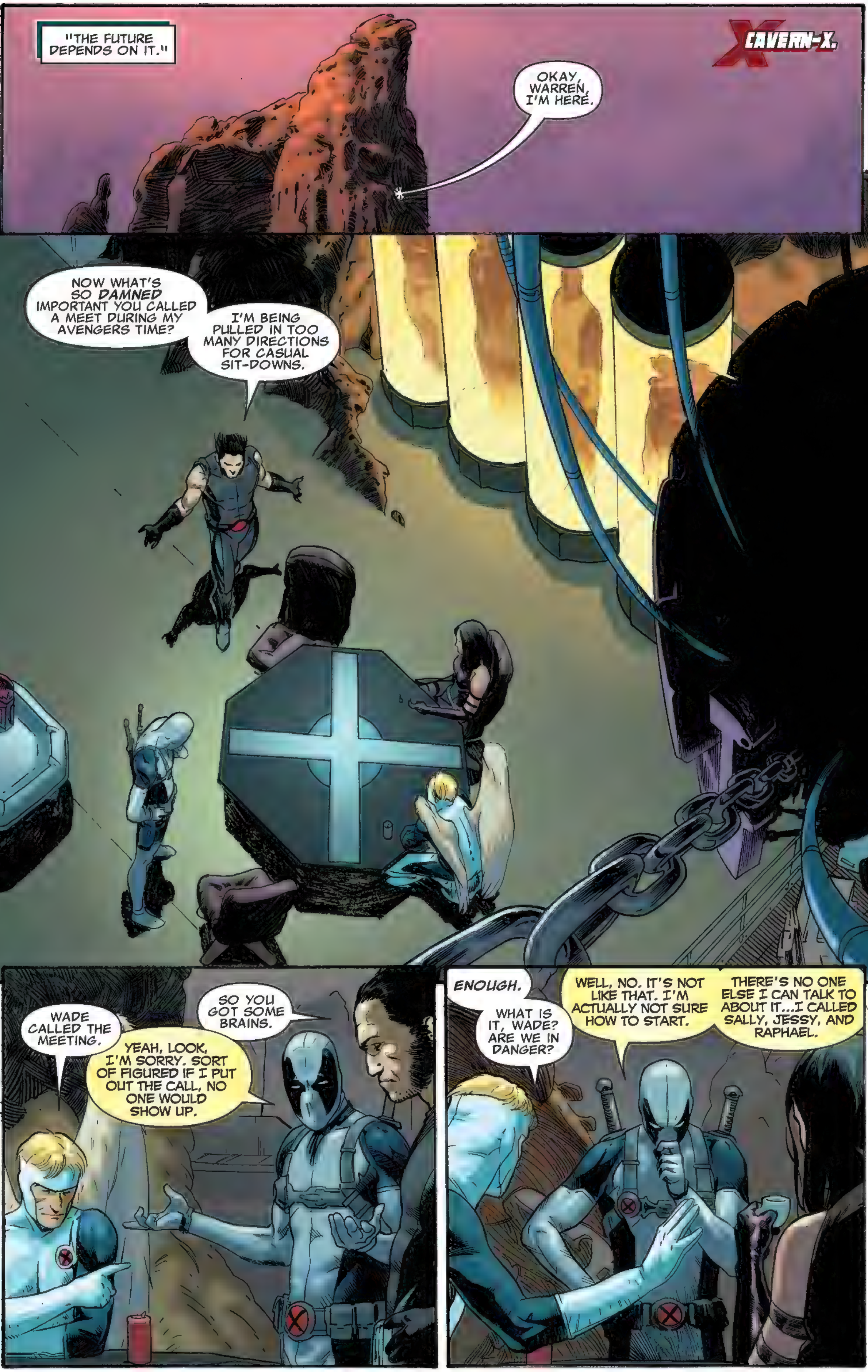
ONCE HACKED AND INITIATED, THE CODE RAN WILD, DELUDED, DREAMING IN IMPOSSIBLE EQUATIONS...

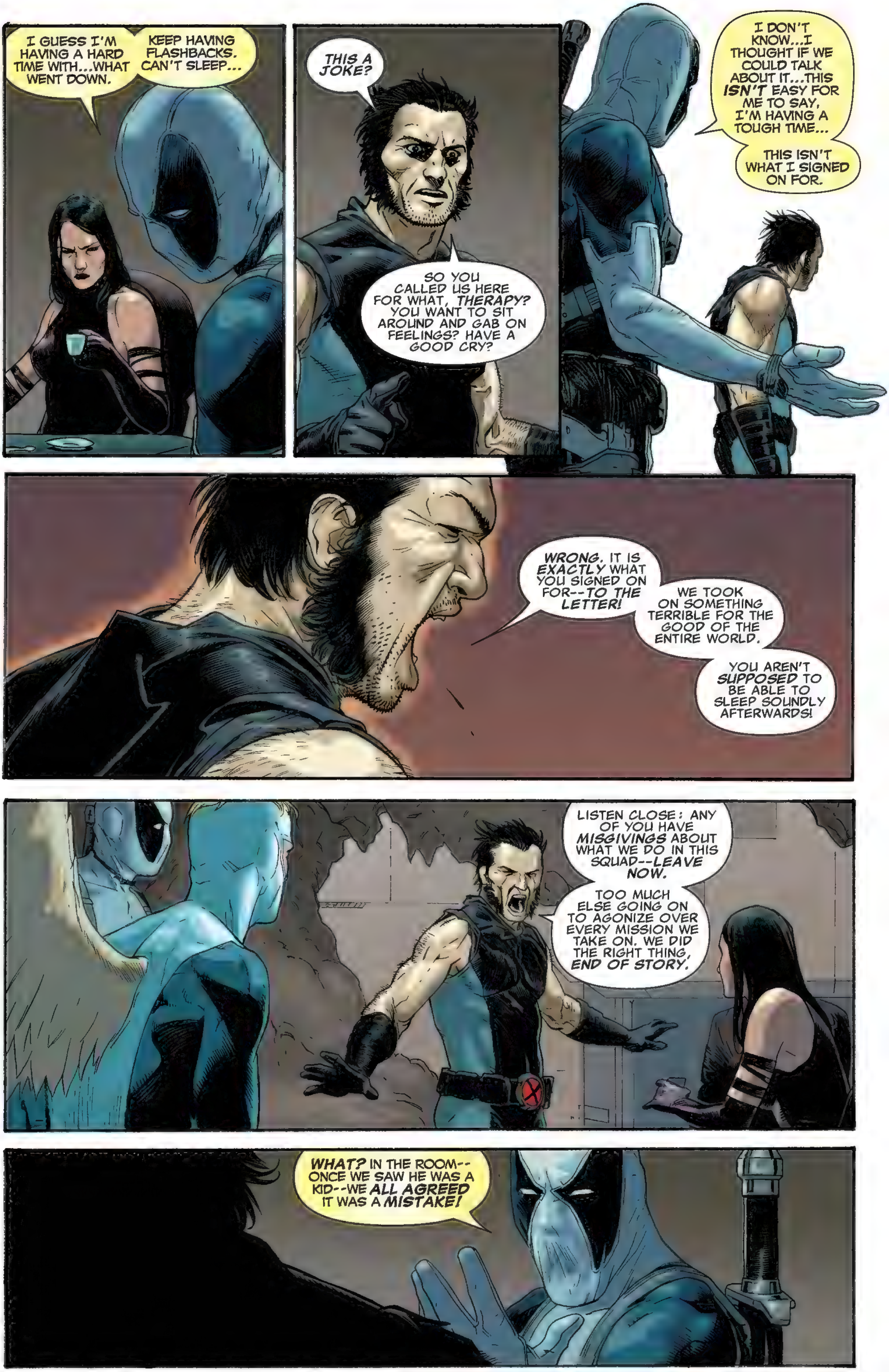
AN ALGORITHM OF SENTIENT INFINITY.

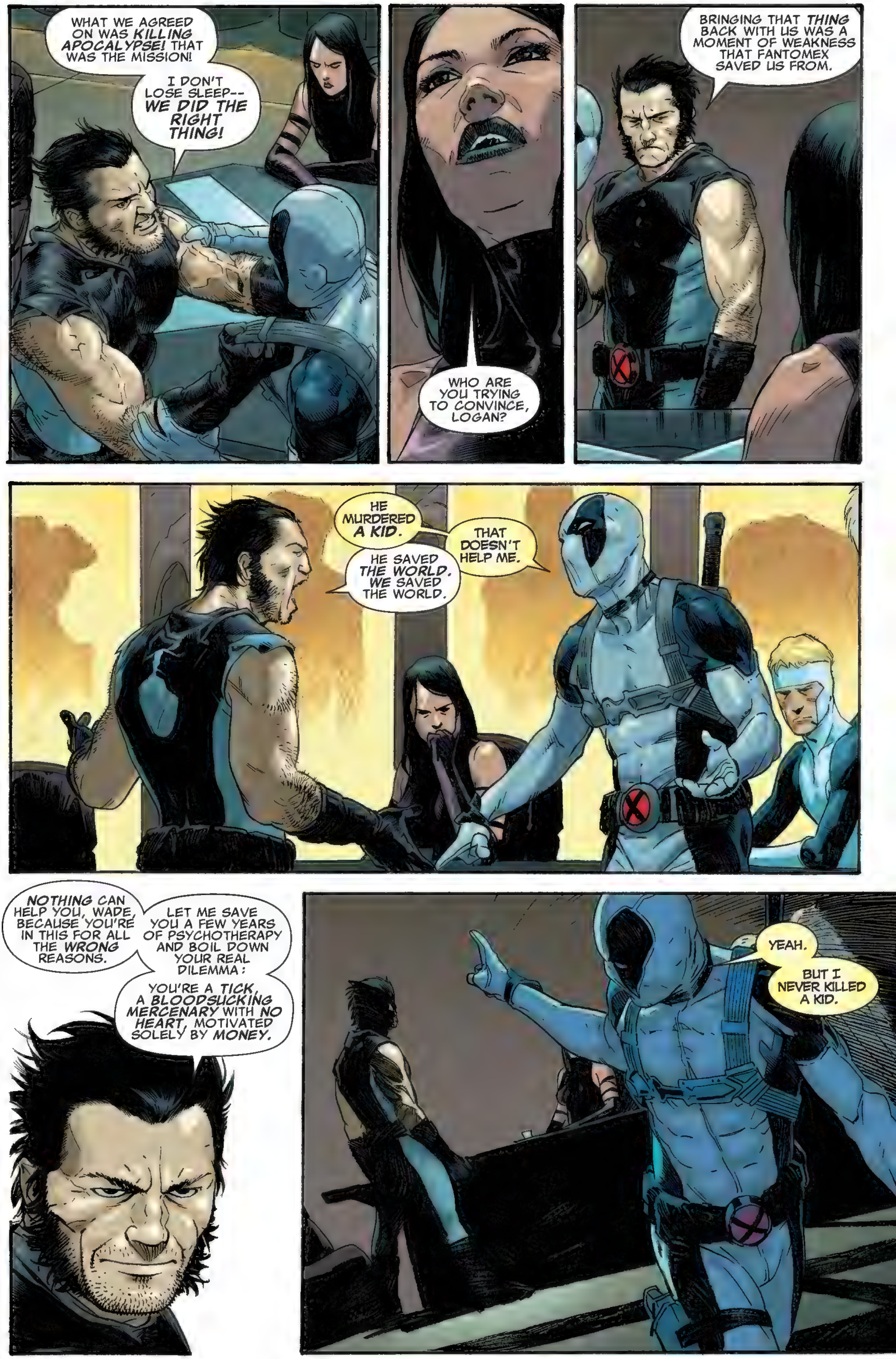

THE COMPUTER I RAN THE EQUATION ON BECAME SELF-AWARE, GREW INTO A MONSTER, AND ATTEMPTED TO KILL ME.
ERICA: WEAPON I
LESSON ONE: BE ON YOUR GUARD WITHIN THIS PLACE.
ONE MUST BE MINDFUL OF WHAT THE WORLD IS...
NUKE WEAPON VII
...AND WHO IT HAS CREATED.
EAPON X
EVEN ITS BOTCHED FAILURES HAVE THEIR ROLE TO PLAY IN YOUR FATE.
BEFORE DESTROYING THE LIVING COMPUTER, I SALVAGED FOUR PIECES OF INFORMATION FROM IT.
1. WEAPON INFINITY IS UNITED.
2. WEAPON INFINITY IS VIRAL.
3. WEAPON INFINITY TRAVELS OMNI-TIME.
4. THE ARCHITECT OF THIS QUIRK IS SEQUESTERED IN A SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER, DEEP IN THE WORLD, ENTOMBED UNDER A MILLION YEARS OF PROGRESS.
HIS (ITS) MISCHIEF IS UNDENIABLE.
I WILL CONTINUE MY EFFORTS TO FIND AND DESTROY HIM (IT).
AND HE (IT) WILL CONTINUE TO DO THE SAME TO ME...

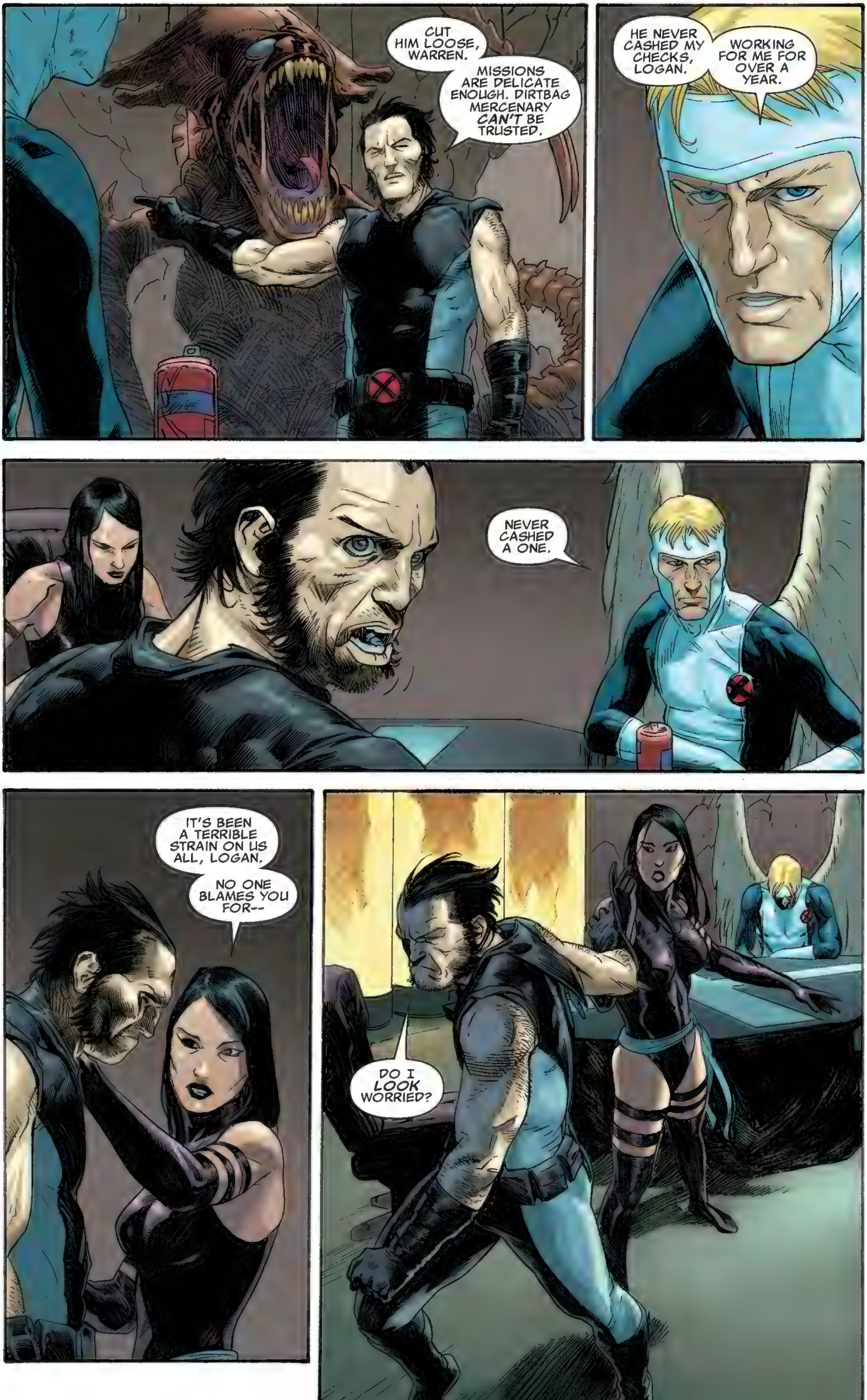

THE WORLD SIMPLY ISN'T BIG ENOUGH FOR THE *BOTH* OF US.

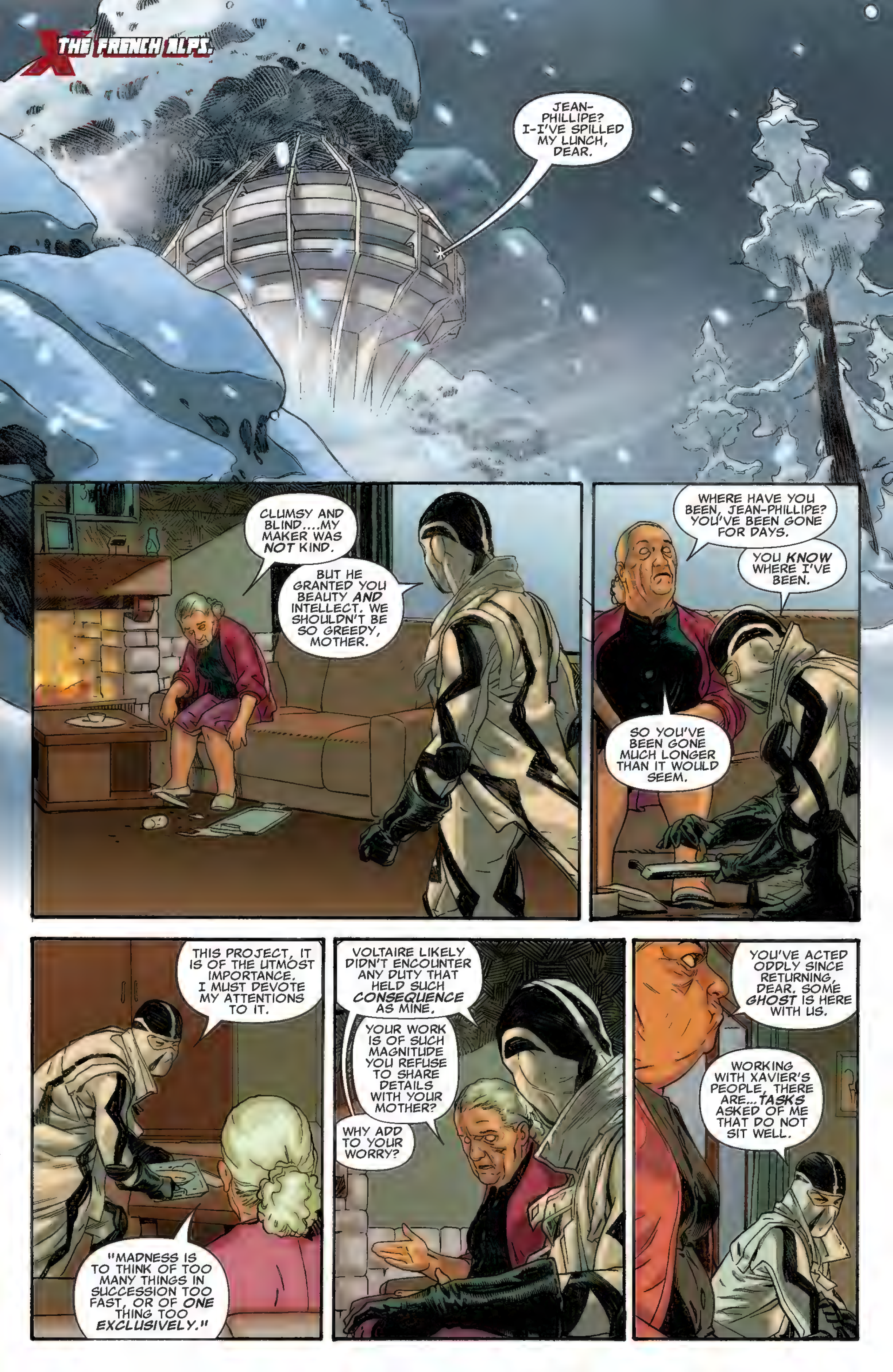

THERE ARE STEPS I'VE TAKEN TO SAFEGUARD THE WORLD FROM CAUSING MORE UNINTENDED TROUBLE.
DESPITE WHAT YOU MIGHT HEAR, SIZE *DOES* MATTER.
USING A TRANSMOGRIFICATION RAY GUN I STOLE FROM ONE VICTOR VON DOOM, I'VE KEPT THE WORLD AT A CONTAINABLE SIZE.
AS RESIZING TECHNOLOGY IS *QUITE* RARE, THIS IS A VALUABLE ASSET IN DETERRING INTRUDERS.
IT IS A *WELL-GUARDED* SECRET THAT I HOLD THE WORLD.
THE ONLY MEN WHO KNOW AREN'T THE SECRET-TELLING SORTS.
SO YOU ARE SAFE FOR NOW.
GROW WELL...

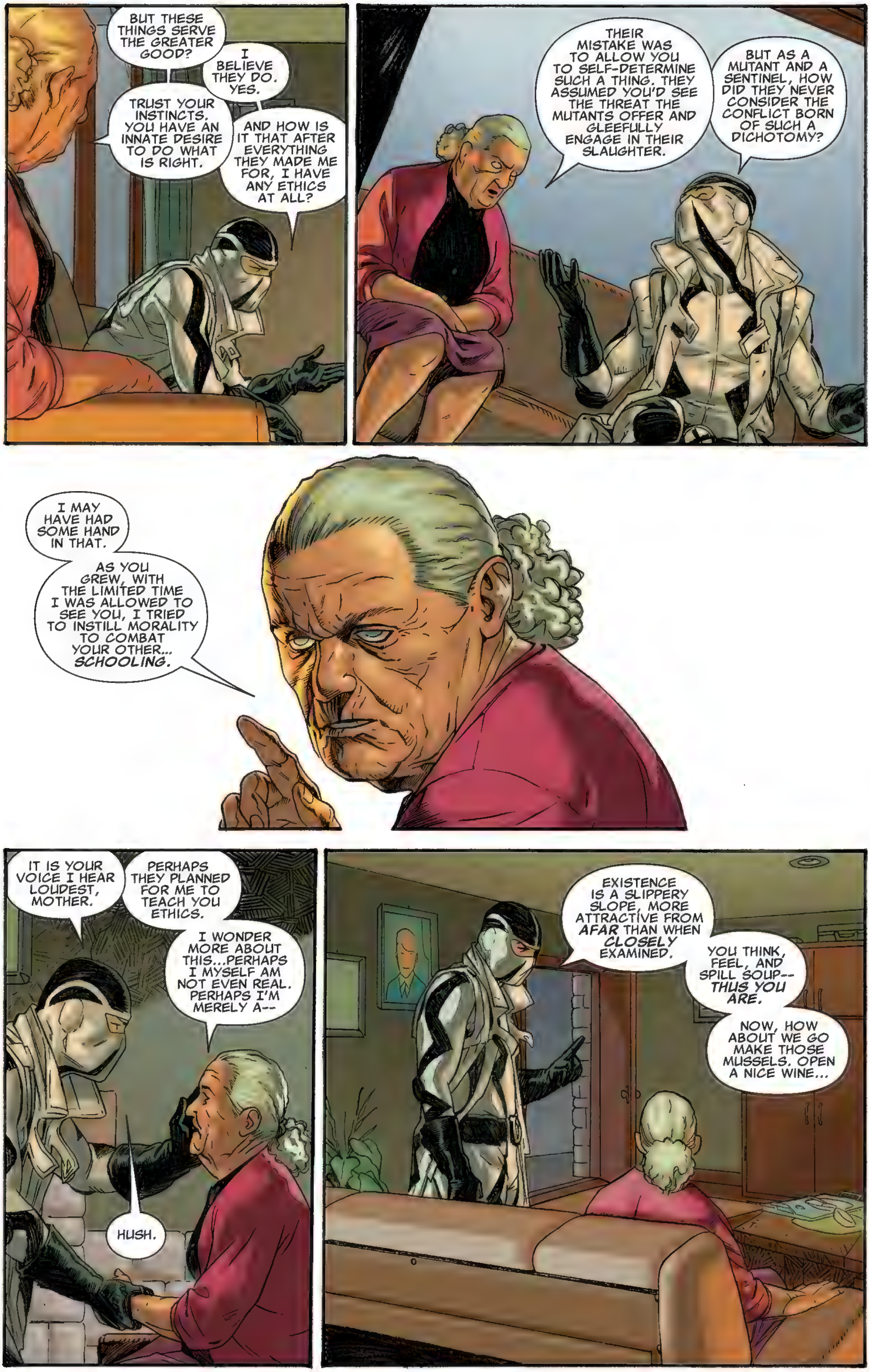

"THE FUTURE DEPENDS ON IT."
CAVERN-X.
OKAY, WARREN, I'M HERE.
NOW WHAT'S SO *DAMNED* IMPORTANT YOU CALLED A MEET DURING MY AVENGERS TIME?
I'M BEING PULLED IN TOO MANY DIRECTIONS FOR CASUAL SIT-DOWNS.
WADE CALLED THE MEETING.
SO YOU GOT SOME BRAINS.
YEAH, LOOK, I'M SORRY. SORT OF FIGURED IF I PUT OUT THE CALL, NO ONE WOULD SHOW UP.
ENOUGH.
WHAT IS IT, WADE? ARE WE IN DANGER?
WELL, NO. IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. I'M ACTUALLY NOT SURE HOW TO START.
THERE'S NO ONE ELSE I CAN TALK TO ABOUT IT...I CALLED SALLY, JESSY, AND RAPHAEL.

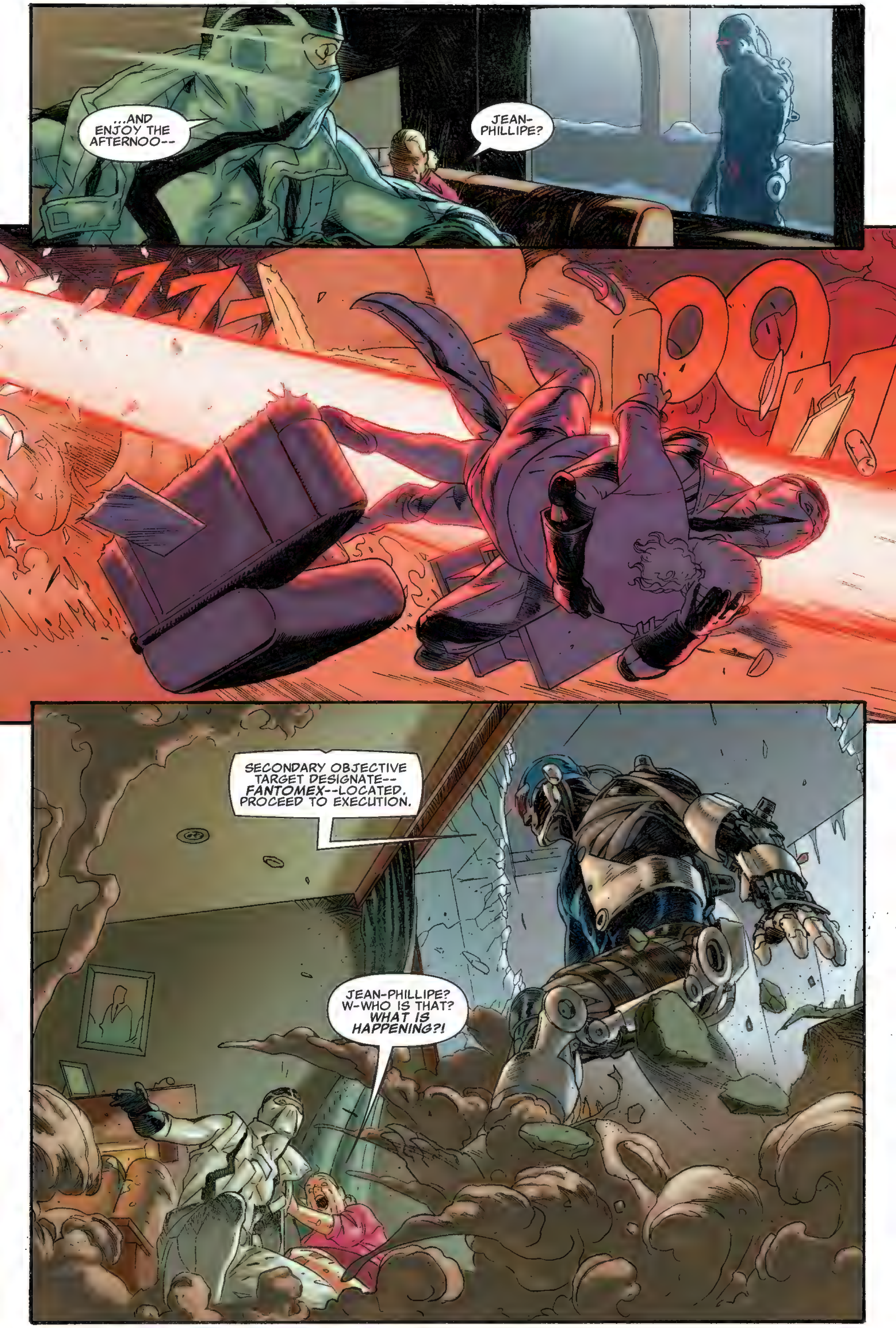

I GUESS I'M HAVING A HARD TIME WITH...WHAT WENT DOWN.
KEEP HAVING FLASHBACKS. CAN'T SLEEP...
THIS A JOKE?
SO YOU CALLED US HERE FOR WHAT, *THERAPY?* YOU WANT TO SIT AROUND AND GAB ON FEELINGS? HAVE A GOOD CRY?
I DON'T KNOW...I THOUGHT IF WE COULD TALK ABOUT IT...THIS ***ISN'T*** EASY FOR ME TO SAY, I'M HAVING A TOUGH TIME...
THIS ISN'T WHAT I SIGNED ON FOR.
WRONG. IT IS ***EXACTLY*** WHAT YOU SIGNED ON FOR--***TO THE LETTER!***
WE TOOK ON SOMETHING TERRIBLE FOR THE GOOD OF THE ENTIRE WORLD.
YOU AREN'T ***SUPPOSED*** TO BE ABLE TO SLEEP SOUNDLY AFTERWARDS!
LISTEN CLOSE: ANY OF YOU HAVE ***MISGIVINGS*** ABOUT WHAT WE DO IN THIS SQUAD--***LEAVE NOW.***
TOO MUCH ELSE GOING ON TO AGONIZE OVER EVERY MISSION WE TAKE ON. WE DID THE RIGHT THING, ***END OF STORY.***
WHAT? IN THE ROOM--ONCE WE SAW HE WAS A KID--WE ***ALL AGREED*** IT WAS A ***MISTAKE!***

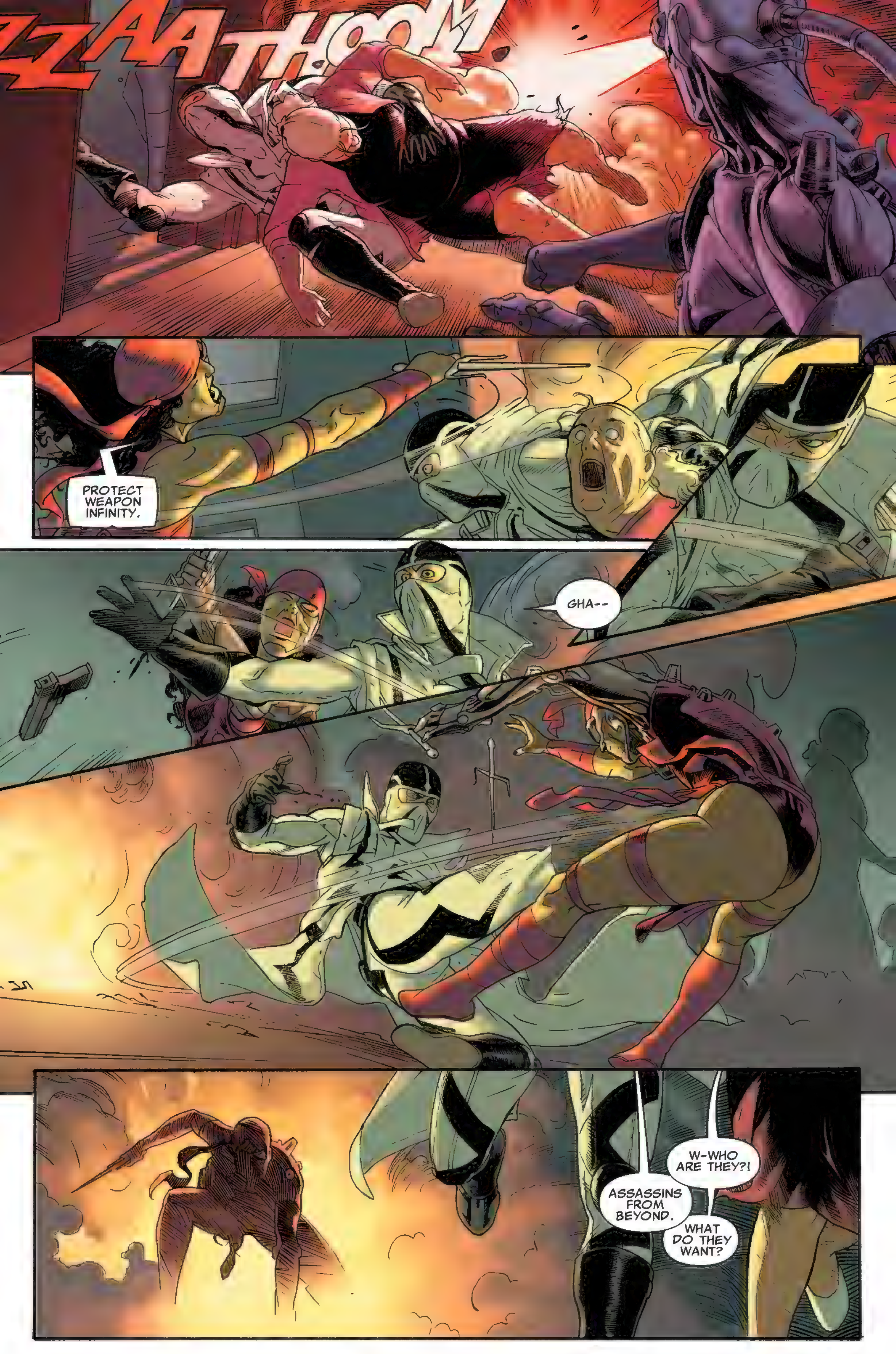

WHAT WE AGREED ON WAS KILLING APOCALYPSE! THAT WAS THE MISSION!
I DON'T LOSE SLEEP-- WE DID THE RIGHT THING!
WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO CONVINCE, LOGAN?
BRINGING THAT THING BACK WITH US WAS A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS THAT FANTOMEX SAVED US FROM.
HE MURDERED A KID.
HE SAVED THE WORLD. WE SAVED THE WORLD.
THAT DOESN'T HELP ME.
NOTHING CAN HELP YOU, WADE, BECAUSE YOU'RE IN THIS FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS.
LET ME SAVE YOU A FEW YEARS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND BOIL DOWN YOUR REAL DILEMMA:
YOU'RE A TICK, A BLOODSUCKING MERCENARY WITH NO HEART, MOTIVATED SOLELY BY MONEY.
YEAH.
BUT I NEVER KILLED A KID.

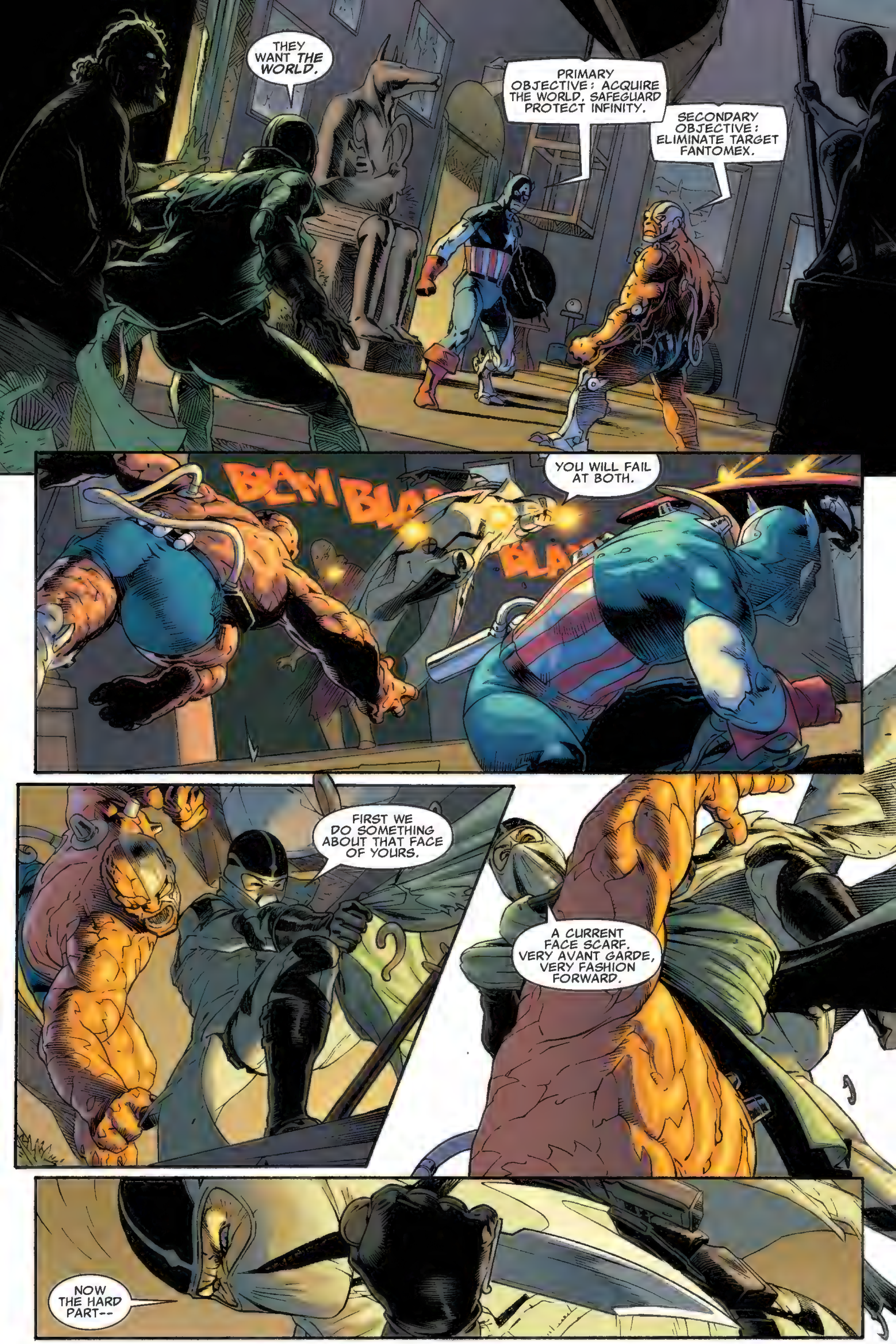

CUT HIM LOOSE, WARREN.
MISSIONS ARE DELICATE ENOUGH. DIRTBAG MERCENARY *CAN'T* BE TRUSTED.
HE NEVER CASHED MY CHECKS, LOGAN.
WORKING FOR ME FOR OVER A YEAR.
NEVER CASHED A ONE.
IT'S BEEN A TERRIBLE STRAIN ON US ALL, LOGAN.
NO ONE BLAMES YOU FOR--
DO I *LOOK* WORRIED?

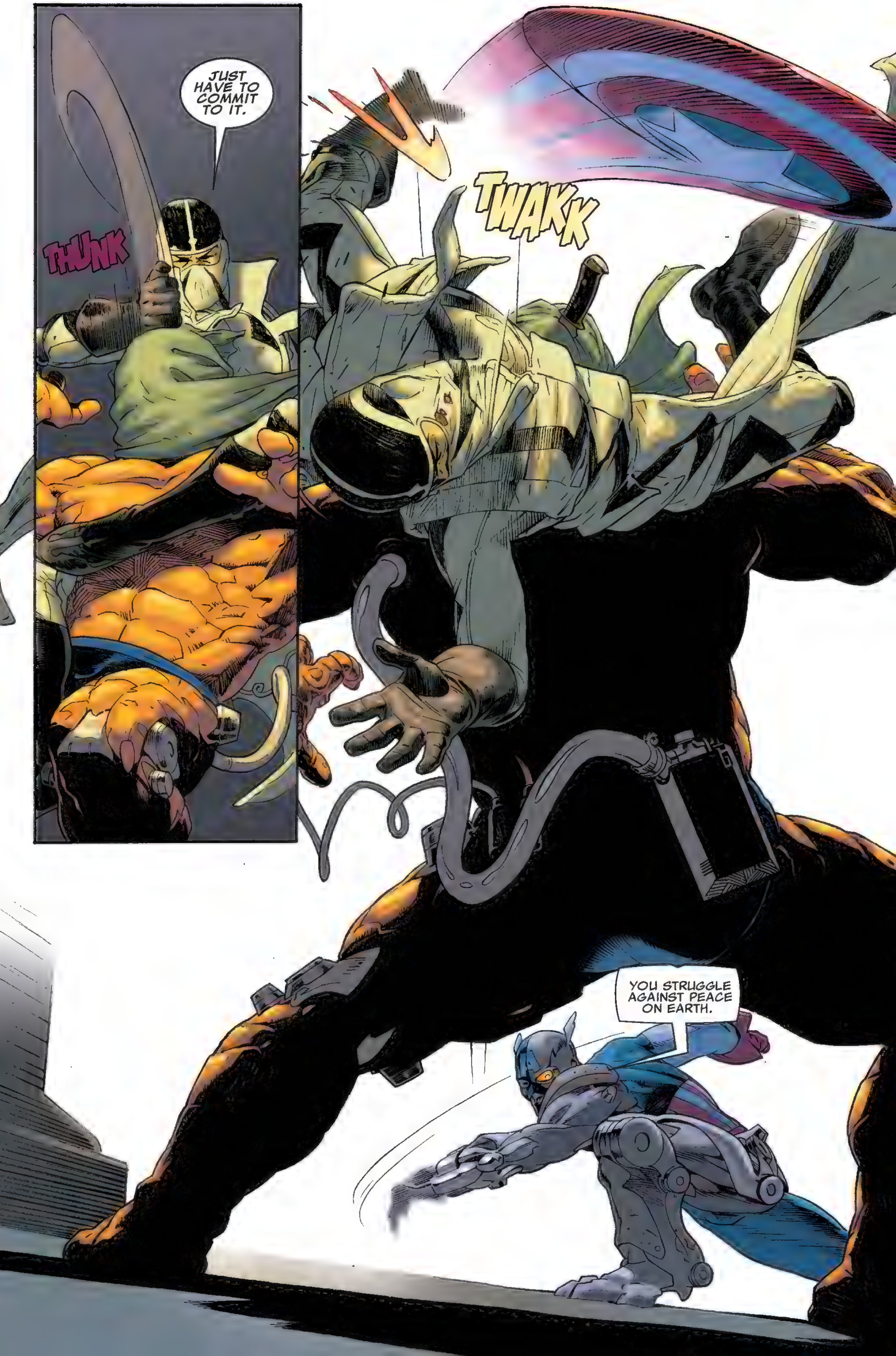

THE FRENCH ALPS.
JEAN-PHILLIPE? I-I'VE SPILLED MY LUNCH, DEAR.
CLUMSY AND BLIND....MY MAKER WAS NOT KIND.
BUT HE GRANTED YOU BEAUTY AND INTELLECT. WE SHOULDN'T BE SO GREEDY, MOTHER.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, JEAN-PHILLIPE? YOU'VE BEEN GONE FOR DAYS.
YOU KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN.
SO YOU'VE BEEN GONE MUCH LONGER THAN IT WOULD SEEM.
THIS PROJECT, IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE. I MUST DEVOTE MY ATTENTIONS TO IT.
"MADNESS IS TO THINK OF TOO MANY THINGS IN SUCCESSION TOO FAST, OR OF ONE THING TOO EXCLUSIVELY."
VOLTAIRE LIKELY DIDN'T ENCOUNTER ANY DUTY THAT HELD SUCH CONSEQUENCE AS MINE.
YOUR WORK IS OF SUCH MAGNITUDE YOU REFUSE TO SHARE DETAILS WITH YOUR MOTHER?
WHY ADD TO YOUR WORRY?
YOU'VE ACTED ODDLY SINCE RETURNING, DEAR. SOME GHOST IS HERE WITH US.
WORKING WITH XAVIER'S PEOPLE, THERE ARE...TASKS ASKED OF ME THAT DO NOT SIT WELL.

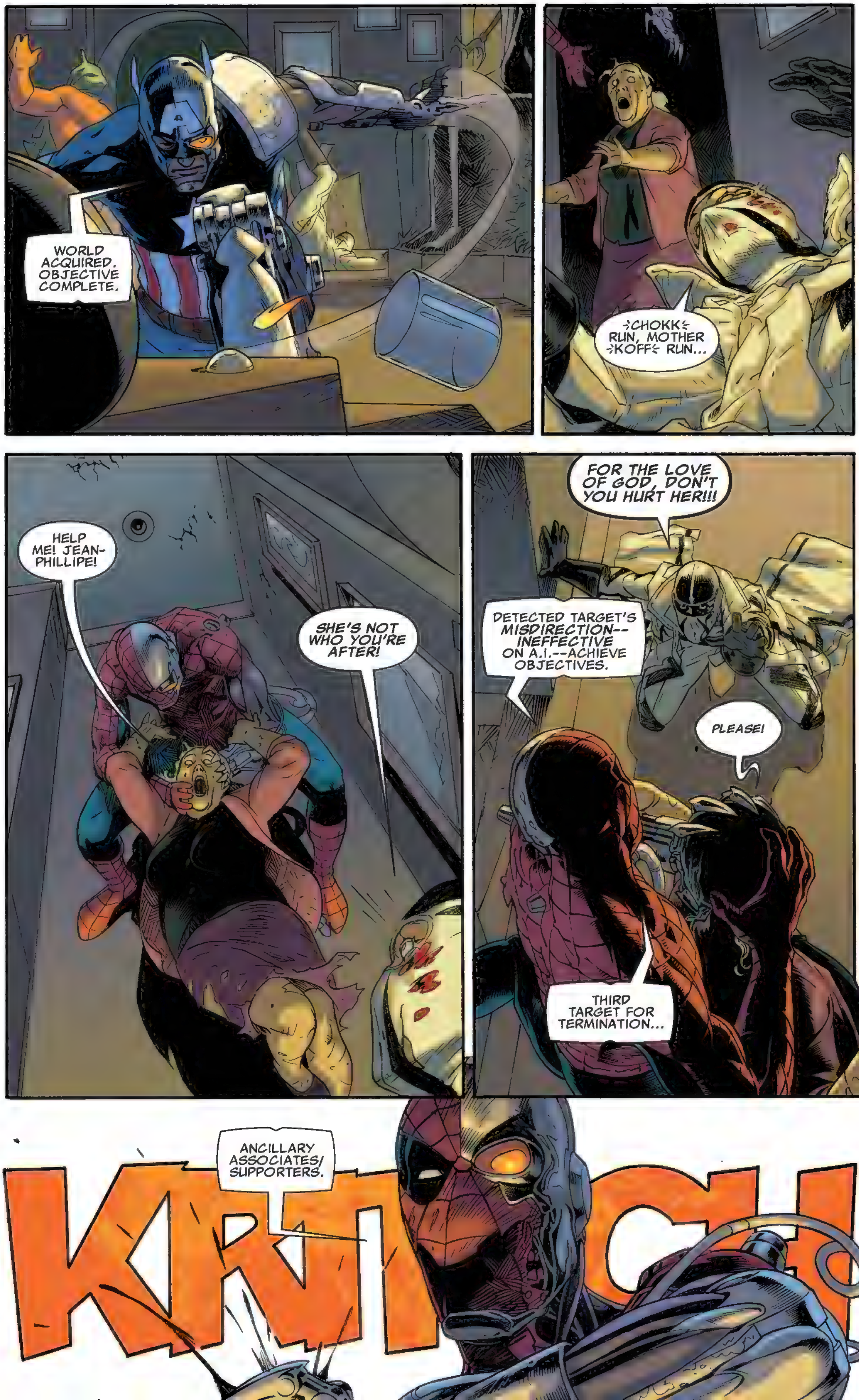

BUT THESE THINGS SERVE THE GREATER GOOD?
I BELIEVE THEY DO. YES.
TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS. YOU HAVE AN INNATE DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.
AND HOW IS IT THAT AFTER EVERYTHING THEY MADE ME FOR, I HAVE ANY ETHICS AT ALL?
THEIR MISTAKE WAS TO ALLOW YOU TO SELF-DETERMINE SUCH A THING. THEY ASSUMED YOU'D SEE THE THREAT THE MUTANTS OFFER AND GLEEFULLY ENGAGE IN THEIR SLAUGHTER.
BUT AS A MUTANT AND A SENTINEL, HOW DID THEY NEVER CONSIDER THE CONFLICT BORN OF SUCH A DICHOTOMY?
I MAY HAVE HAD SOME HAND IN THAT.
AS YOU GREW, WITH THE LIMITED TIME I WAS ALLOWED TO SEE YOU, I TRIED TO INSTILL MORALITY TO COMBAT YOUR OTHER... SCHOOLING.
IT IS YOUR VOICE I HEAR LOUDEST, MOTHER.
PERHAPS THEY PLANNED FOR ME TO TEACH YOU ETHICS.
I WONDER MORE ABOUT THIS...PERHAPS I MYSELF AM NOT EVEN REAL. PERHAPS I'M MERELY A--
HUSH.
EXISTENCE IS A SLIPPERY SLOPE, MORE ATTRACTIVE FROM AFAR THAN WHEN CLOSELY EXAMINED.
YOU THINK, FEEL, AND SPILL SOUP-- THUS YOU ARE.
NOW, HOW ABOUT WE GO MAKE THOSE MUSSELS. OPEN A NICE WINE...

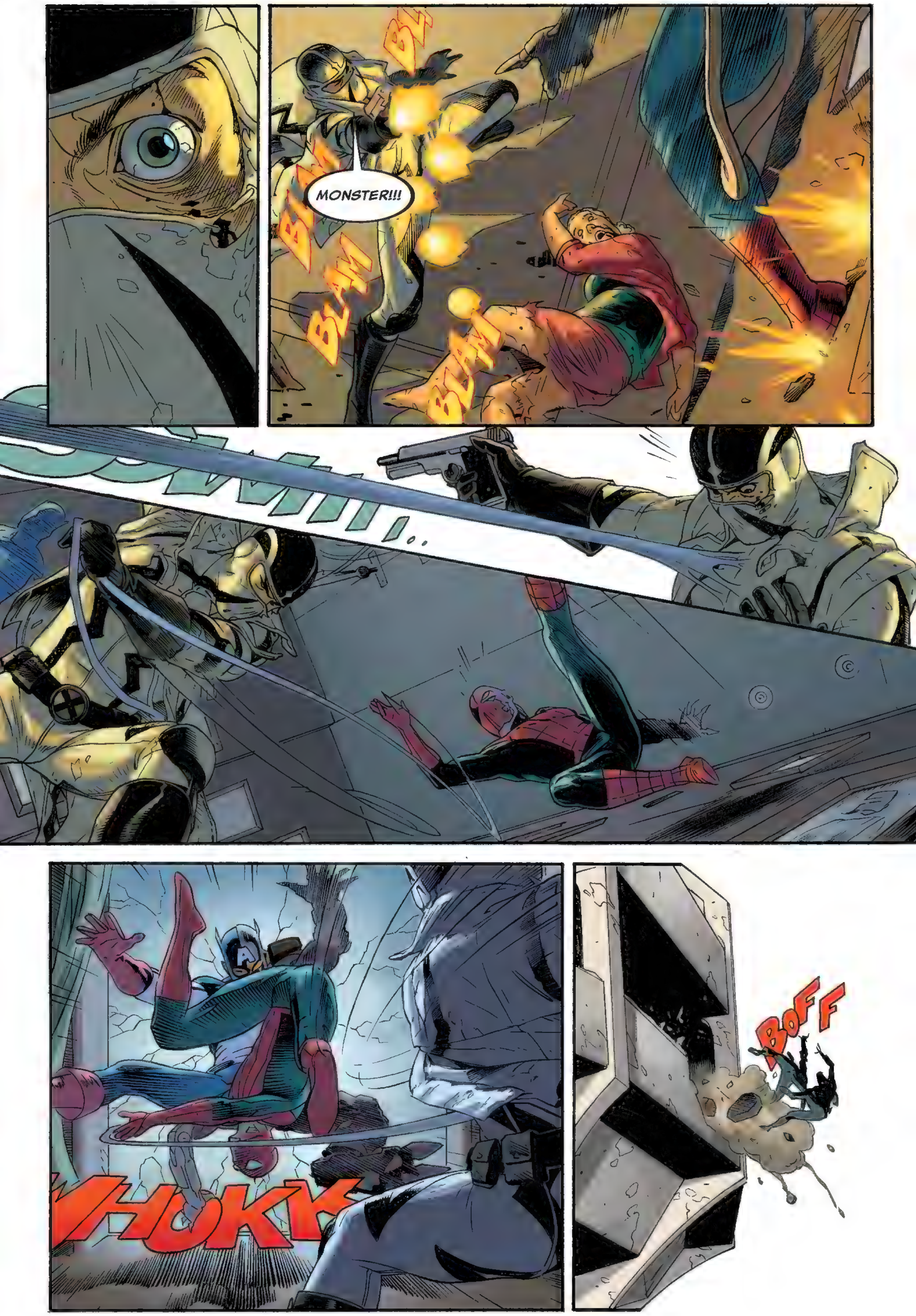

...AND ENJOY THE AFTERNOO--
JEAN-PHILLIPE?
ZZ
OOM
SECONDARY OBJECTIVE TARGET DESIGNATE--*FANTOMEX*--LOCATED. PROCEED TO EXECUTION.
JEAN-PHILLIPE? W-WHO IS THAT? *WHAT IS HAPPENING?!*

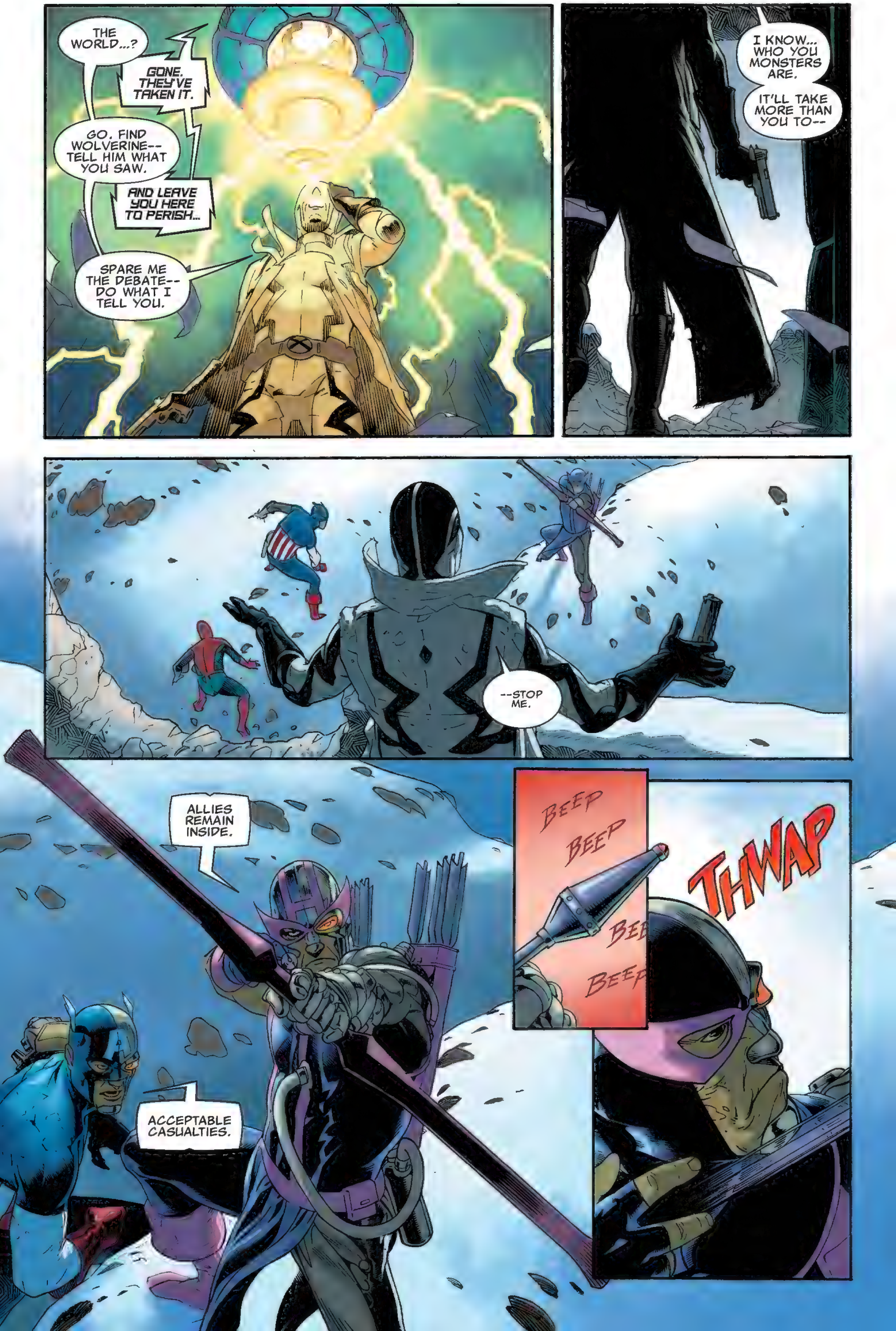

ZZAATHOOM
PROTECT WEAPON INFINITY.
GHA--
W-WHO ARE THEY?!
ASSASSINS FROM BEYOND.
WHAT DO THEY WANT?

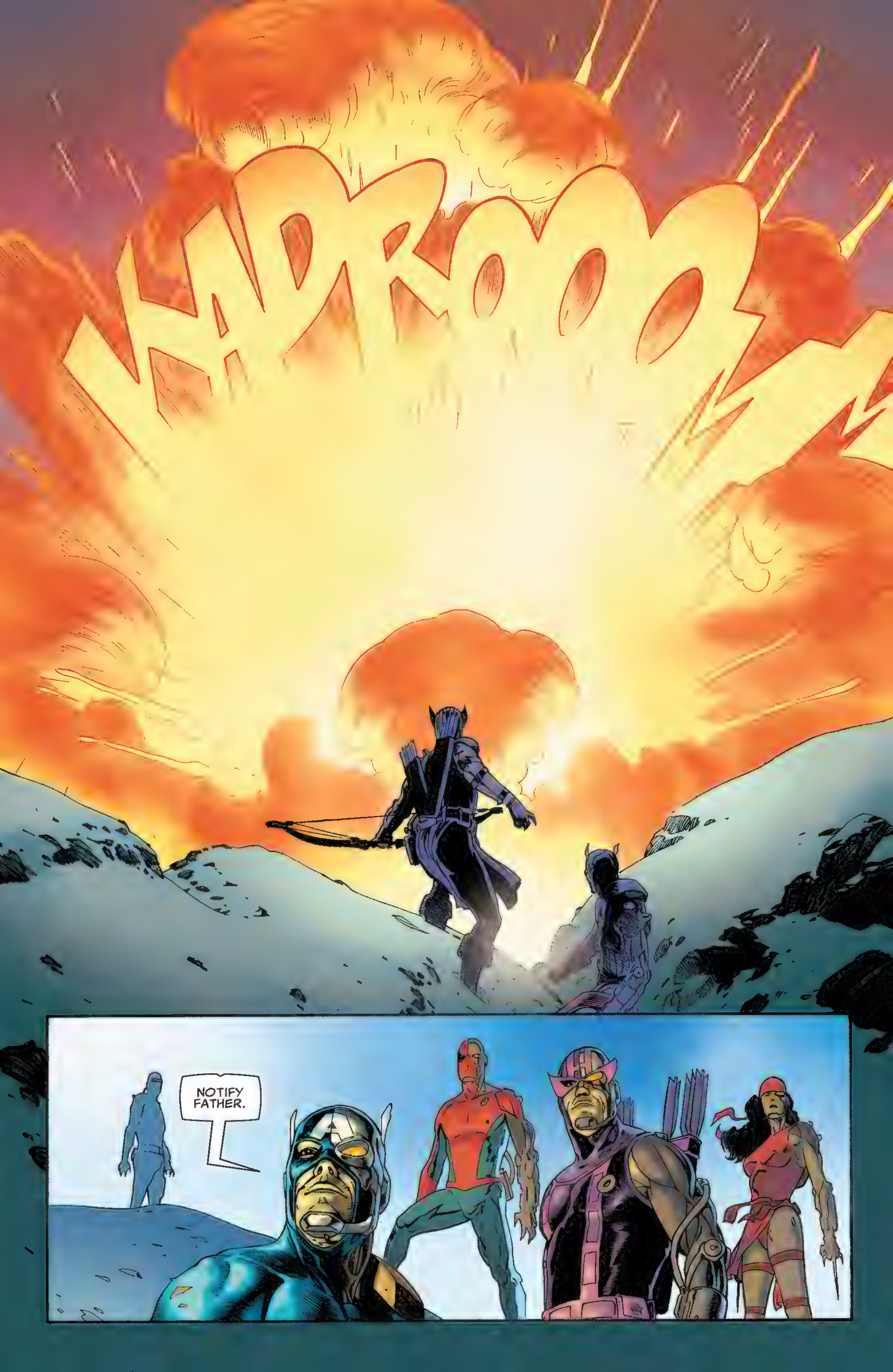

THEY WANT THE WORLD.
PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: ACQUIRE THE WORLD. SAFEGUARD PROTECT INFINITY.
SECONDARY OBJECTIVE: ELIMINATE TARGET FANTOMEX.
BLAM BLA BLA
YOU WILL FAIL AT BOTH.
FIRST WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT FACE OF YOURS.
A CURRENT FACE SCARF. VERY AVANT GARDE, VERY FASHION FORWARD.
NOW THE HARD PART--

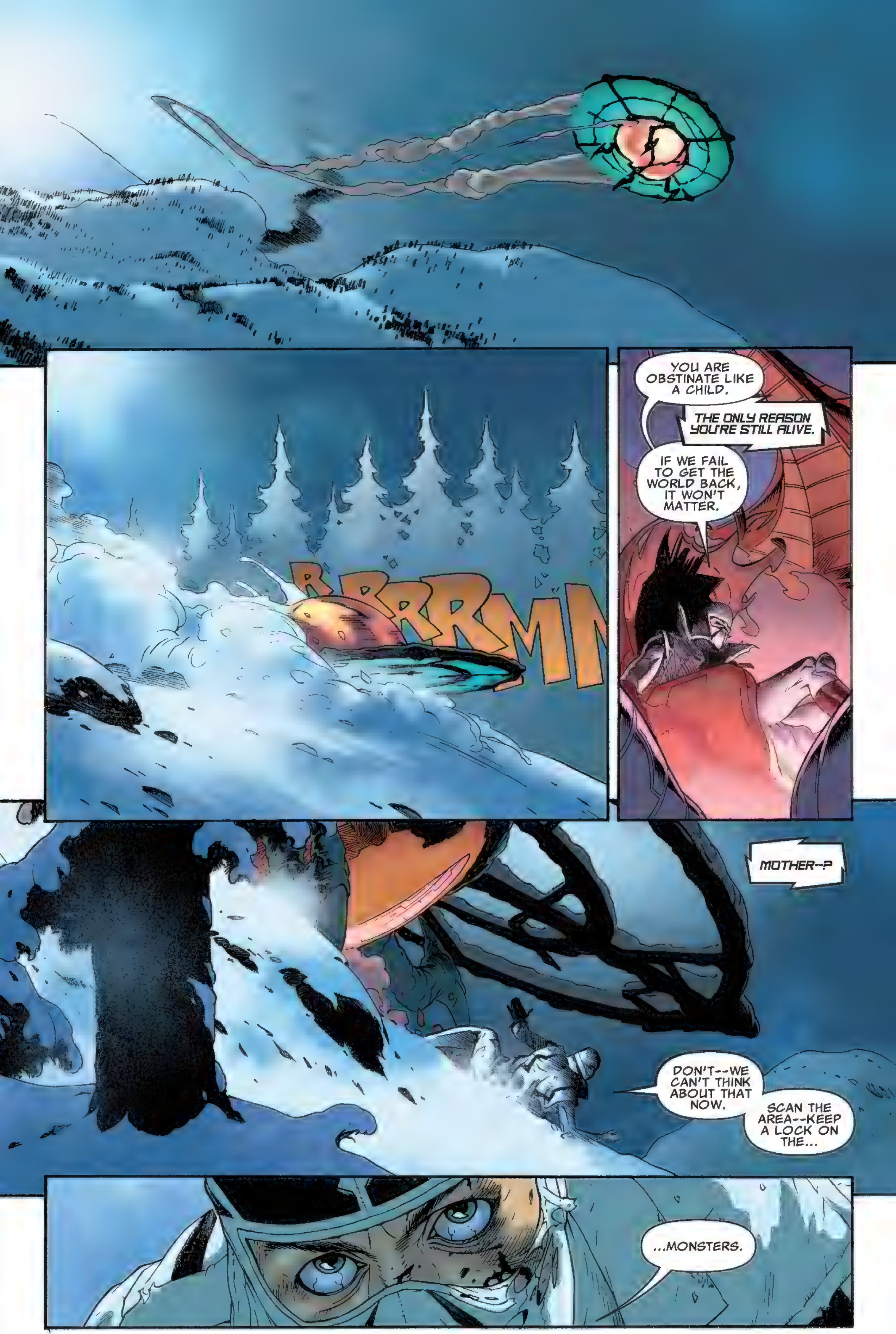

JUST HAVE TO COMMIT TO IT.
THUNK
TWAKK
YOU STRUGGLE AGAINST PEACE ON EARTH.


WORLD ACQUIRED. OBJECTIVE COMPLETE.
⊰CHOKK⊱ RUN, MOTHER ⊰KOFF⊱ RUN...
HELP ME! JEAN-PHILLIPE!
SHE'S NOT WHO YOU'RE AFTER!
FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, DON'T YOU HURT HER!!!
DETECTED TARGET'S MISDIRECTION--INEFFECTIVE ON A.I.--ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES.
PLEASE!
THIRD TARGET FOR TERMINATION...
ANCILLARY ASSOCIATES/ SUPPORTERS.
KRTCH


MONSTER!!!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
WHUKK
BOFF


THE WORLD...?
GONE. THEY'VE TAKEN IT.
GO. FIND WOLVERINE-- TELL HIM WHAT YOU SAW.
AND LEAVE YOU HERE TO PERISH...
SPARE ME THE DEBATE-- DO WHAT I TELL YOU.
I KNOW... WHO YOU MONSTERS ARE.
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN YOU TO--
--STOP ME.
ALLIES REMAIN INSIDE.
ACCEPTABLE CASUALTIES.
BEEP
BEEP
BEE
BEEP
THWAP

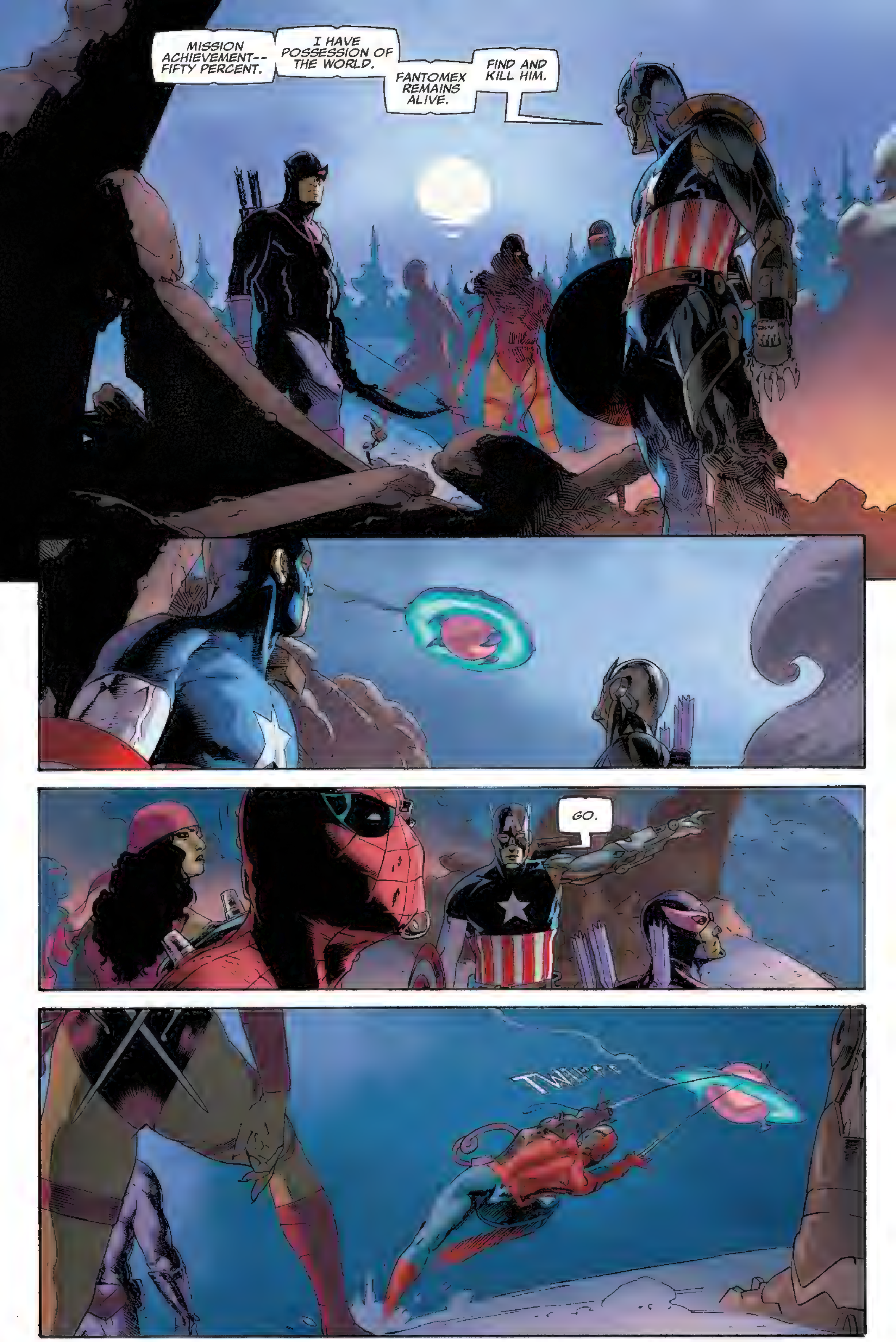

KADROOOM
NOTIFY FATHER.

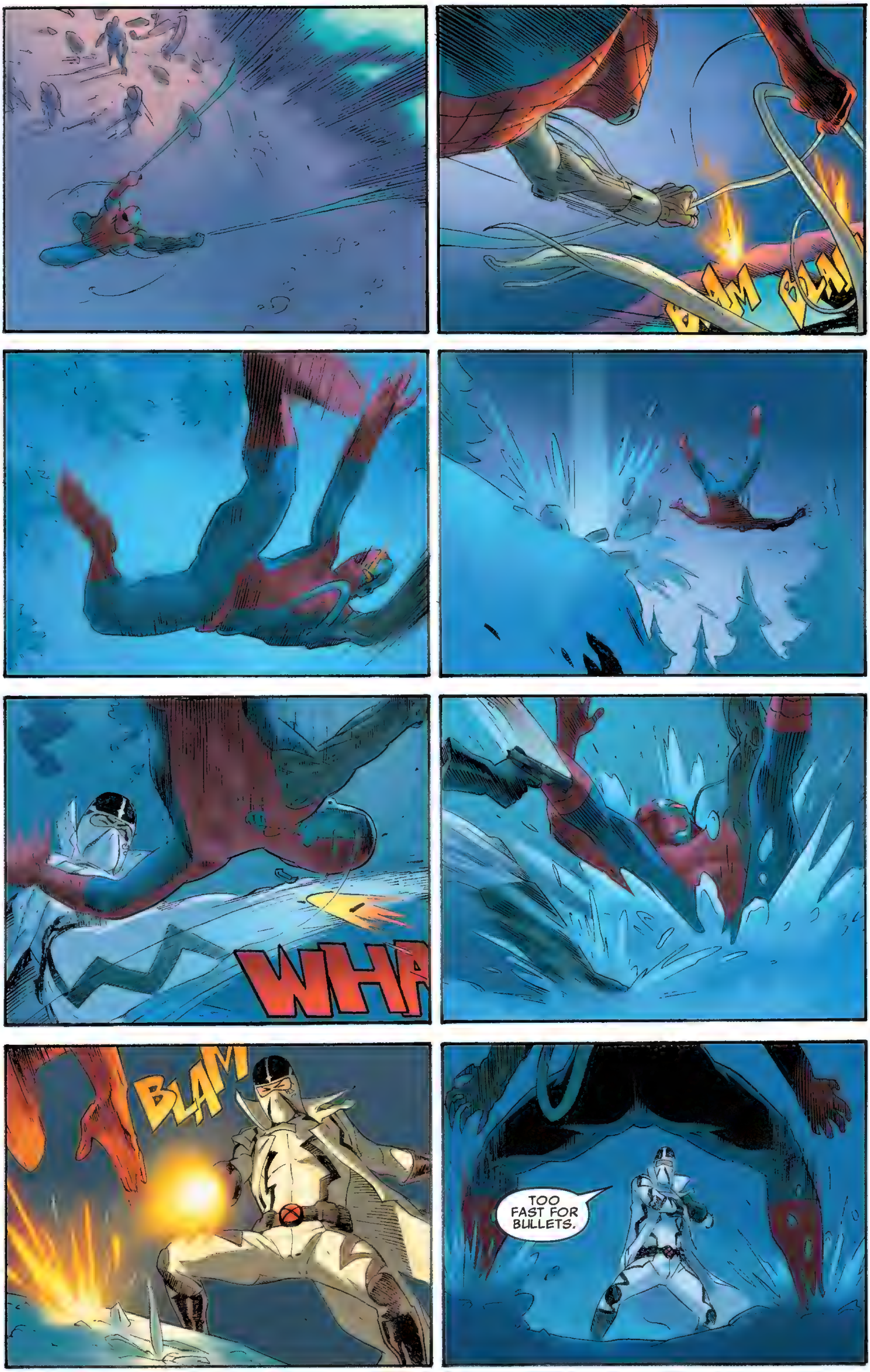

BRRRMM
YOU ARE OBSTINATE LIKE A CHILD.
THE ONLY REASON YOU'RE STILL ALIVE.
IF WE FAIL TO GET THE WORLD BACK, IT WON'T MATTER.
MOTHER--?
DON'T--WE CAN'T THINK ABOUT THAT NOW.
SCAN THE AREA--KEEP A LOCK ON THE...
...MONSTERS.

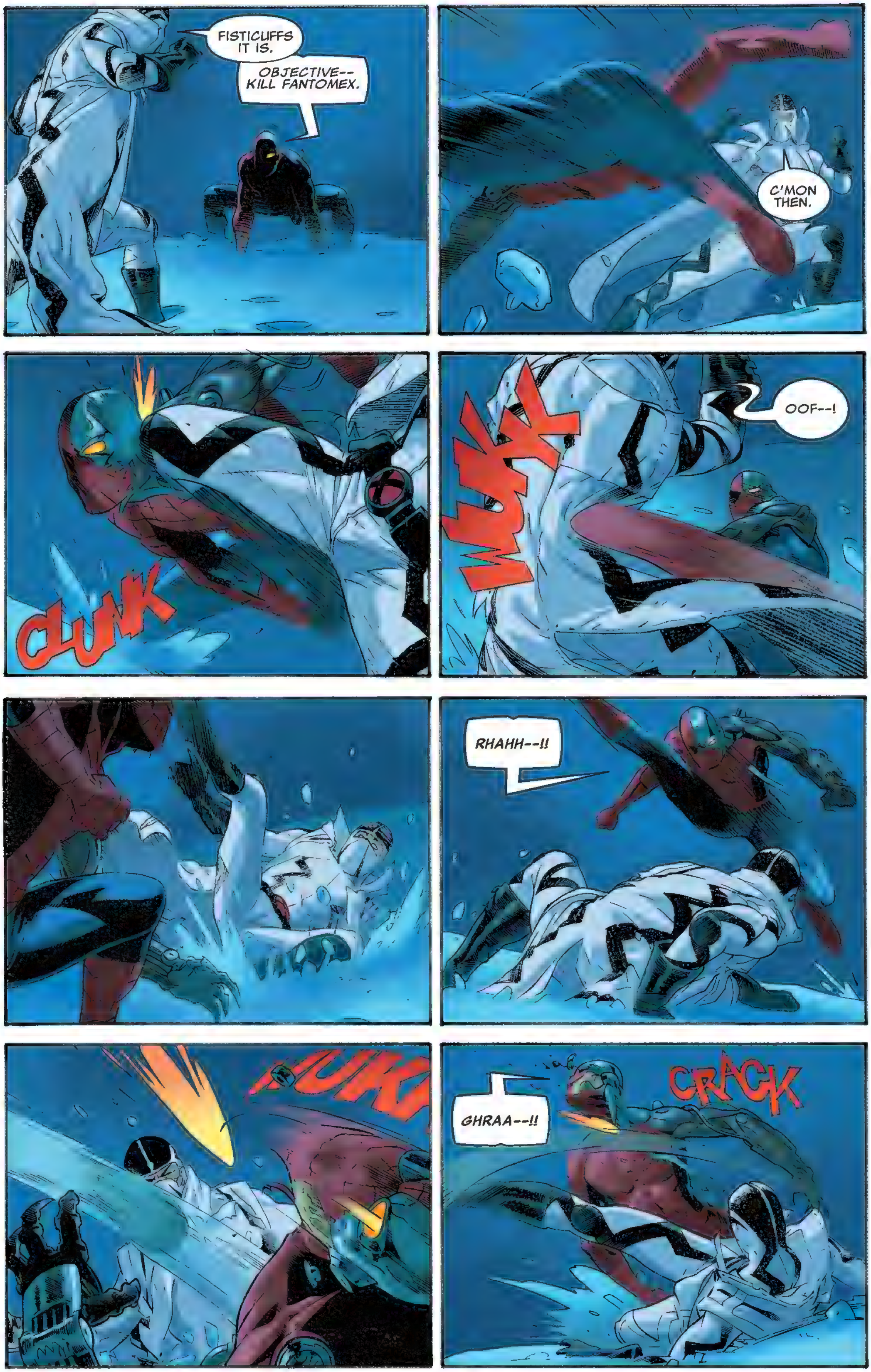
06

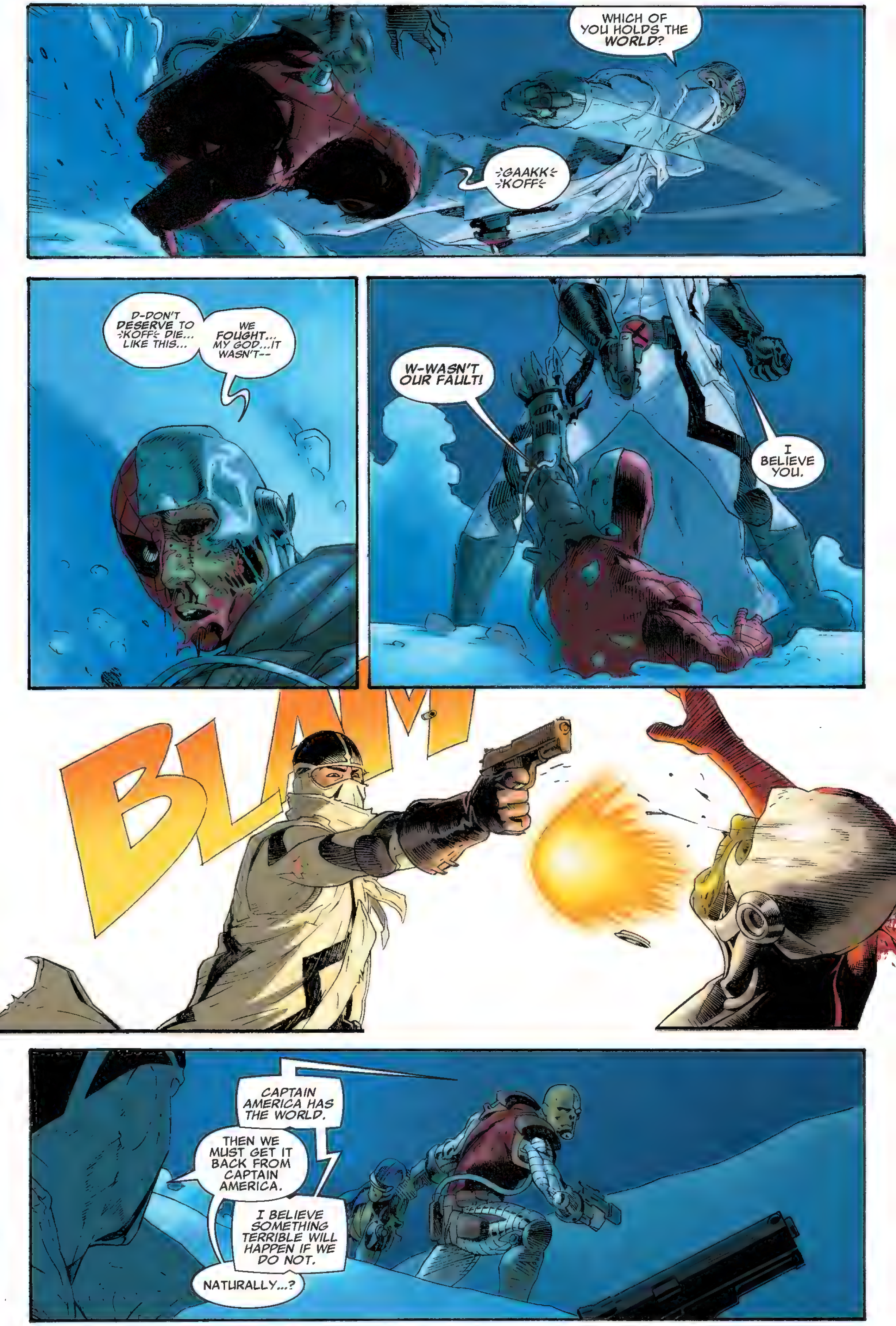
DEATHLOK NATION

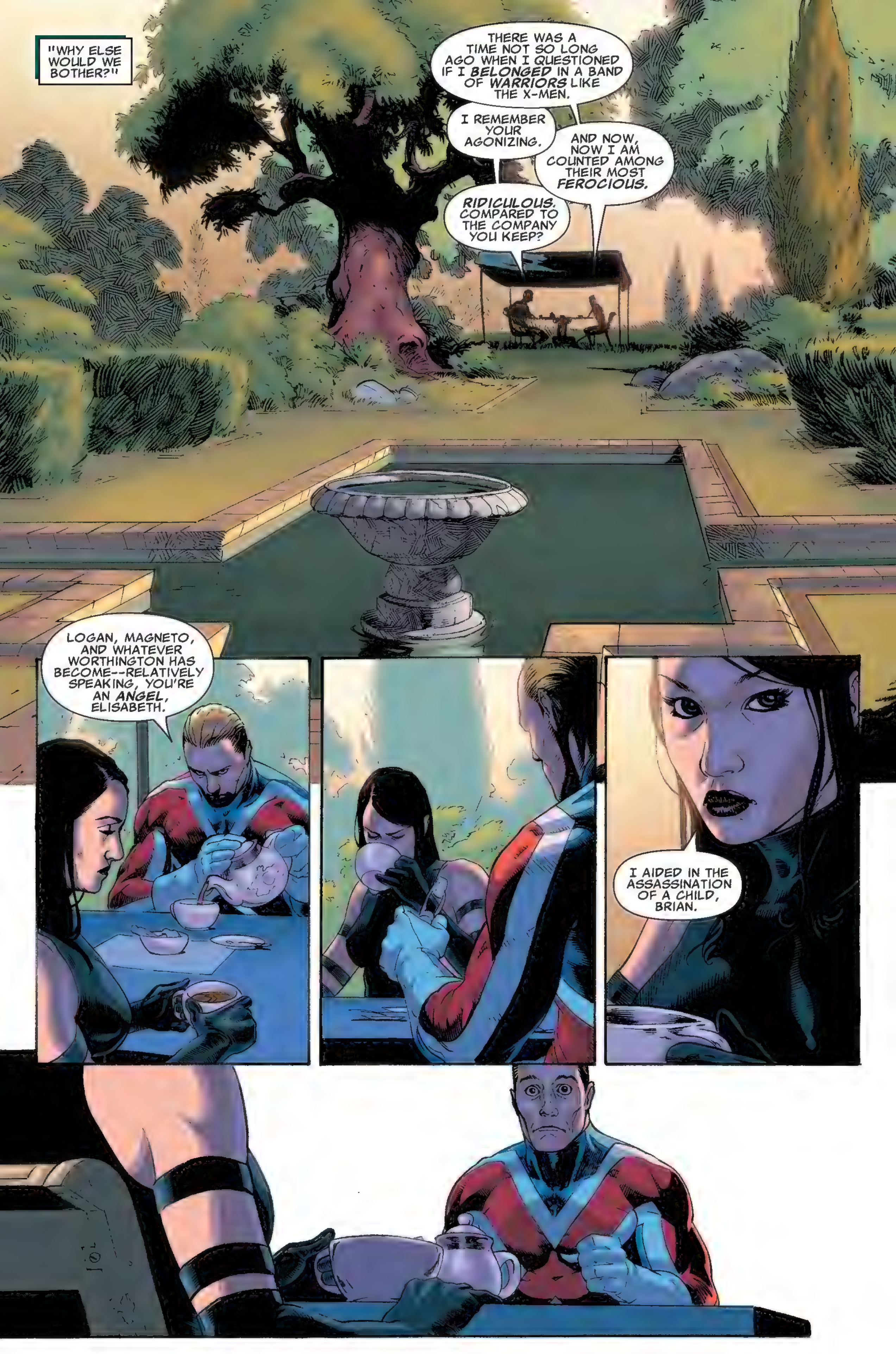
CHAPTER 2: WORLD TIME

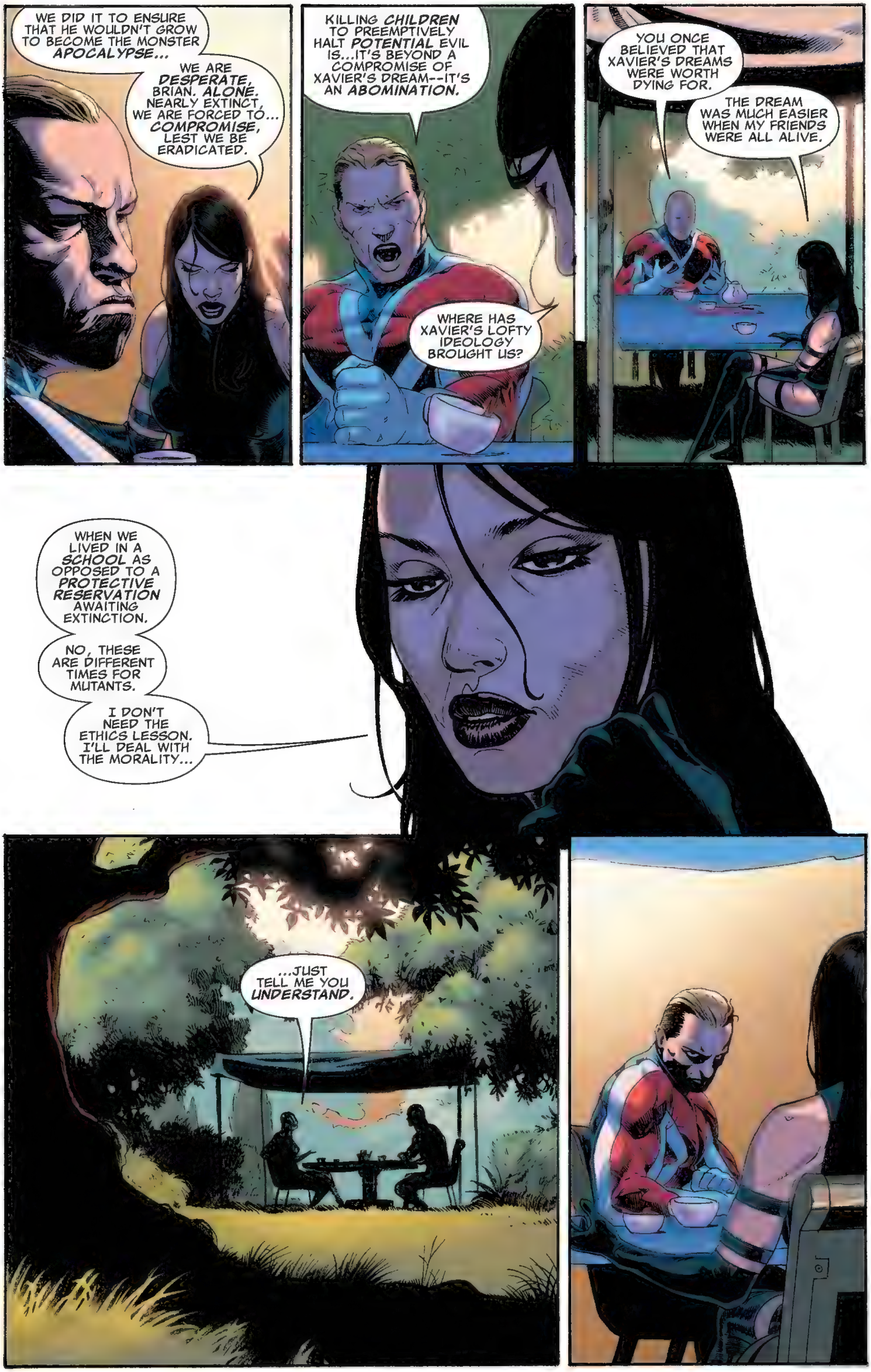

MISSION ACHIEVEMENT-- FIFTY PERCENT.
I HAVE POSSESSION OF THE WORLD.
FANTOMEX REMAINS ALIVE.
FIND AND KILL HIM.
GO.
TWIPPP

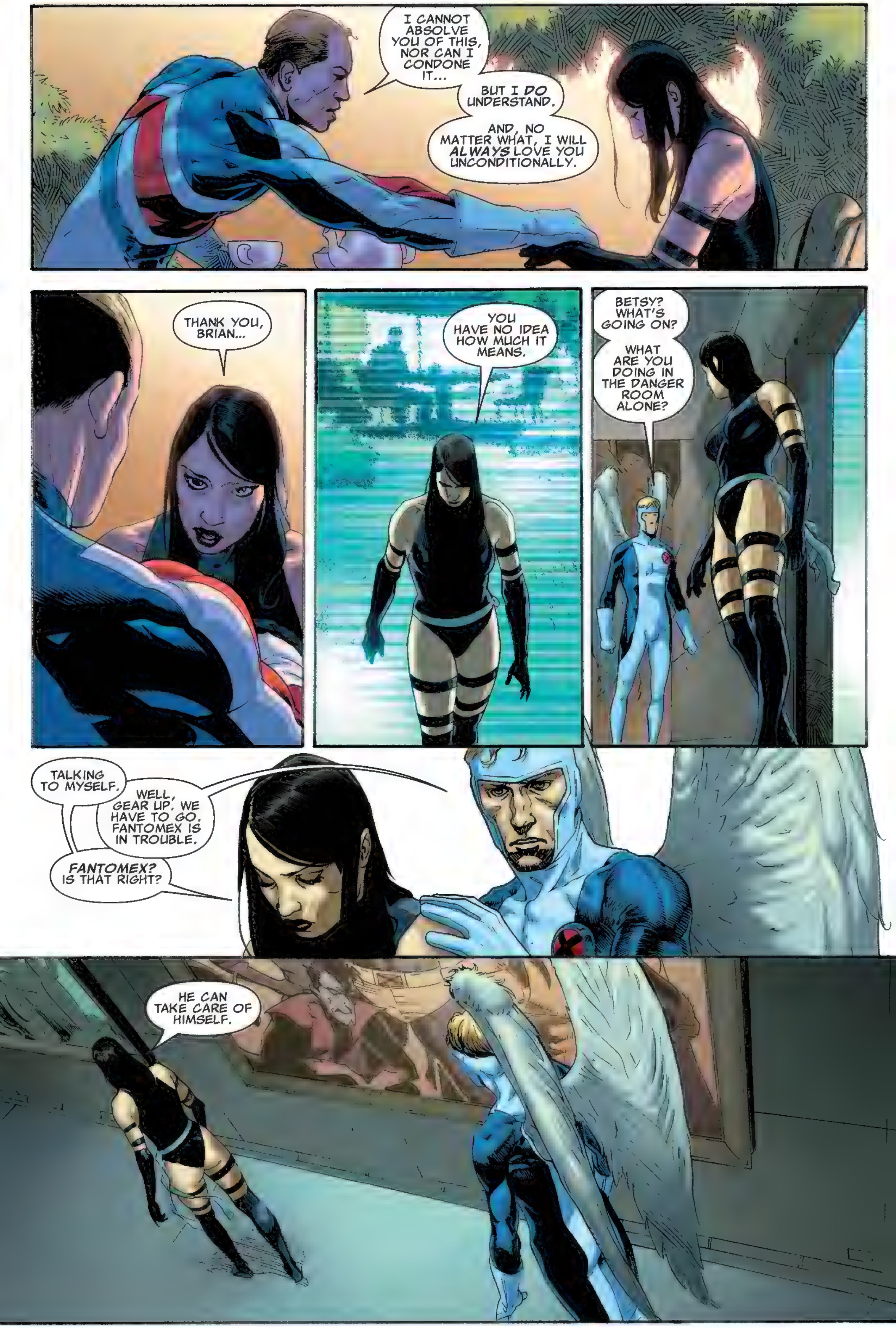

BLAM
BLAM
WHA
BLAM
TOO FAST FOR BULLETS.

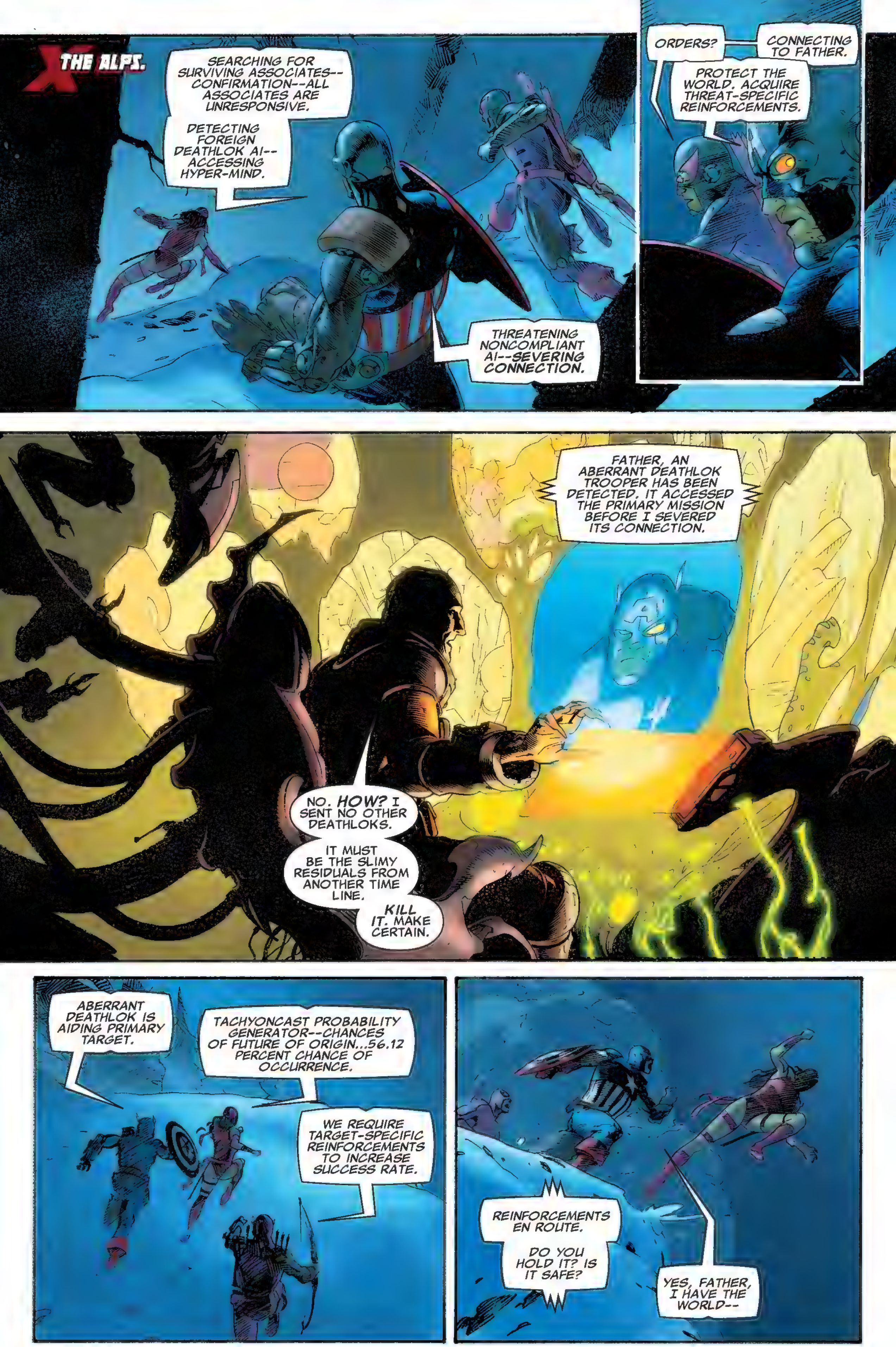

FISTICUFFS IT IS.
OBJECTIVE-- KILL FANTOMEX.
C'MON THEN.
CLUNK
WHAK
OOF--!
RHAHH--!!
UK
GHRAA--!!
CRACK

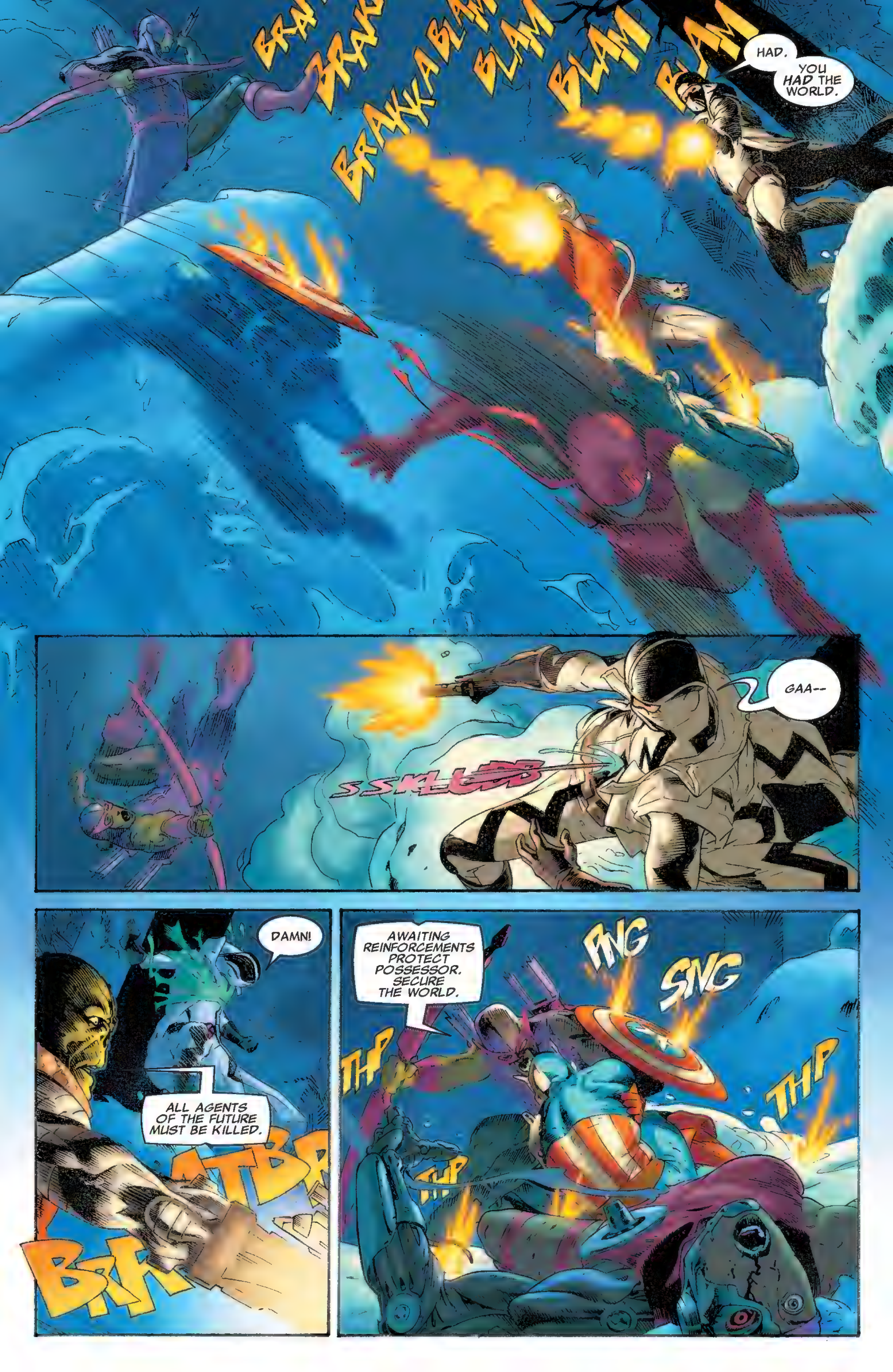

WHICH OF YOU HOLDS THE *WORLD?*
⊰GAAKK⊱ ⊰KOFF⊱
D-DON'T DESERVE TO ⊰KOFF⊱ DIE... LIKE THIS...
WE FOUGHT... MY GOD...IT WASN'T--
W-WASN'T OUR FAULT!
I BELIEVE YOU.
BLAM
CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS THE WORLD.
THEN WE MUST GET IT BACK FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA.
I BELIEVE SOMETHING TERRIBLE WILL HAPPEN IF WE DO NOT.
NATURALLY...?

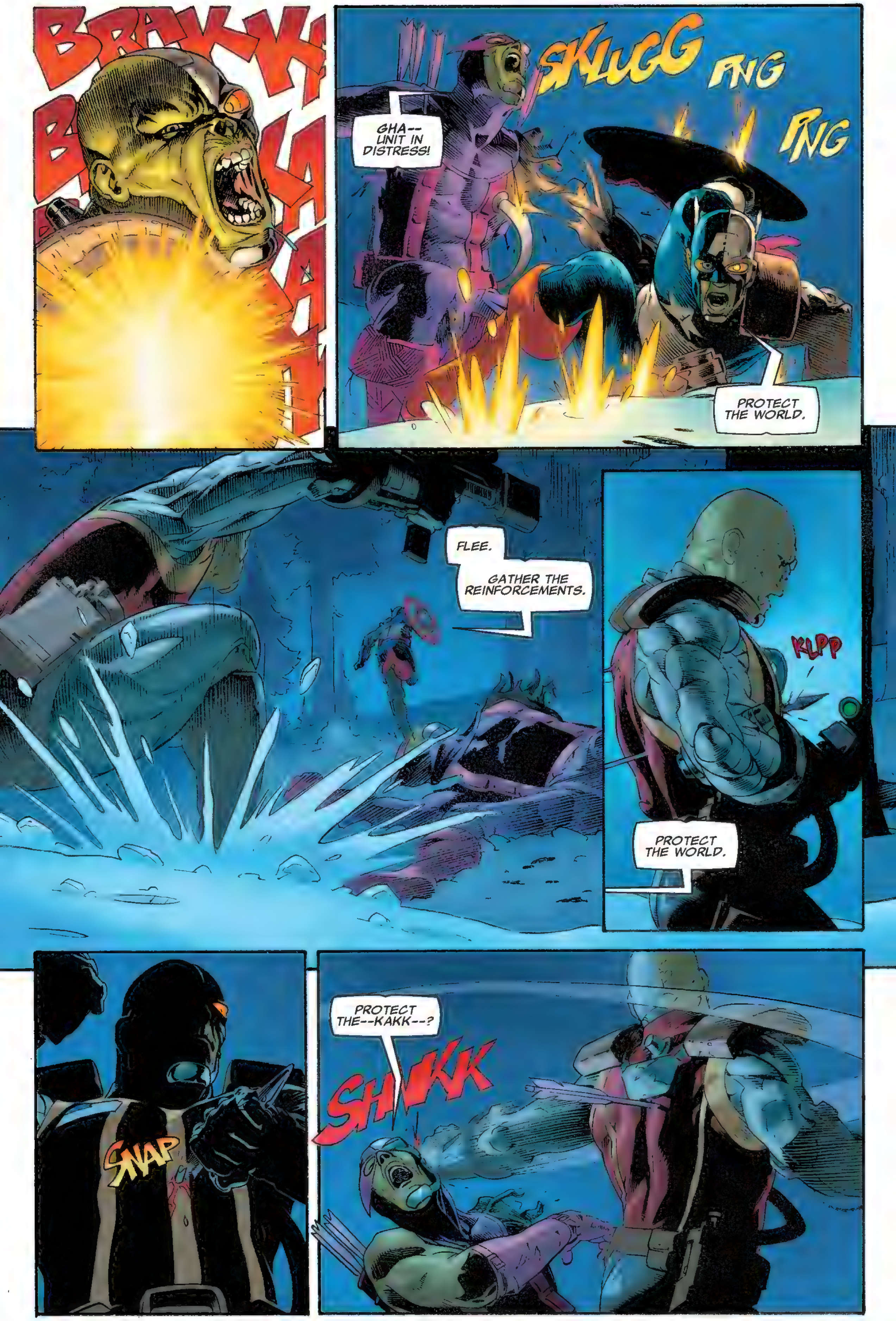

"WHY ELSE WOULD WE BOTHER?"
THERE WAS A TIME NOT SO LONG AGO WHEN I QUESTIONED IF I BELONGED IN A BAND OF WARRIORS LIKE THE X-MEN.
I REMEMBER YOUR AGONIZING.
AND NOW, NOW I AM COUNTED AMONG THEIR MOST FEROCIOUS.
RIDICULOUS. COMPARED TO THE COMPANY YOU KEEP?
LOGAN, MAGNETO, AND WHATEVER WORTHINGTON HAS BECOME--RELATIVELY SPEAKING, YOU'RE AN ANGEL, ELISABETH.
I AIDED IN THE ASSASSINATION OF A CHILD, BRIAN.

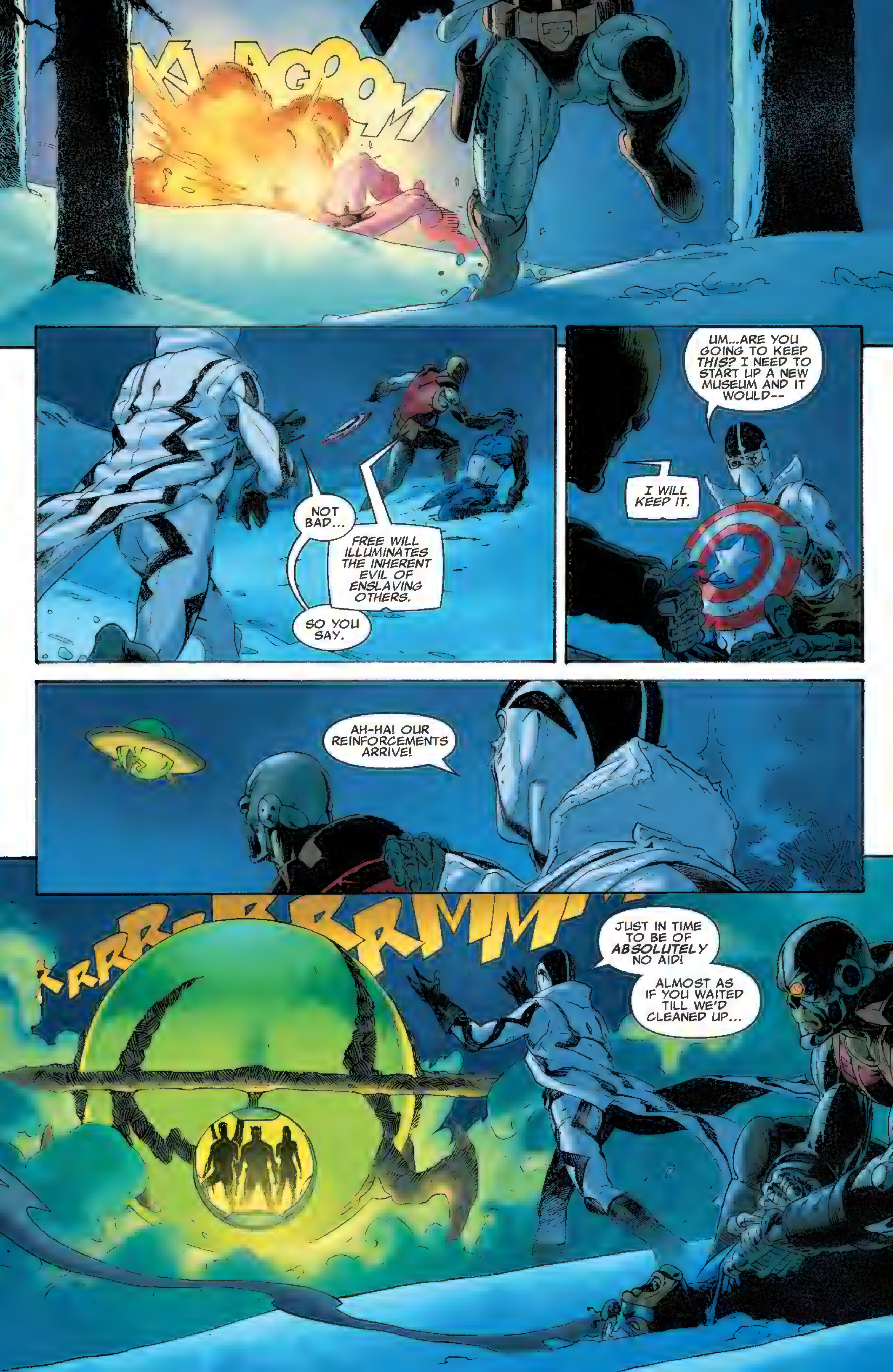

WE DID IT TO ENSURE THAT HE WOULDN'T GROW TO BECOME THE MONSTER **APOCALYPSE...**
WE ARE **DESPERATE,** BRIAN. **ALONE.** NEARLY EXTINCT, WE ARE FORCED TO... **COMPROMISE,** LEST WE BE ERADICATED.
KILLING **CHILDREN** TO PREEMPTIVELY HALT **POTENTIAL** EVIL IS...IT'S BEYOND A COMPROMISE OF XAVIER'S DREAM--IT'S AN **ABOMINATION.**
WHERE HAS XAVIER'S LOFTY IDEOLOGY BROUGHT US?
YOU ONCE BELIEVED THAT XAVIER'S DREAMS WERE WORTH DYING FOR.
THE DREAM WAS MUCH EASIER WHEN MY FRIENDS WERE ALL ALIVE.
WHEN WE LIVED IN A **SCHOOL** AS OPPOSED TO A **PROTECTIVE RESERVATION** AWAITING EXTINCTION.
NO, THESE ARE DIFFERENT TIMES FOR MUTANTS.
I DON'T NEED THE ETHICS LESSON. I'LL DEAL WITH THE MORALITY...
...JUST TELL ME YOU **UNDERSTAND.**

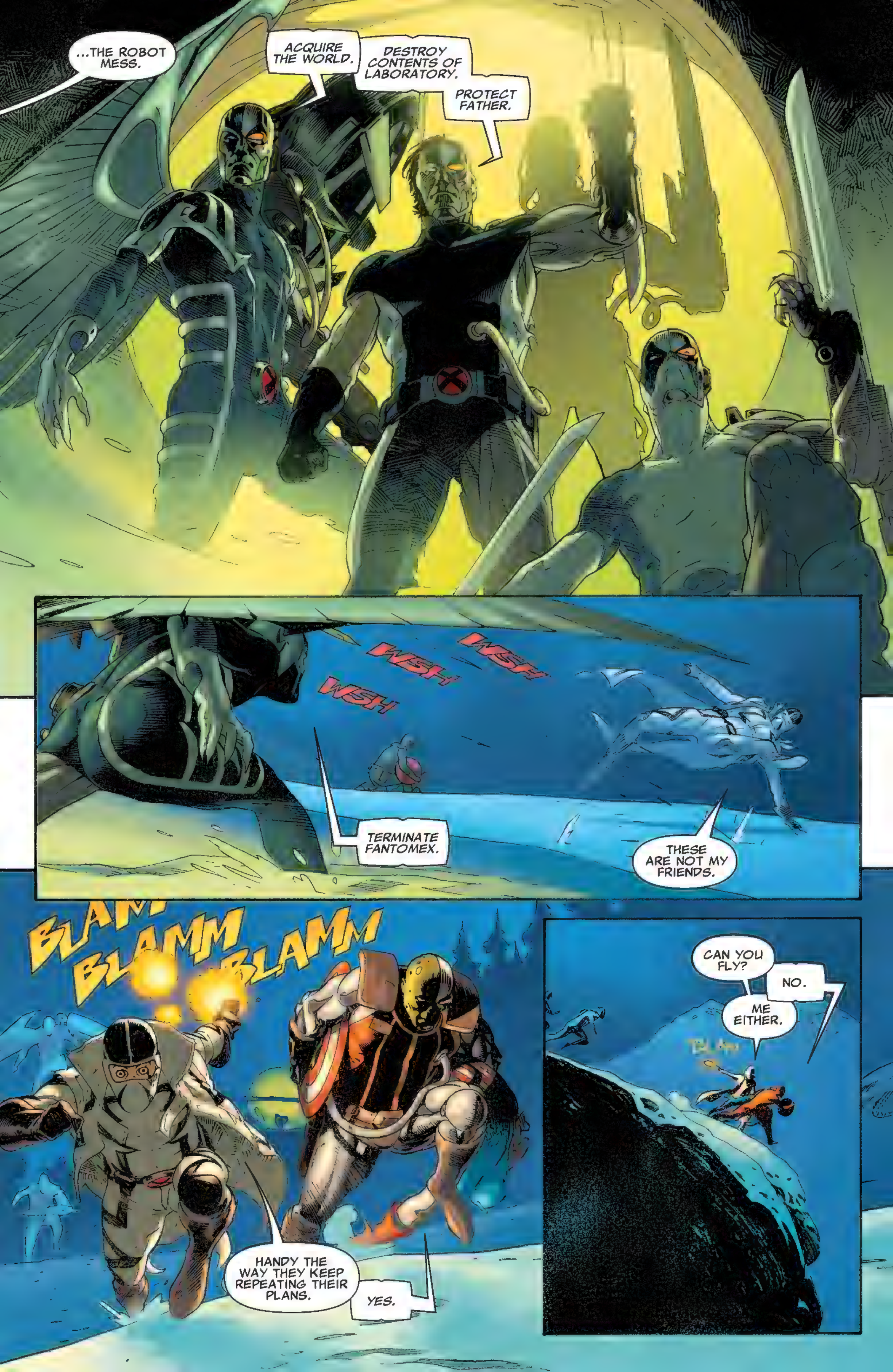

I CANNOT ABSOLVE YOU OF THIS, NOR CAN I CONDONE IT...
BUT I *DO* UNDERSTAND.
AND, NO MATTER WHAT, I WILL *ALWAYS* LOVE YOU UNCONDITIONALLY.
THANK YOU, BRIAN...
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH IT MEANS.
BETSY? WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE DANGER ROOM ALONE?
TALKING TO MYSELF.
WELL, GEAR UP, WE HAVE TO GO. FANTOMEX IS IN TROUBLE.
FANTOMEX? IS THAT RIGHT?
HE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.

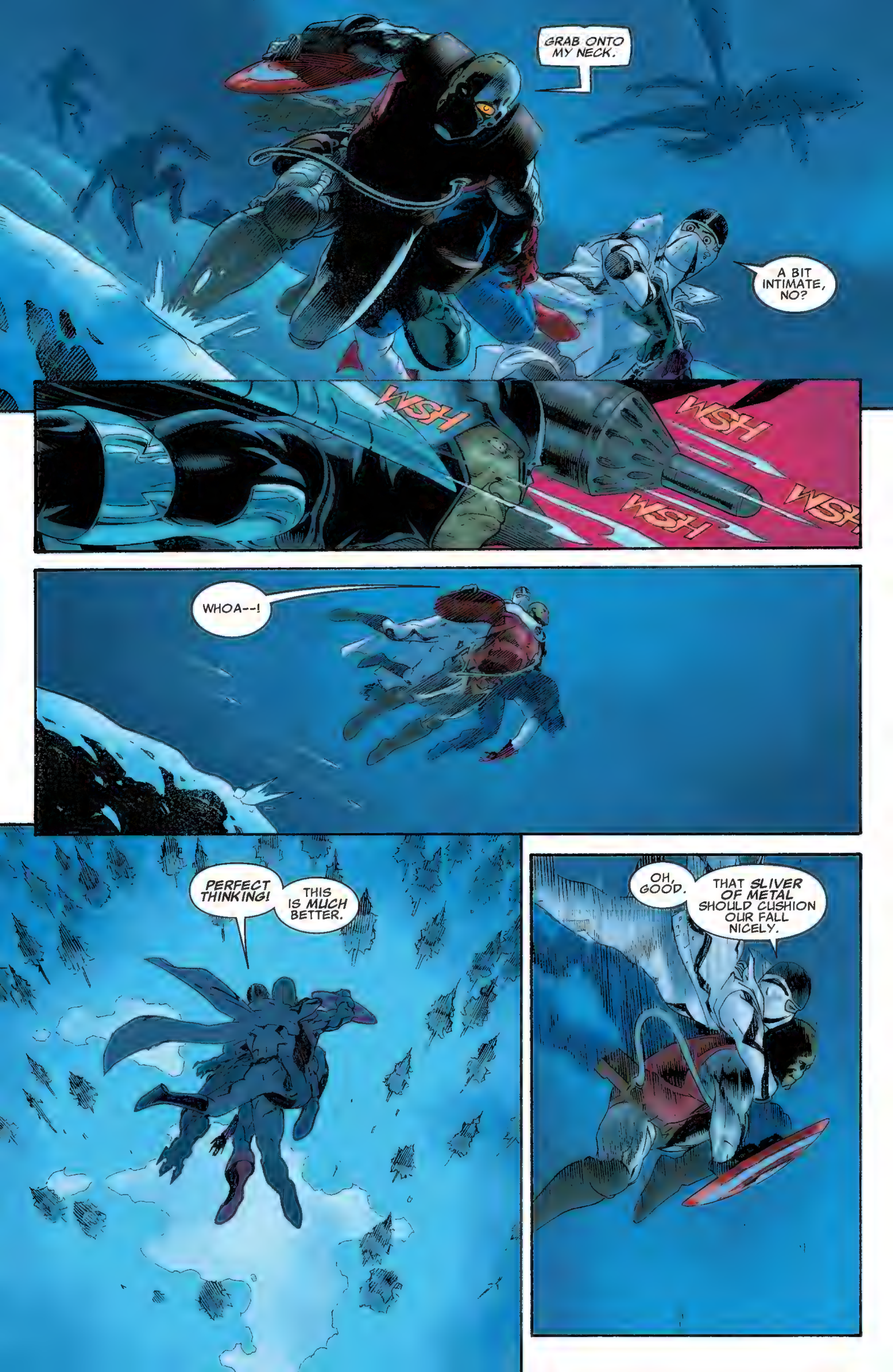

THE ALPS.
SEARCHING FOR SURVIVING ASSOCIATES--CONFIRMATION--ALL ASSOCIATES ARE UNRESPONSIVE.
DETECTING FOREIGN DEATHLOK AI--ACCESSING HYPER-MIND.
THREATENING NONCOMPLIANT AI--SEVERING CONNECTION.
ORDERS?
CONNECTING TO FATHER.
PROTECT THE WORLD. ACQUIRE THREAT-SPECIFIC REINFORCEMENTS.
FATHER, AN ABERRANT DEATHLOK TROOPER HAS BEEN DETECTED. IT ACCESSED THE PRIMARY MISSION BEFORE I SEVERED ITS CONNECTION.
NO. HOW? I SENT NO OTHER DEATHLOKS.
IT MUST BE THE SLIMY RESIDUALS FROM ANOTHER TIME LINE.
KILL IT. MAKE CERTAIN.
ABERRANT DEATHLOK IS AIDING PRIMARY TARGET.
TACHYONCAST PROBABILITY GENERATOR--CHANCES OF FUTURE OF ORIGIN...56.12 PERCENT CHANCE OF OCCURRENCE.
WE REQUIRE TARGET-SPECIFIC REINFORCEMENTS TO INCREASE SUCCESS RATE.
REINFORCEMENTS EN ROUTE.
DO YOU HOLD IT? IS IT SAFE?
YES, FATHER, I HAVE THE WORLD--

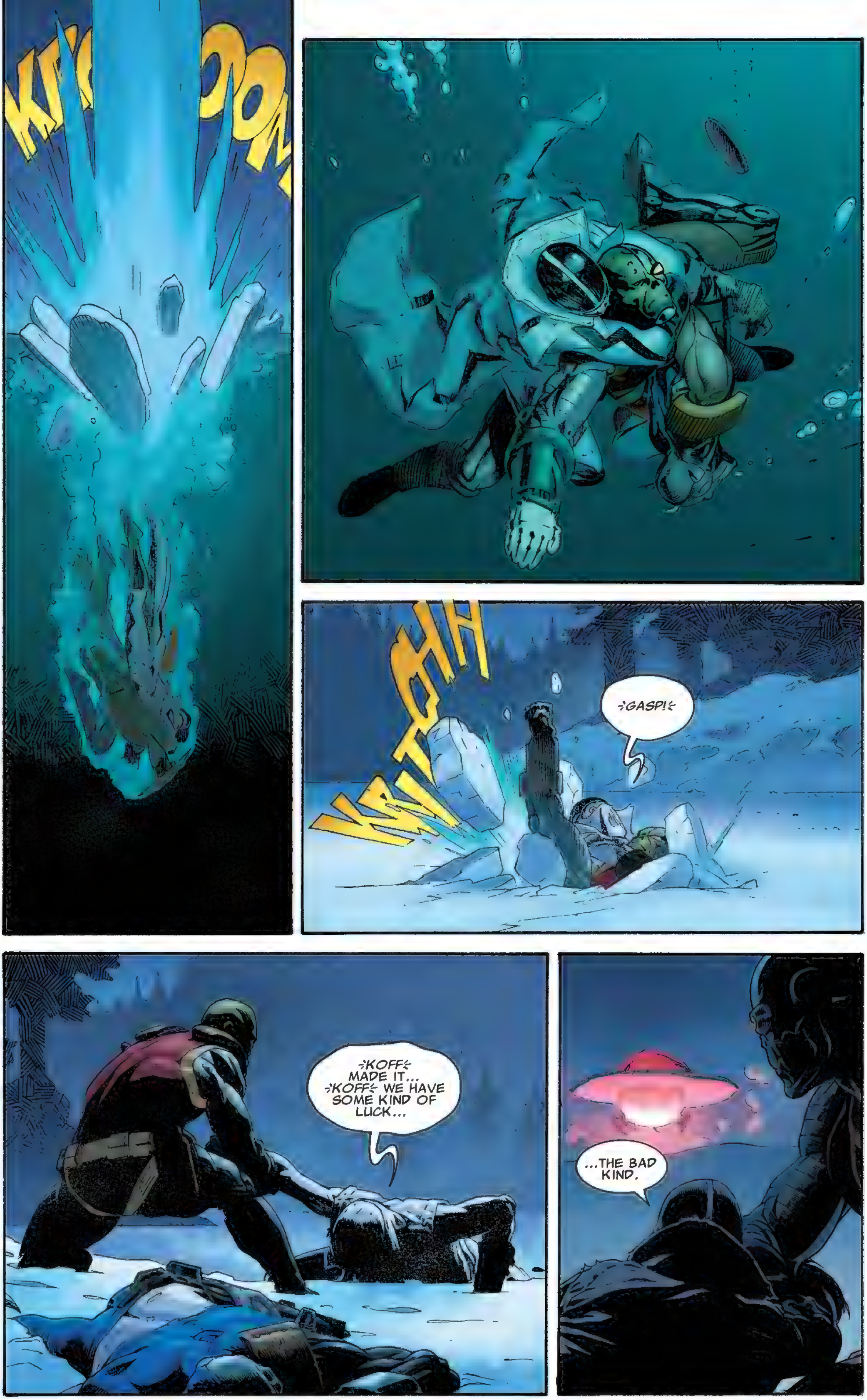

BRAKKABLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
HAD. YOU HAD THE WORLD.
SSKLUBB
GAA--
DAMN!
ALL AGENTS OF THE FUTURE MUST BE KILLED.
BRATBR
AWAITING REINFORCEMENTS PROTECT POSSESSOR. SECURE THE WORLD.
PING
SING
THP
THP
THP

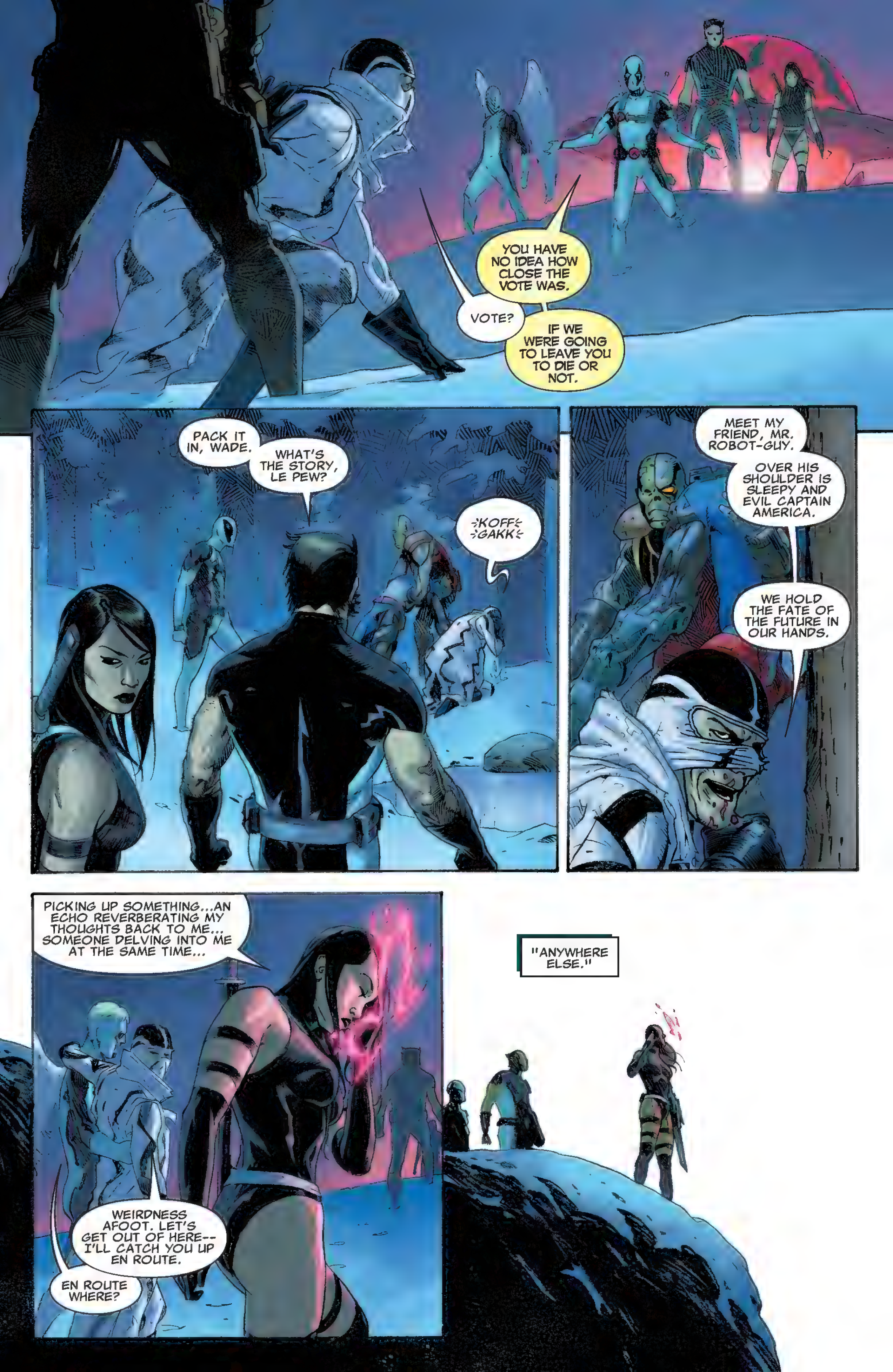

BRAKK!
SKLUGG
PNG
PNG
GHA-- UNIT IN DISTRESS!
PROTECT THE WORLD.
FLEE.
GATHER THE REINFORCEMENTS.
KLPP
PROTECT THE WORLD.
SNAP
PROTECT THE--KAKK--?
SHNKK

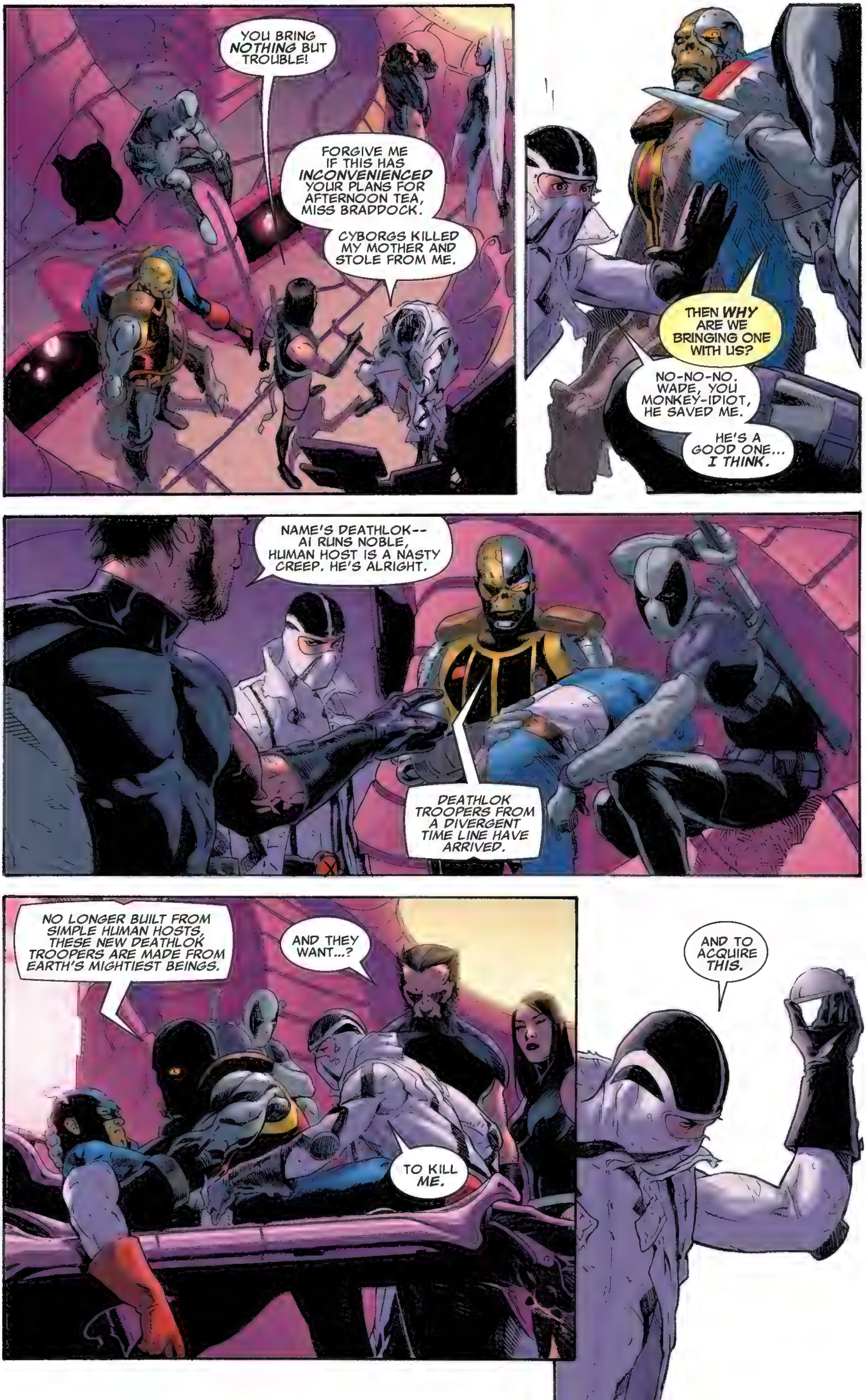

KAAGOOM
NOT BAD...
FREE WILL ILLUMINATES THE INHERENT EVIL OF ENSLAVING OTHERS.
SO YOU SAY.
UM...ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP *THIS?* I NEED TO START UP A NEW MUSEUM AND IT WOULD--
I WILL KEEP IT.
AH-HA! OUR REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE!
KRRR-BRRMM
JUST IN TIME TO BE OF **ABSOLUTELY** NO AID!
ALMOST AS IF YOU WAITED TILL WE'D CLEANED UP...

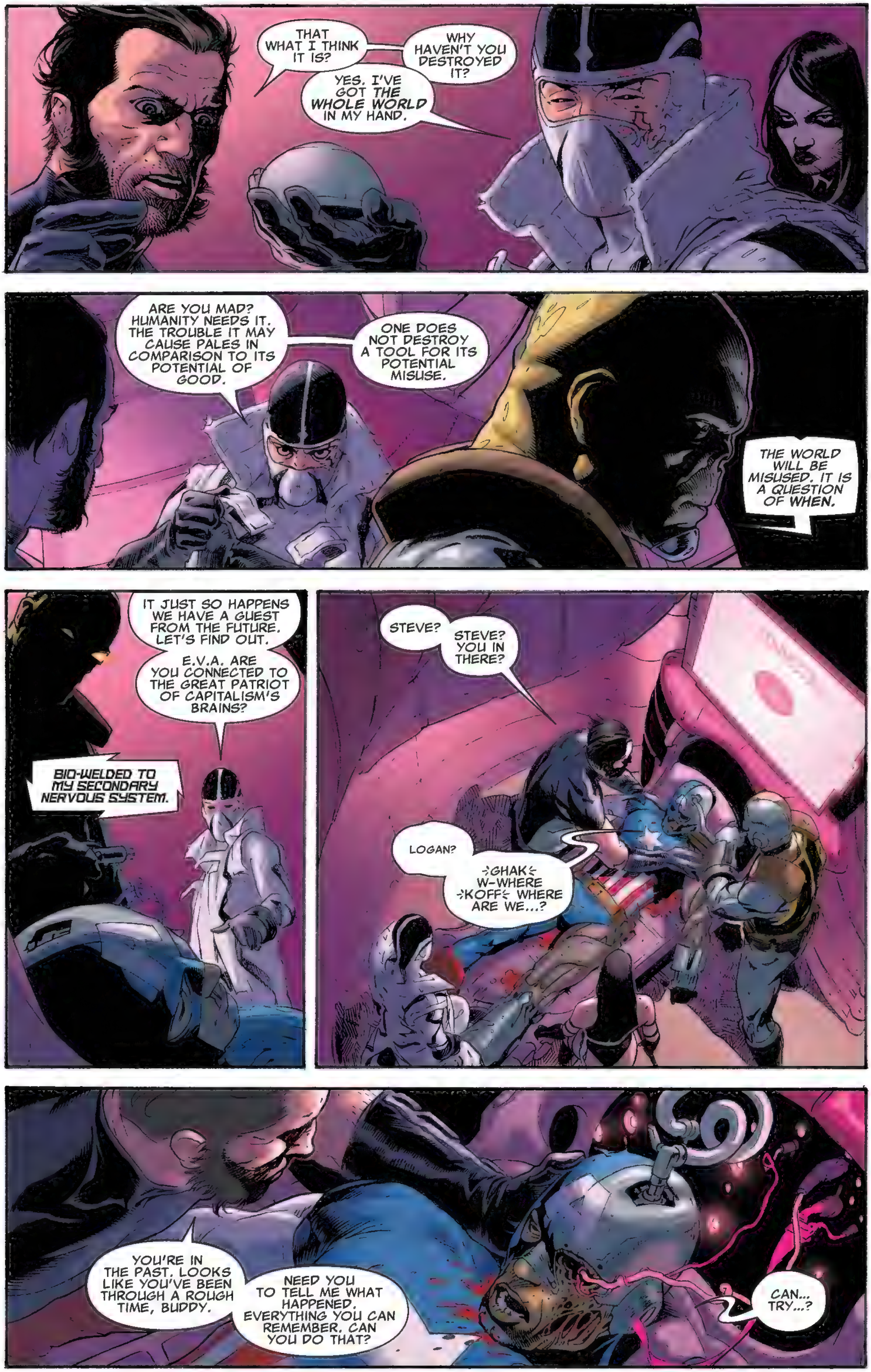

...THE ROBOT MESS.
ACQUIRE THE WORLD.
DESTROY CONTENTS OF LABORATORY.
PROTECT FATHER.
WSH
WSH
WSH
TERMINATE FANTOMEX.
THESE ARE NOT MY FRIENDS.
BLAM
BLAMM
BLAMM
HANDY THE WAY THEY KEEP REPEATING THEIR PLANS.
YES.
CAN YOU FLY?
NO.
ME EITHER.
BLAM

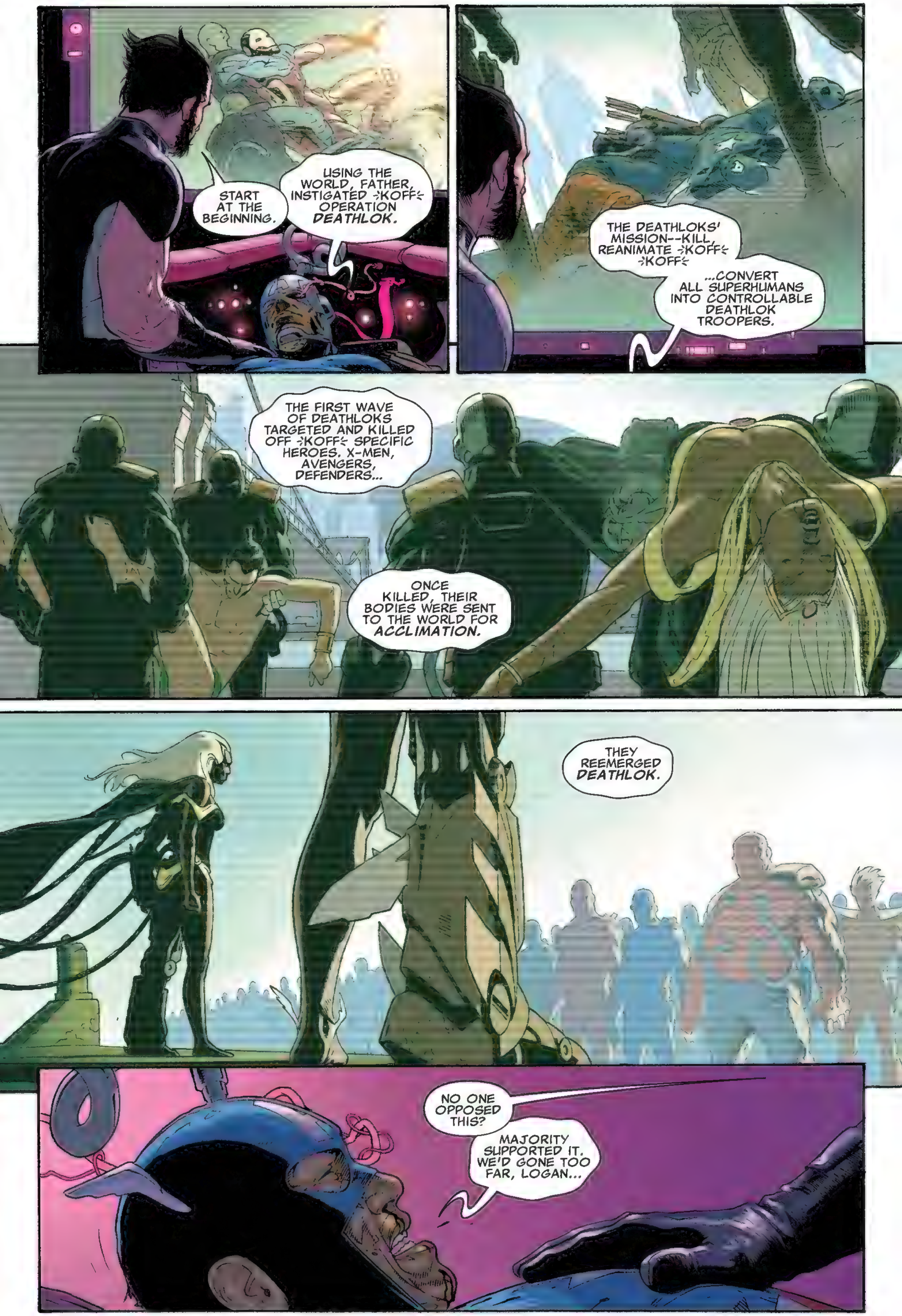

GRAB ONTO MY NECK.
A BIT INTIMATE, NO?
WSH
WSH
WSH
WSH
WHOA--!
PERFECT THINKING!
THIS IS MUCH BETTER.
OH, GOOD.
THAT SLIVER OF METAL SHOULD CUSHION OUR FALL NICELY.

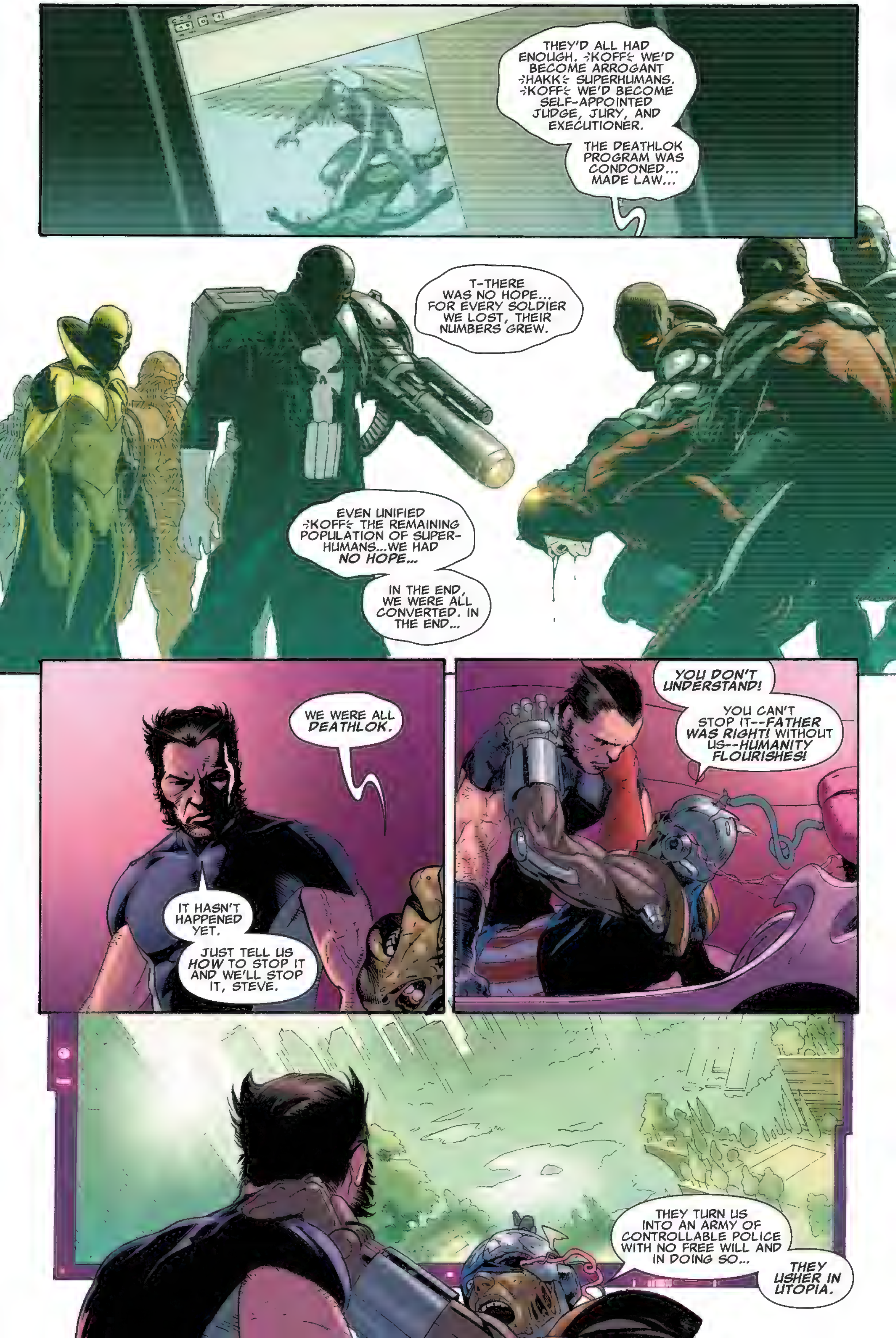

WATCHH
⊰GASP!⊱
⊰KOFF⊱ MADE IT... ⊰KOFF⊱ WE HAVE SOME KIND OF LUCK...
...THE BAD KIND.

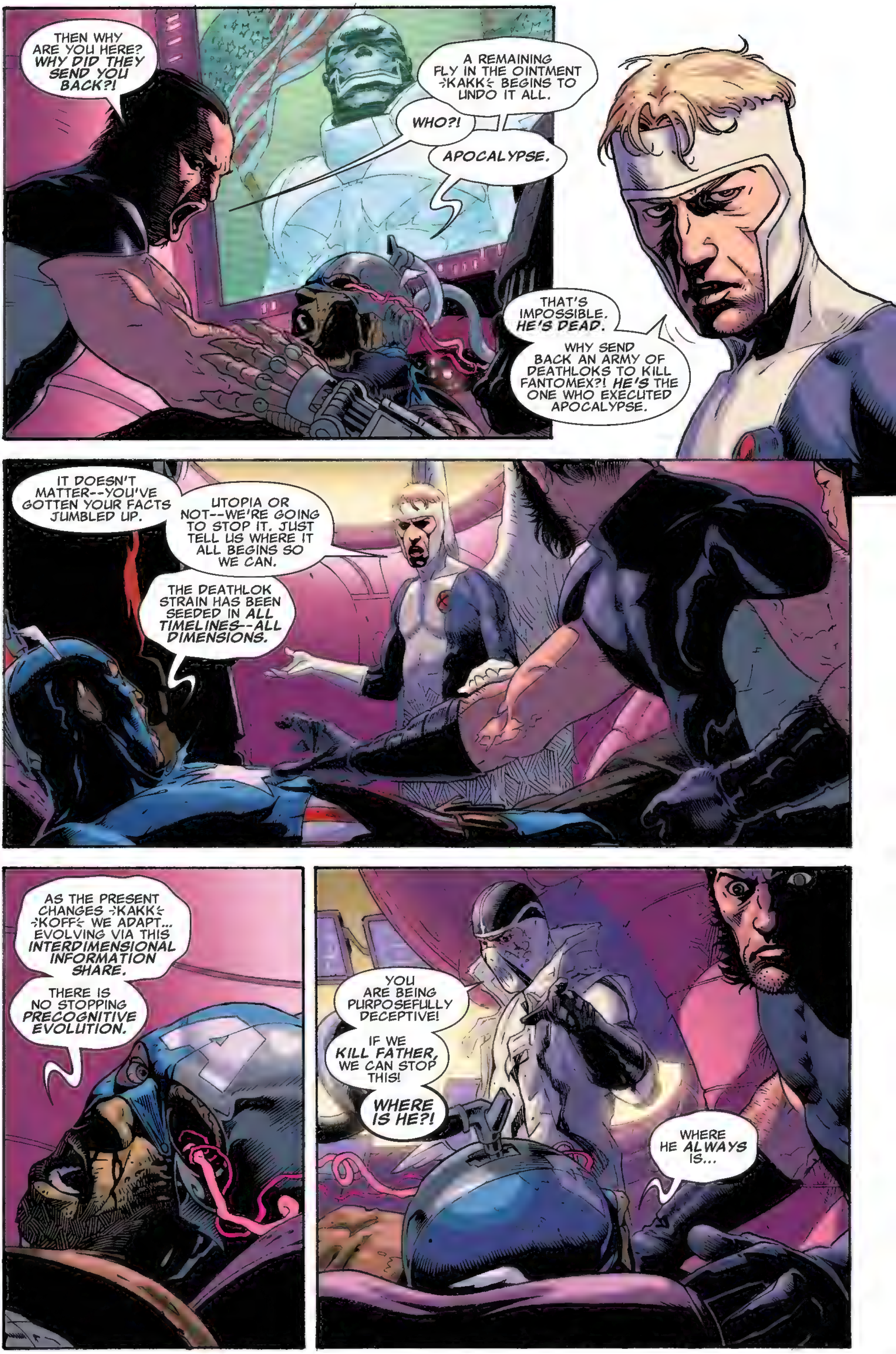

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW CLOSE THE VOTE WAS.
VOTE?
IF WE WERE GOING TO LEAVE YOU TO DIE OR NOT.
PACK IT IN, WADE.
WHAT'S THE STORY, LE PEW?
-KOFF- -GAKK-
MEET MY FRIEND, MR. ROBOT-GUY.
OVER HIS SHOULDER IS SLEEPY AND EVIL CAPTAIN AMERICA.
WE HOLD THE FATE OF THE FUTURE IN OUR HANDS.
PICKING UP SOMETHING...AN ECHO REVERBERATING MY THOUGHTS BACK TO ME... SOMEONE DELVING INTO ME AT THE SAME TIME...
WEIRDNESS AFOOT. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE-- I'LL CATCH YOU UP EN ROUTE.
EN ROUTE WHERE?
"ANYWHERE ELSE."

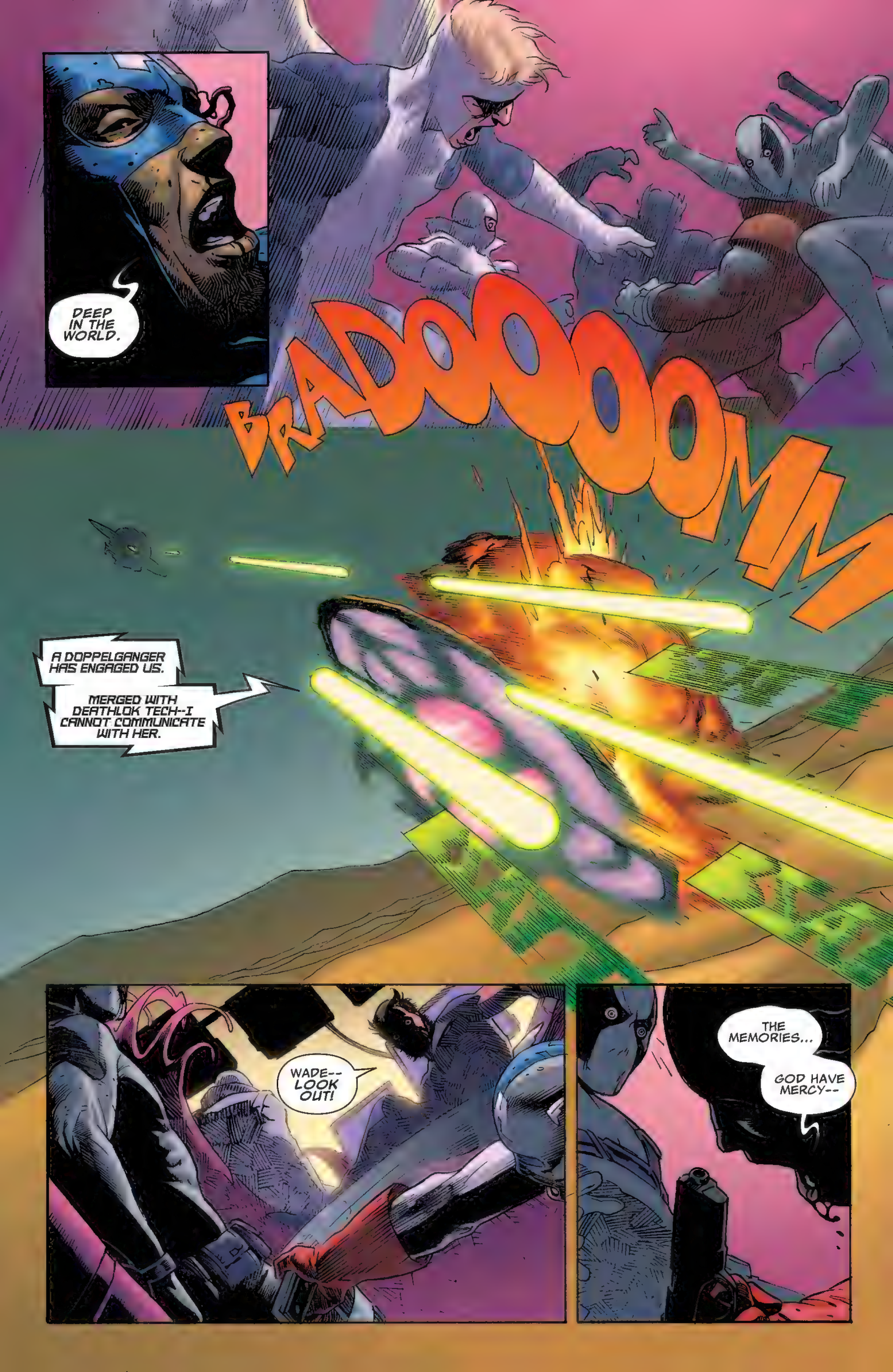

YOU BRING NOTHING BUT TROUBLE!
FORGIVE ME IF THIS HAS INCONVENIENCED YOUR PLANS FOR AFTERNOON TEA, MISS BRADDOCK.
CYBORGS KILLED MY MOTHER AND STOLE FROM ME.
THEN WHY ARE WE BRINGING ONE WITH US?
NO-NO-NO. WADE, YOU MONKEY-IDIOT, HE SAVED ME.
HE'S A GOOD ONE... I THINK.
NAME'S DEATHLOK-- AI RUNS NOBLE, HUMAN HOST IS A NASTY CREEP. HE'S ALRIGHT.
DEATHLOK TROOPERS FROM A DIVERGENT TIME LINE HAVE ARRIVED.
NO LONGER BUILT FROM SIMPLE HUMAN HOSTS, THESE NEW DEATHLOK TROOPERS ARE MADE FROM EARTH'S MIGHTIEST BEINGS.
AND THEY WANT...?
TO KILL ME.
AND TO ACQUIRE THIS.

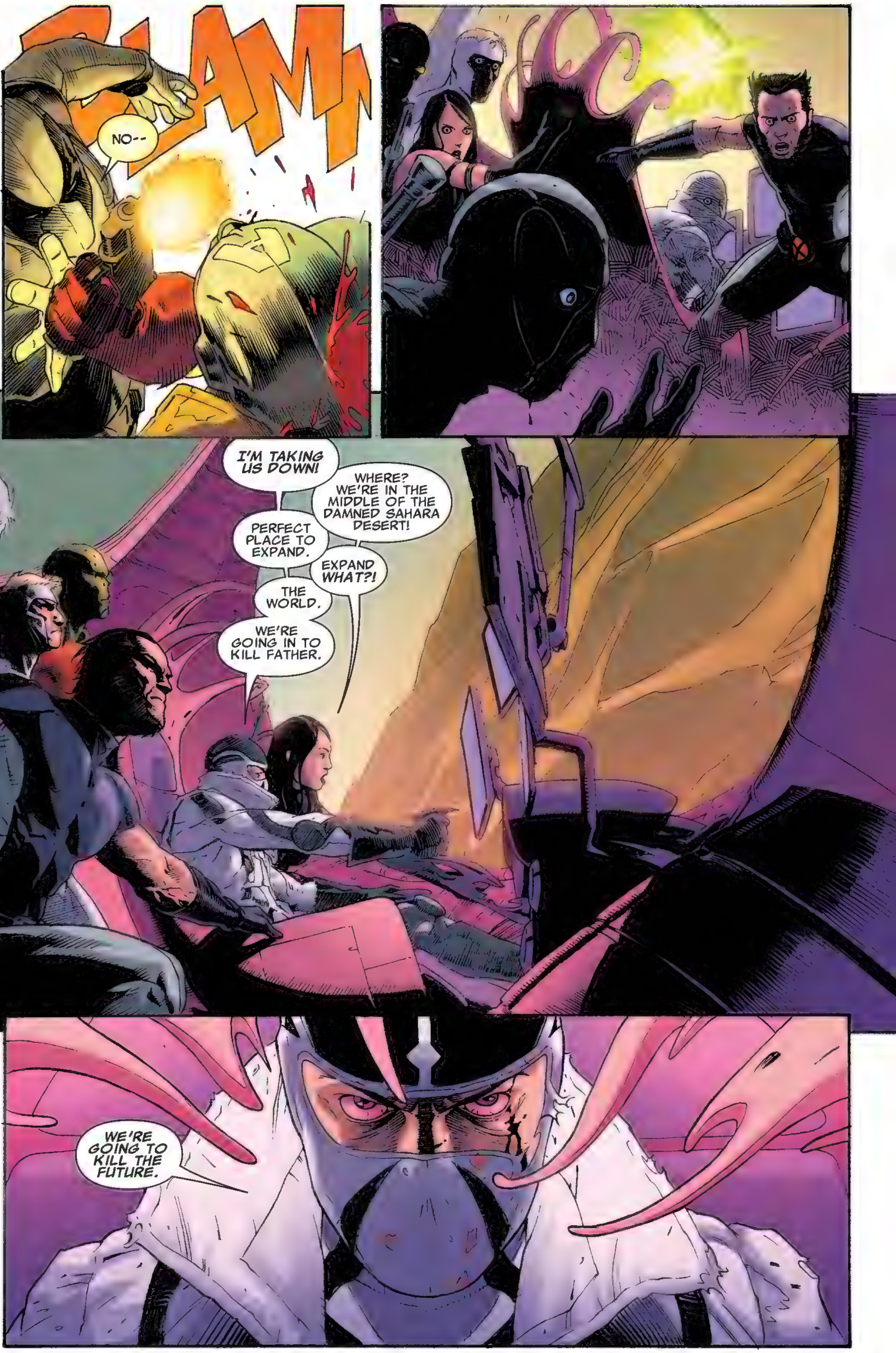

THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?
WHY HAVEN'T YOU DESTROYED IT?
YES. I'VE GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN MY HAND.
ARE YOU MAD? HUMANITY NEEDS IT. THE TROUBLE IT MAY CAUSE PALES IN COMPARISON TO ITS POTENTIAL OF GOOD.
ONE DOES NOT DESTROY A TOOL FOR ITS POTENTIAL MISUSE.
THE WORLD WILL BE MISUSED. IT IS A QUESTION OF WHEN.
IT JUST SO HAPPENS WE HAVE A GUEST FROM THE FUTURE. LET'S FIND OUT.
E.V.A. ARE YOU CONNECTED TO THE GREAT PATRIOT OF CAPITALISM'S BRAINS?
BIO-WELDED TO MY SECONDARY NERVOUS SYSTEM.
STEVE?
STEVE? YOU IN THERE?
LOGAN?
GHAK W-WHERE KOFF WHERE ARE WE...?
YOU'RE IN THE PAST. LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A ROUGH TIME, BUDDY.
NEED YOU TO TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED. EVERYTHING YOU CAN REMEMBER. CAN YOU DO THAT?
CAN... TRY...?


START AT THE BEGINNING.
USING THE WORLD, FATHER, INSTIGATED *KOFF* OPERATION **DEATHLOK.**
THE DEATHLOKS' MISSION--KILL, REANIMATE *KOFF* *KOFF*
...CONVERT ALL SUPERHUMANS INTO CONTROLLABLE DEATHLOK TROOPERS.
THE FIRST WAVE OF DEATHLOKS TARGETED AND KILLED OFF *KOFF* SPECIFIC HEROES. X-MEN, AVENGERS, DEFENDERS...
ONCE KILLED, THEIR BODIES WERE SENT TO THE WORLD FOR **ACCLIMATION.**
THEY REEMERGED **DEATHLOK.**
NO ONE OPPOSED THIS?
MAJORITY SUPPORTED IT. WE'D GONE TOO FAR, LOGAN...


THEY'D ALL HAD ENOUGH. ⪢KOFF⪡ WE'D BECOME ARROGANT ⪢HAKK⪡ SUPERHUMANS. ⪢KOFF⪡ WE'D BECOME SELF-APPOINTED JUDGE, JURY, AND EXECUTIONER.
THE DEATHLOK PROGRAM WAS CONDONED... MADE LAW...
T-THERE WAS NO HOPE... FOR EVERY SOLDIER WE LOST, THEIR NUMBERS GREW.
EVEN UNIFIED ⪢KOFF⪡ THE REMAINING POPULATION OF SUPER-HUMANS...WE HAD NO HOPE...
IN THE END, WE WERE ALL CONVERTED. IN THE END...
WE WERE ALL DEATHLOK.
IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET.
JUST TELL US HOW TO STOP IT AND WE'LL STOP IT, STEVE.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!
YOU CAN'T STOP IT--FATHER WAS RIGHT! WITHOUT US--HUMANITY FLOURISHES!
THEY TURN US INTO AN ARMY OF CONTROLLABLE POLICE WITH NO FREE WILL AND IN DOING SO...
THEY USHER IN UTOPIA.

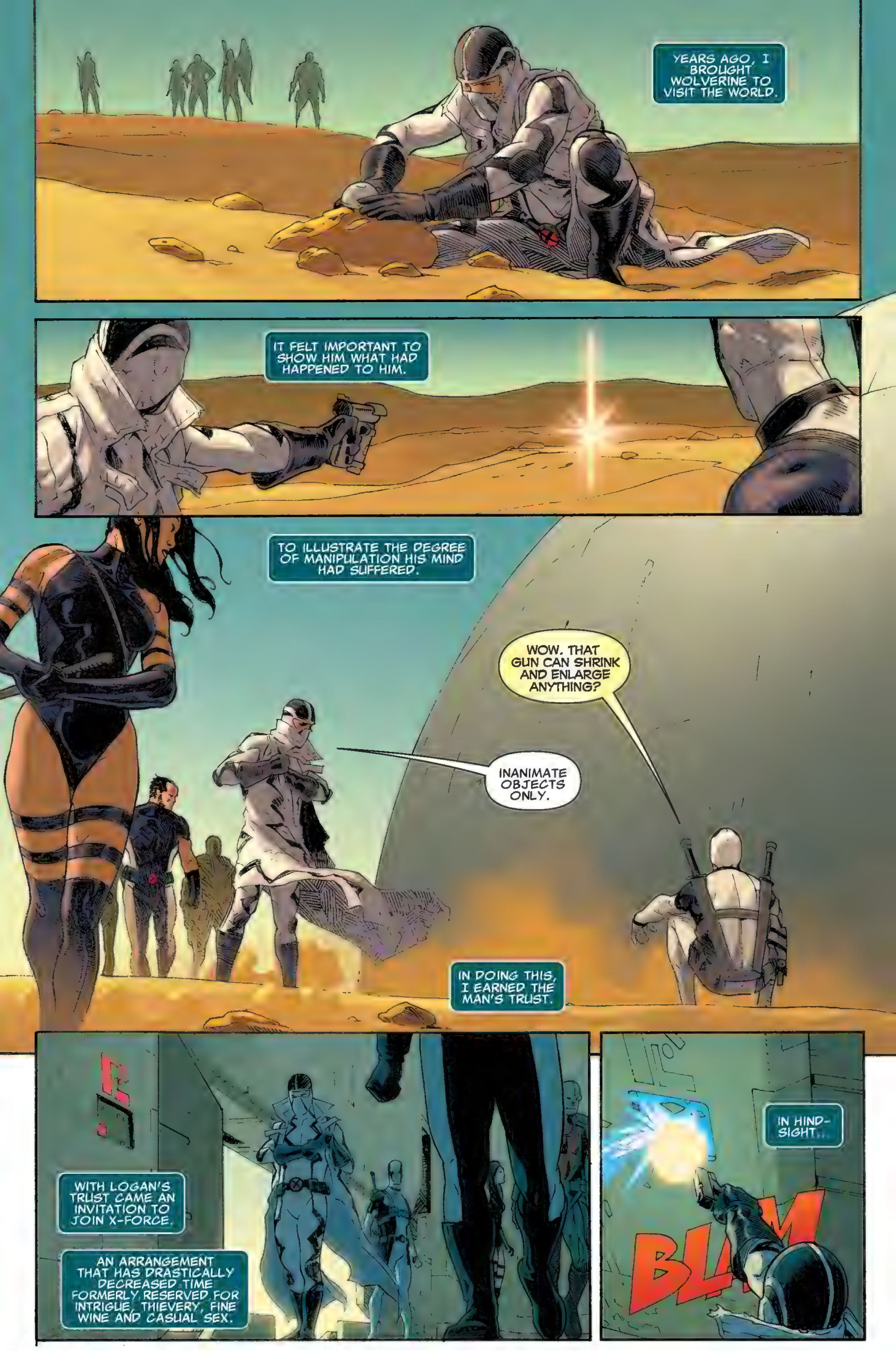

THEN WHY ARE YOU HERE? *WHY DID THEY SEND YOU BACK?!*
A REMAINING FLY IN THE OINTMENT -KAKK- BEGINS TO UNDO IT ALL.
WHO?!
APOCALYPSE.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. *HE'S DEAD.*
WHY SEND BACK AN ARMY OF DEATHLOKS TO KILL FANTOMEX?! *HE'S* THE ONE WHO EXECUTED APOCALYPSE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER--YOU'VE GOTTEN YOUR FACTS JUMBLED UP.
UTOPIA OR NOT--WE'RE GOING TO STOP IT. JUST TELL US WHERE IT ALL BEGINS SO WE CAN.
THE DEATHLOK STRAIN HAS BEEN SEEDED IN *ALL TIMELINES--ALL DIMENSIONS.*
AS THE PRESENT CHANGES -KAKK- -KOFF- WE ADAPT... EVOLVING VIA THIS *INTERDIMENSIONAL INFORMATION SHARE.*
THERE IS NO STOPPING *PRECOGNITIVE EVOLUTION.*
YOU ARE BEING PURPOSEFULLY DECEPTIVE!
IF WE *KILL FATHER,* WE CAN STOP THIS!
WHERE IS HE?!
WHERE HE *ALWAYS* IS...

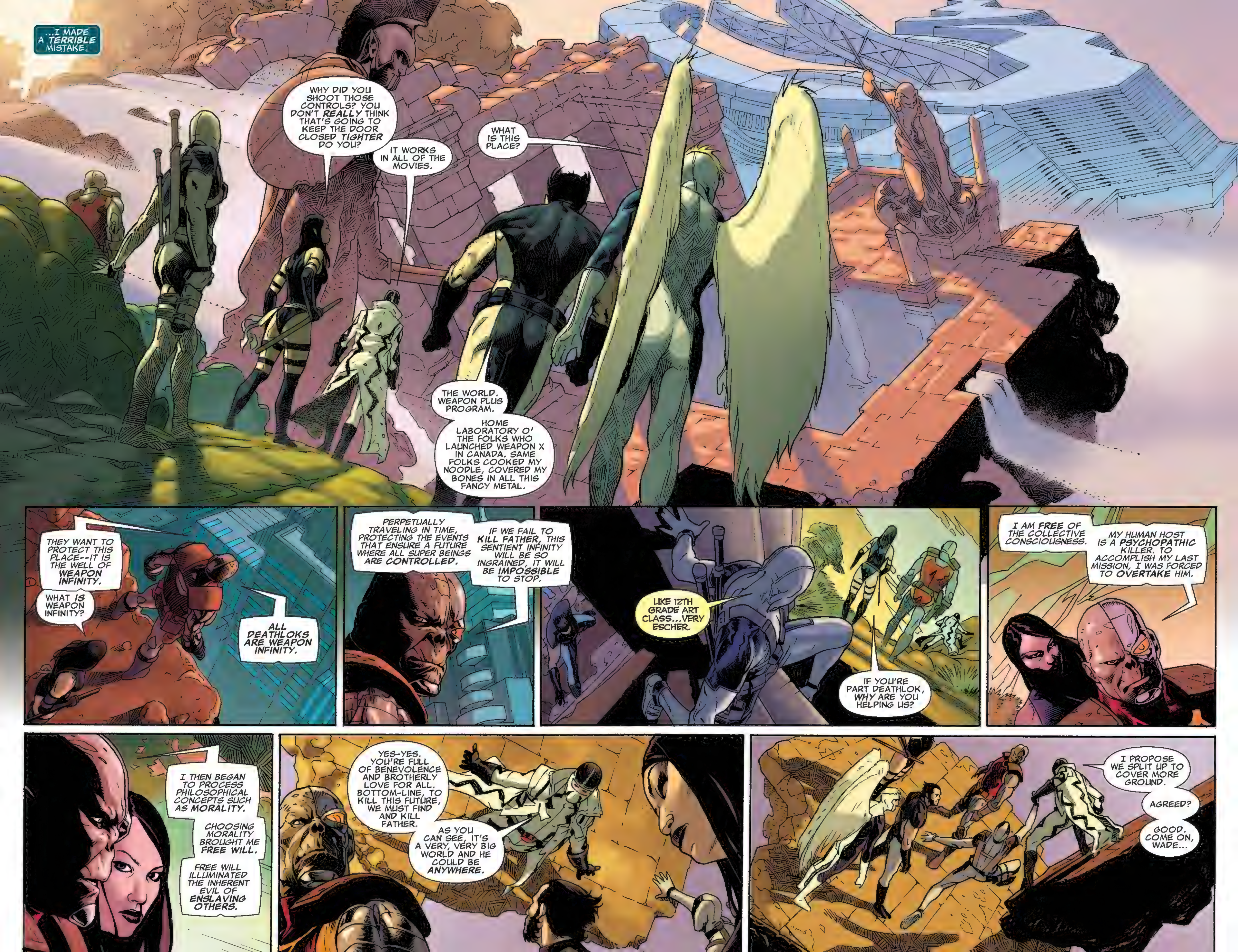

DEEP IN THE WORLD.
BRADOOOOOM
A DOPPELGANGER HAS ENGAGED US.
MERGED WITH DEATHLOK TECH--I CANNOT COMMUNICATE WITH HER.
WADE-- LOOK OUT!
THE MEMORIES...
GOD HAVE MERCY--

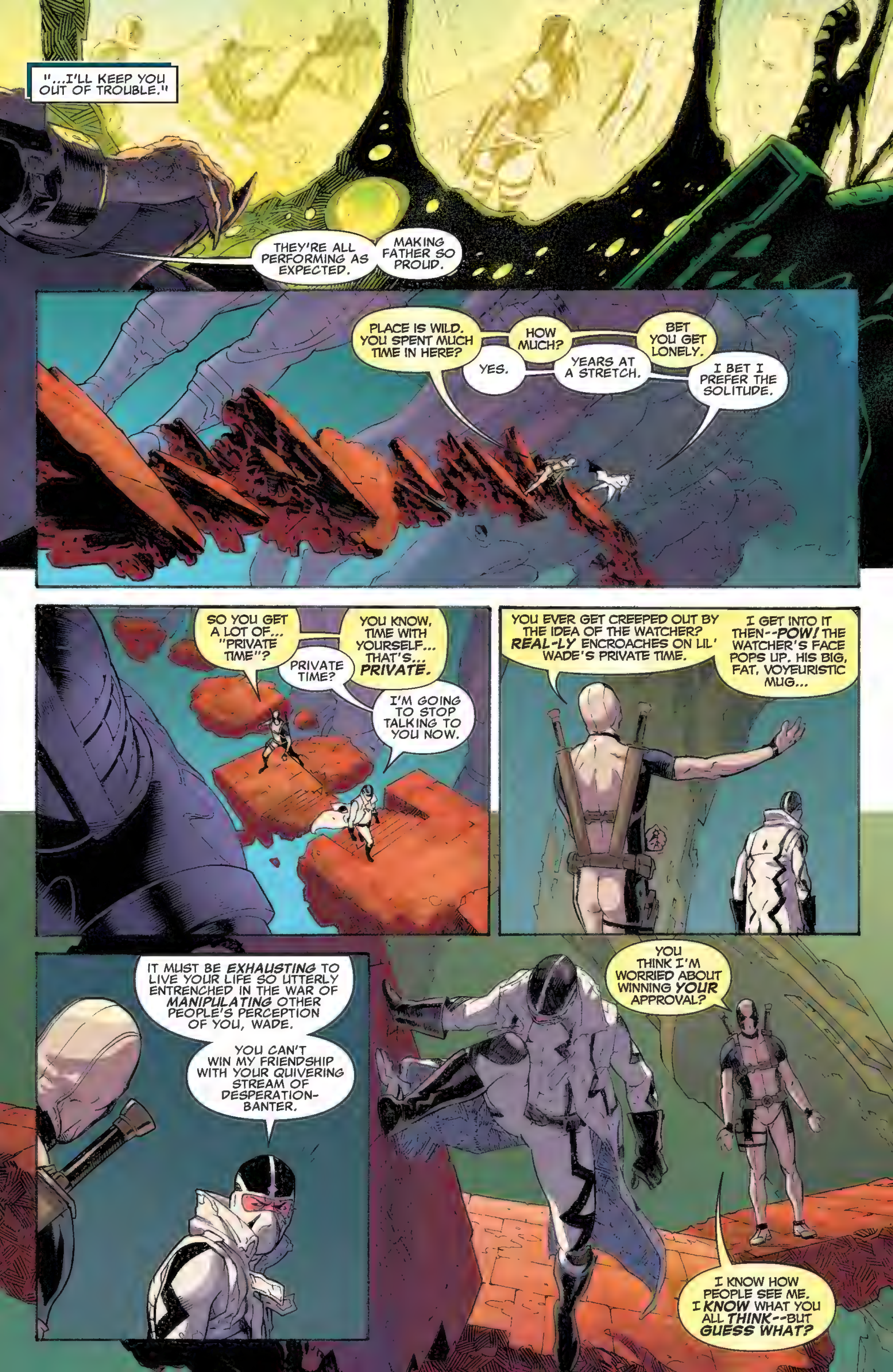

NO--
I'M TAKING US DOWN!
WHERE? WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAMNED SAHARA DESERT!
PERFECT PLACE TO EXPAND.
EXPAND *WHAT?!*
THE WORLD.
WE'RE GOING IN TO KILL FATHER.
WE'RE GOING TO KILL THE FUTURE.

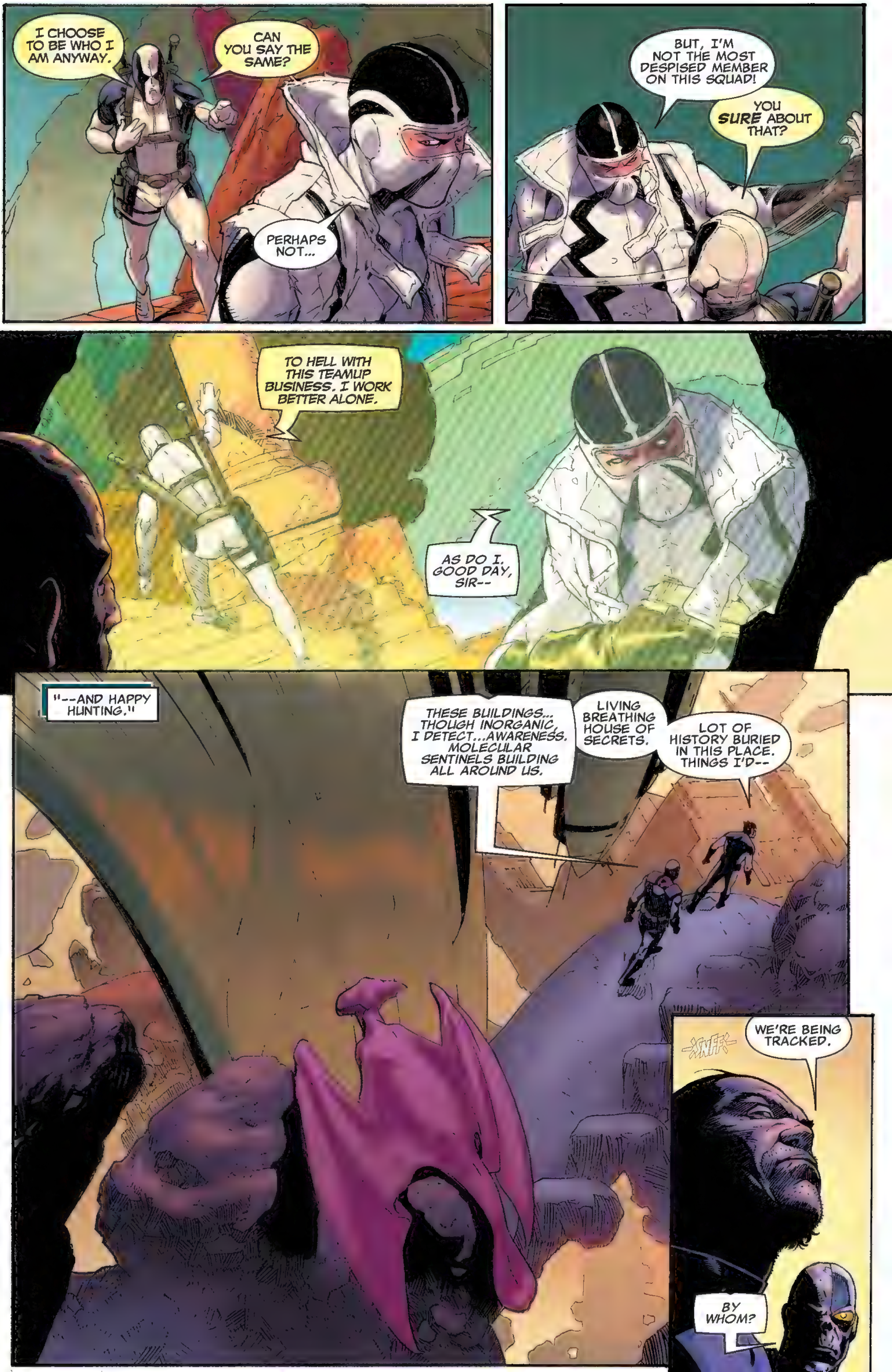
07 DEATHLOK NATION

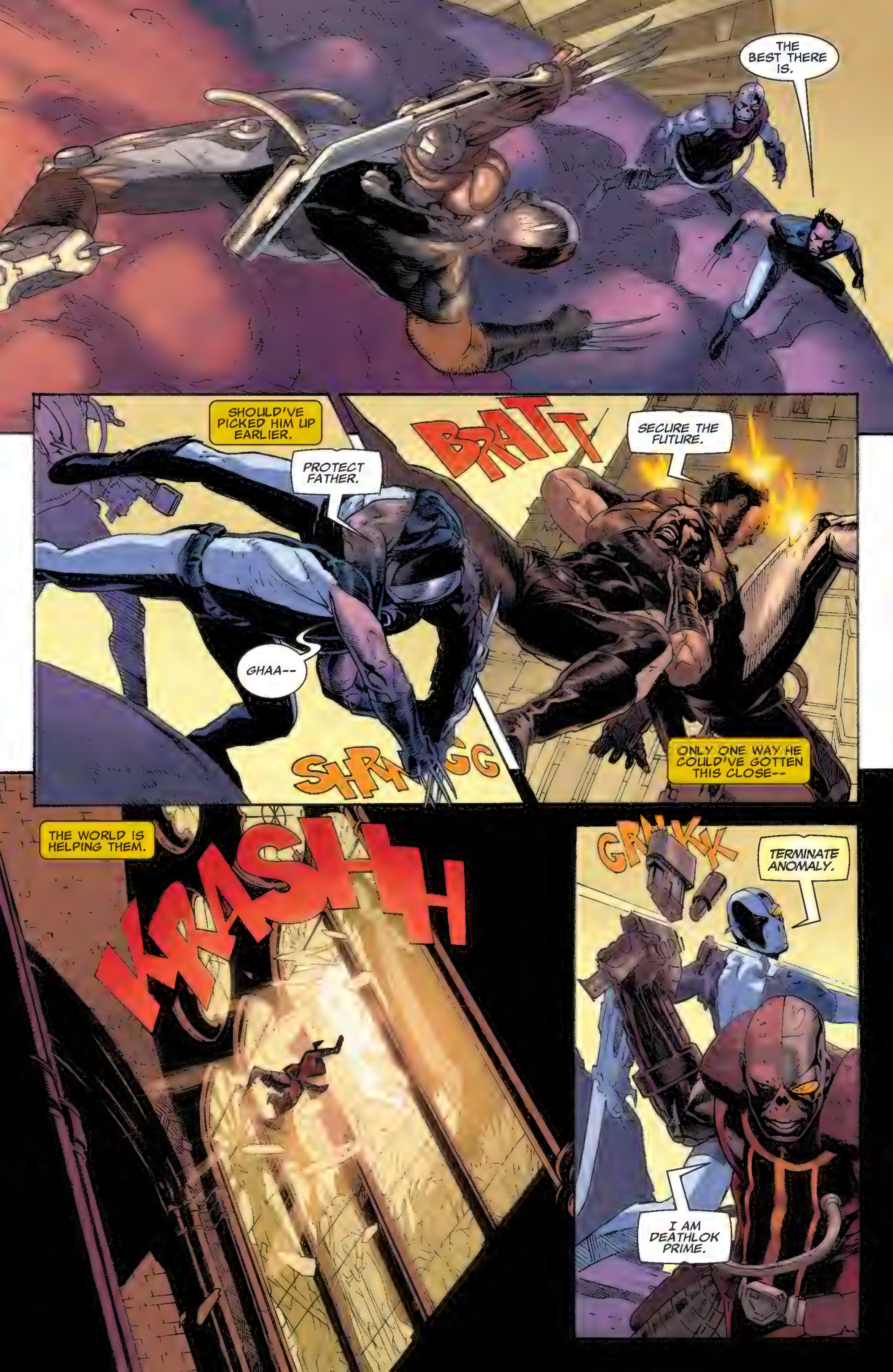
CHAPTER 3: NEW LIFE

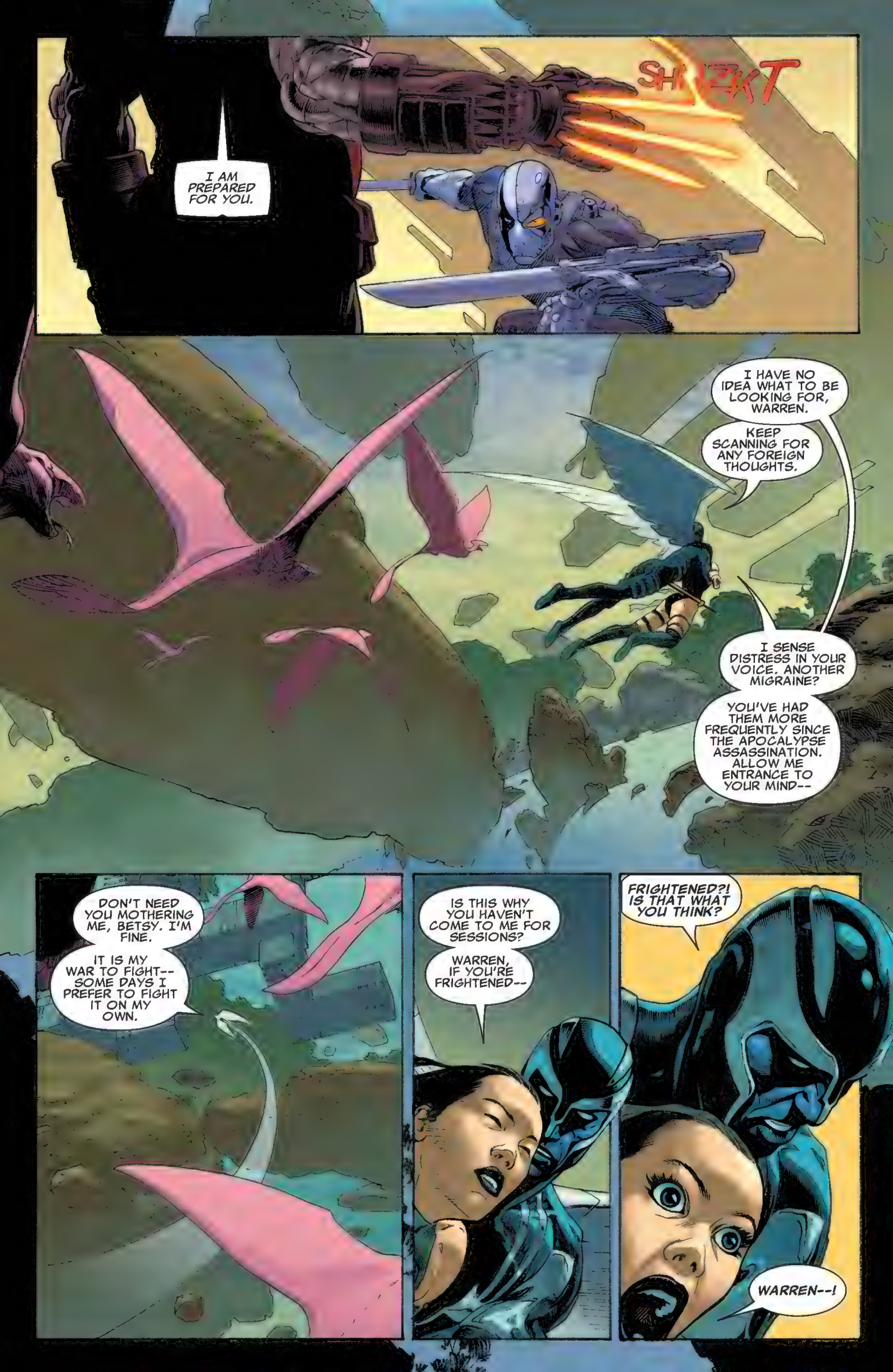

YEARS AGO, I BROUGHT WOLVERINE TO VISIT THE WORLD.
IT FELT IMPORTANT TO SHOW HIM WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM.
TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEGREE OF MANIPULATION HIS MIND HAD SUFFERED.
WOW. THAT GUN CAN SHRINK AND ENLARGE ANYTHING?
INANIMATE OBJECTS ONLY.
IN DOING THIS, I EARNED THE MAN'S TRUST.
WITH LOGAN'S TRUST CAME AN INVITATION TO JOIN X-FORCE.
AN ARRANGEMENT THAT HAS DRASTICALLY DECREASED TIME FORMERLY RESERVED FOR INTRIGUE, THIEVERY, FINE WINE AND CASUAL SEX.
IN HIND-SIGHT...
BLAM

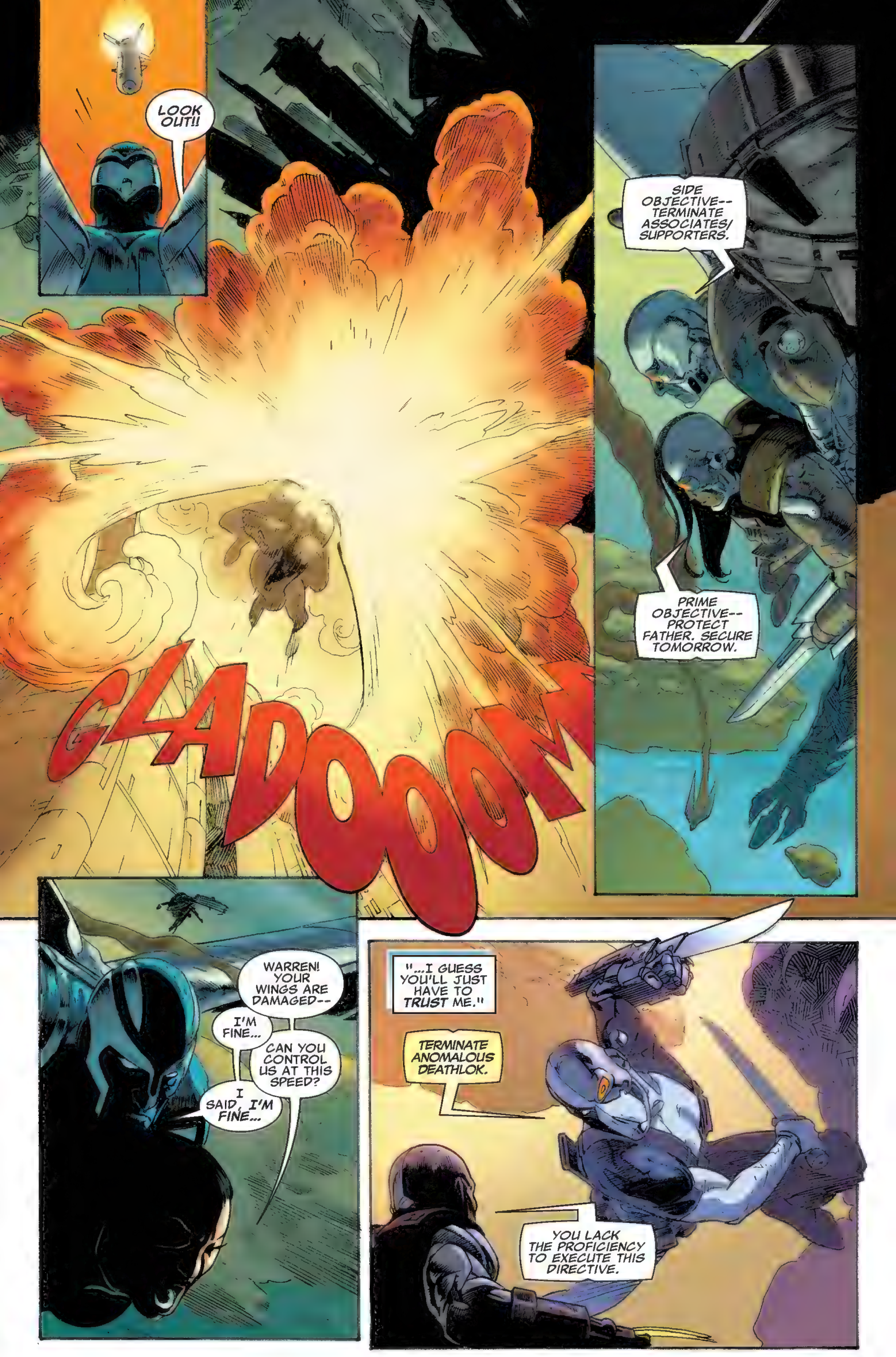

...I MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.
WHY DID YOU SHOOT THOSE CONTROLS? YOU DON'T REALLY THINK THAT'S GOING TO KEEP THE DOOR CLOSED TIGHTER DO YOU?
IT WORKS IN ALL OF THE MOVIES.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
THE WORLD. WEAPON PLUS PROGRAM.
HOME LABORATORY O' THE FOLKS WHO LAUNCHED WEAPON X IN CANADA. SAME FOLKS COOKED MY NOODLE, COVERED MY BONES IN ALL THIS FANCY METAL.
THEY WANT TO PROTECT THIS PLACE--IT IS THE WELL OF WEAPON INFINITY.
WHAT IS WEAPON INFINITY?
ALL DEATHLOKS ARE WEAPON INFINITY.
PERPETUALLY TRAVELING IN TIME, PROTECTING THE EVENTS THAT ENSURE A FUTURE WHERE ALL SUPER BEINGS ARE CONTROLLED.
IF WE FAIL TO KILL FATHER, THIS SENTIENT INFINITY WILL BE SO INGRAINED, IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO STOP.
LIKE 12TH GRADE ART CLASS...VERY ESCHER.
IF YOU'RE PART DEATHLOK, WHY ARE YOU HELPING US?
I AM FREE OF THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS.
MY HUMAN HOST IS A PSYCHOPATHIC KILLER. TO ACCOMPLISH MY LAST MISSION, I WAS FORCED TO OVERTAKE HIM.
I THEN BEGAN TO PROCESS PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS SUCH AS MORALITY.
CHOOSING MORALITY BROUGHT ME FREE WILL.
FREE WILL ILLUMINATED THE INHERENT EVIL OF ENSLAVING OTHERS.
YES-YES. YOU'RE FULL OF BENEVOLENCE AND BROTHERLY LOVE FOR ALL. BOTTOM-LINE, TO KILL THIS FUTURE, WE MUST FIND AND KILL FATHER.
AS YOU CAN SEE, IT'S A VERY, VERY BIG WORLD AND HE COULD BE ANYWHERE.
I PROPOSE WE SPLIT UP TO COVER MORE GROUND.
AGREED?
GOOD. COME ON, WADE...

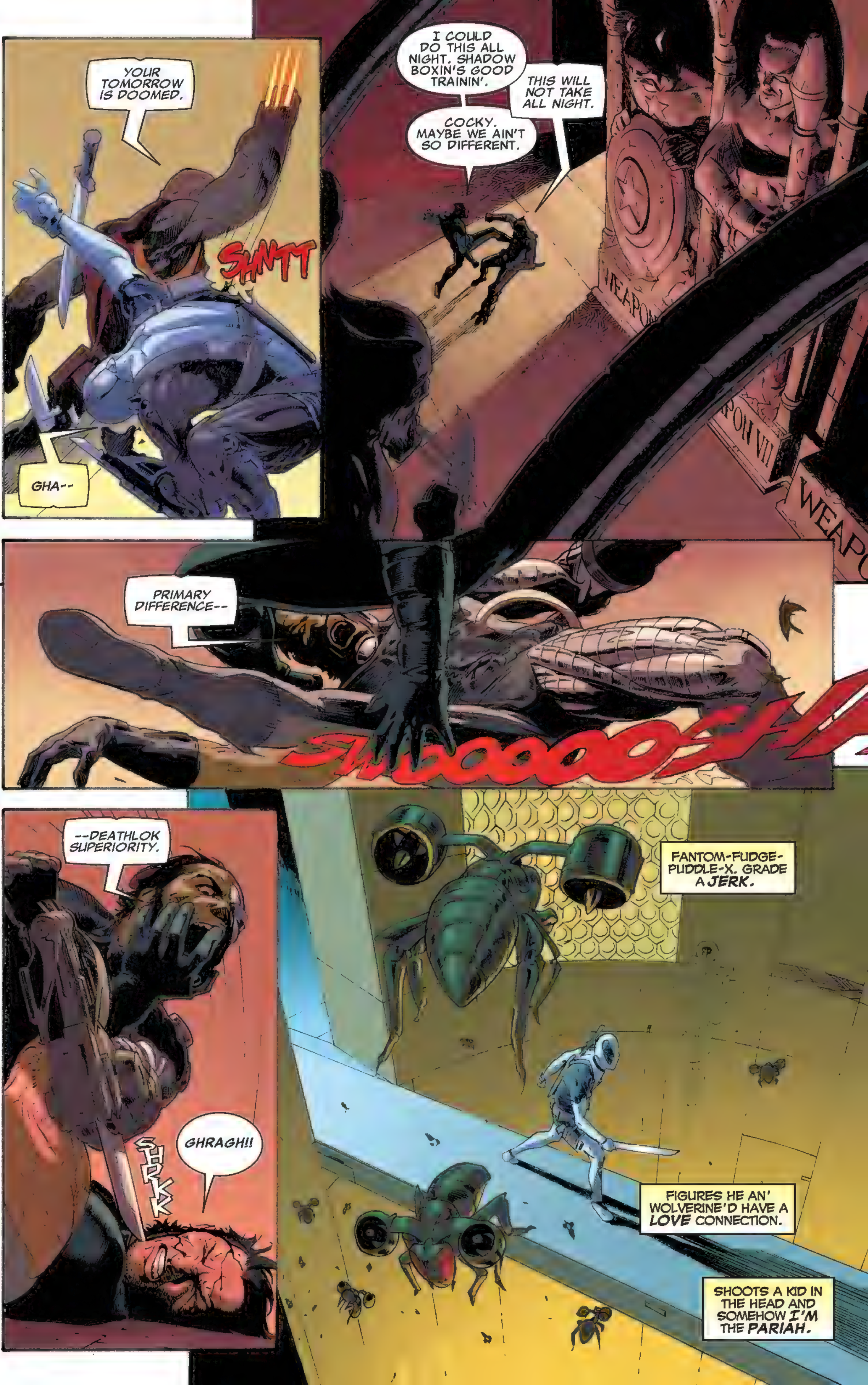

"...I'LL KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE."
THEY'RE ALL PERFORMING AS EXPECTED.
MAKING FATHER SO PROUD.
PLACE IS WILD. YOU SPENT MUCH TIME IN HERE?
YES.
HOW MUCH?
YEARS AT A STRETCH.
BET YOU GET LONELY.
I BET I PREFER THE SOLITUDE.
SO YOU GET A LOT OF... "PRIVATE TIME"?
PRIVATE TIME?
YOU KNOW, TIME WITH YOURSELF... THAT'S... PRIVATE.
I'M GOING TO STOP TALKING TO YOU NOW.
YOU EVER GET CREEPED OUT BY THE IDEA OF THE WATCHER? REAL-LY ENCROACHES ON LIL' WADE'S PRIVATE TIME.
I GET INTO IT THEN--POW! THE WATCHER'S FACE POPS UP. HIS BIG, FAT, VOYEURISTIC MUG...
IT MUST BE EXHAUSTING TO LIVE YOUR LIFE SO UTTERLY ENTRENCHED IN THE WAR OF MANIPULATING OTHER PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF YOU, WADE.
YOU CAN'T WIN MY FRIENDSHIP WITH YOUR QUIVERING STREAM OF DESPERATION-BANTER.
YOU THINK I'M WORRIED ABOUT WINNING YOUR APPROVAL?
I KNOW HOW PEOPLE SEE ME. I KNOW WHAT YOU ALL THINK--BUT GUESS WHAT?

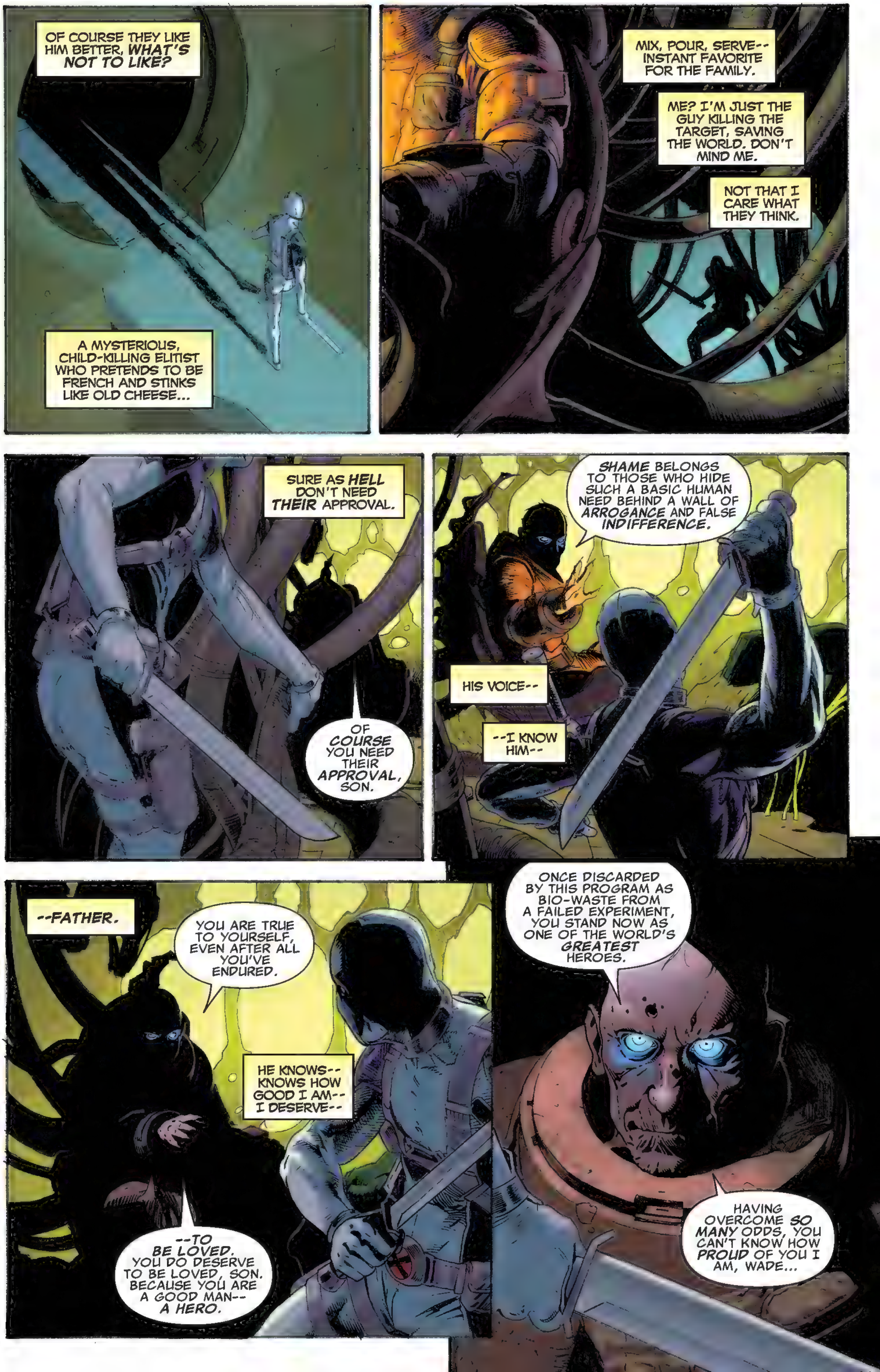

I CHOOSE TO BE WHO I AM ANYWAY.
CAN YOU SAY THE SAME?
PERHAPS NOT...
BUT, I'M NOT THE MOST DESPISED MEMBER ON THIS SQUAD!
YOU *SURE* ABOUT THAT?
TO HELL WITH THIS TEAMUP BUSINESS. I WORK BETTER ALONE.
AS DO I. GOOD DAY, SIR--
"--AND HAPPY HUNTING."
THESE BUILDINGS... THOUGH INORGANIC, I DETECT...AWARENESS. MOLECULAR SENTINELS BUILDING ALL AROUND US.
LIVING BREATHING HOUSE OF SECRETS.
LOT OF HISTORY BURIED IN THIS PLACE. THINGS I'D--
SNFF
WE'RE BEING TRACKED.
BY WHOM?

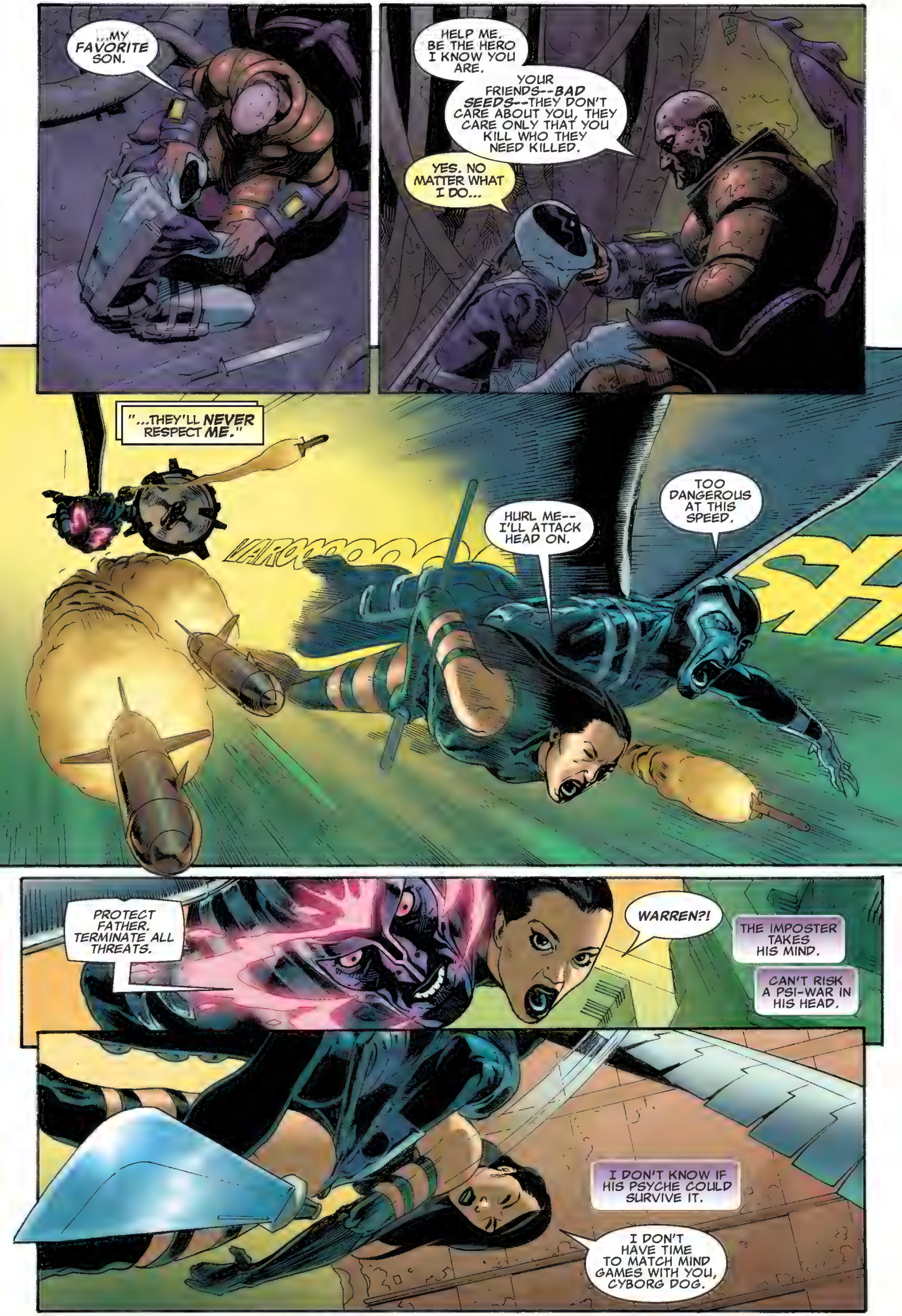

THE BEST THERE IS.
SHOULD'VE PICKED HIM UP EARLIER.
PROTECT FATHER.
BRATT
SECURE THE FUTURE.
GHAA--
ONLY ONE WAY HE COULD'VE GOTTEN THIS CLOSE--
THE WORLD IS HELPING THEM.
KRASHH
TERMINATE ANOMALY.
I AM DEATHLOK PRIME.

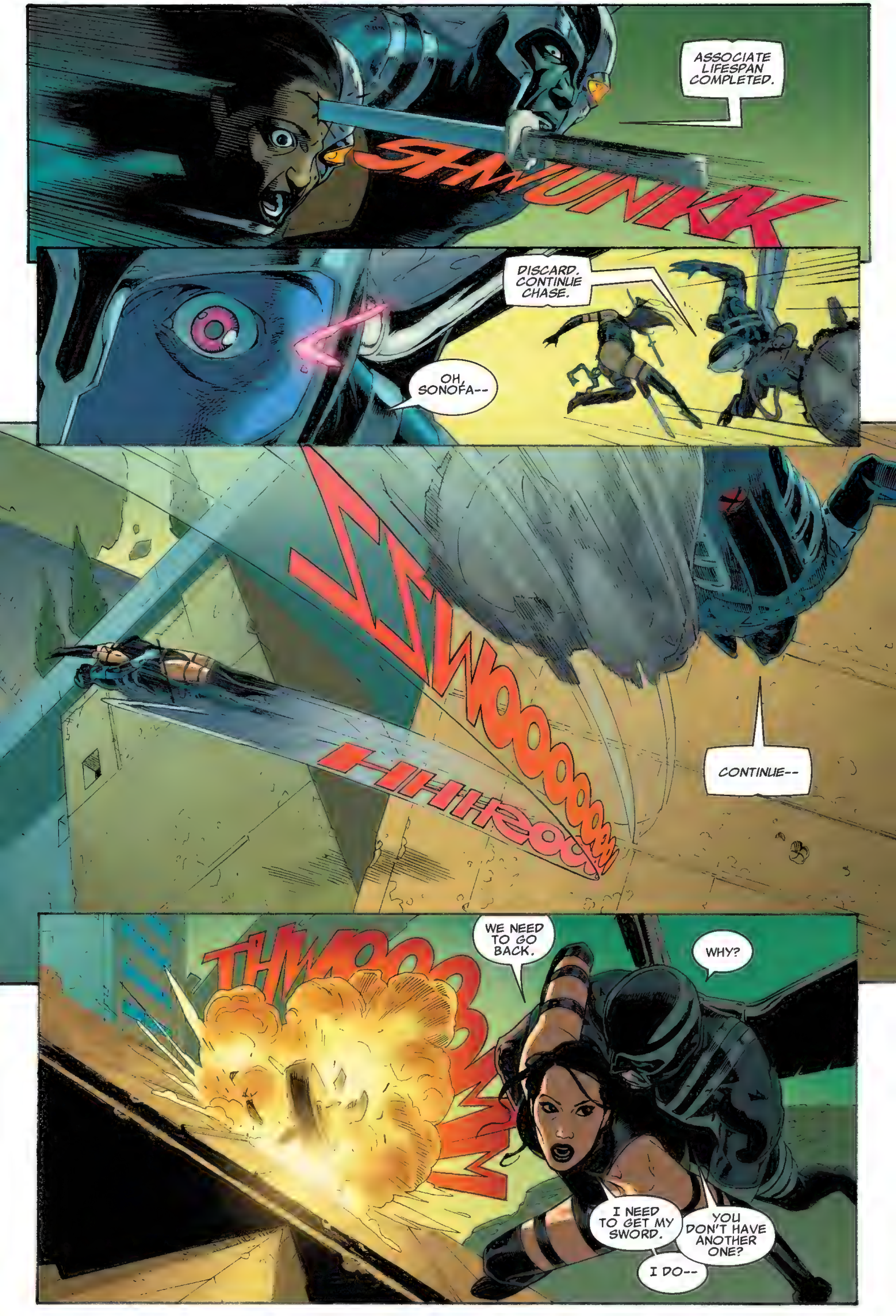

SHNIKT
I AM PREPARED FOR YOU.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO BE LOOKING FOR, WARREN.
KEEP SCANNING FOR ANY FOREIGN THOUGHTS.
I SENSE DISTRESS IN YOUR VOICE. ANOTHER MIGRAINE?
YOU'VE HAD THEM MORE FREQUENTLY SINCE THE APOCALYPSE ASSASSINATION. ALLOW ME ENTRANCE TO YOUR MIND--
DON'T NEED YOU MOTHERING ME, BETSY. I'M FINE.
IT IS MY WAR TO FIGHT--SOME DAYS I PREFER TO FIGHT IT ON MY OWN.
IS THIS WHY YOU HAVEN'T COME TO ME FOR SESSIONS?
WARREN, IF YOU'RE FRIGHTENED--
FRIGHTENED?! IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK?
WARREN--!

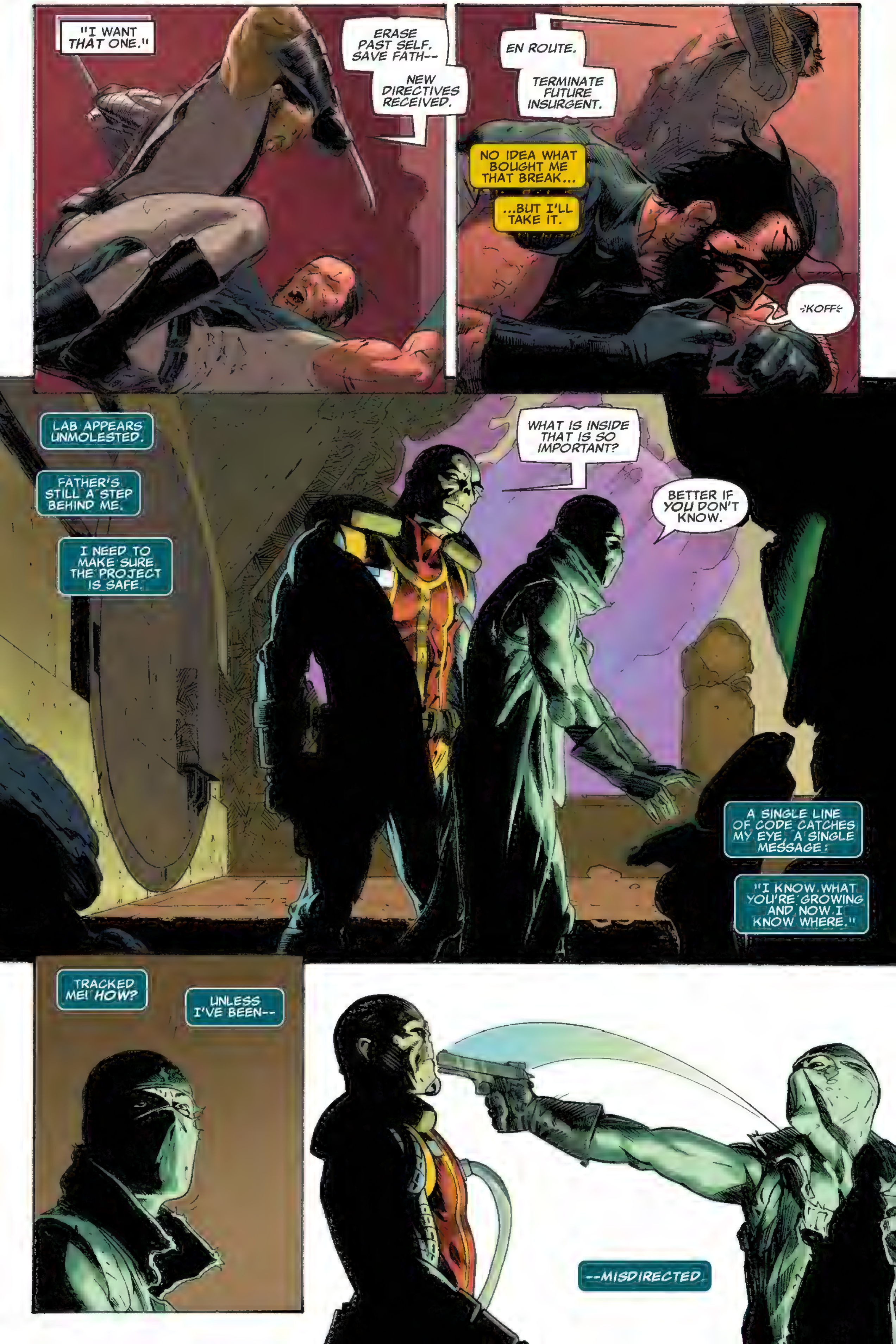

LOOK OUT!!
CLADOOOM
SIDE OBJECTIVE--TERMINATE ASSOCIATES/SUPPORTERS.
PRIME OBJECTIVE--PROTECT FATHER. SECURE TOMORROW.
WARREN! YOUR WINGS ARE DAMAGED--
I'M FINE...
CAN YOU CONTROL US AT THIS SPEED?
I SAID, I'M FINE...
"...I GUESS YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME."
TERMINATE ANOMALOUS DEATHLOK.
YOU LACK THE PROFICIENCY TO EXECUTE THIS DIRECTIVE.

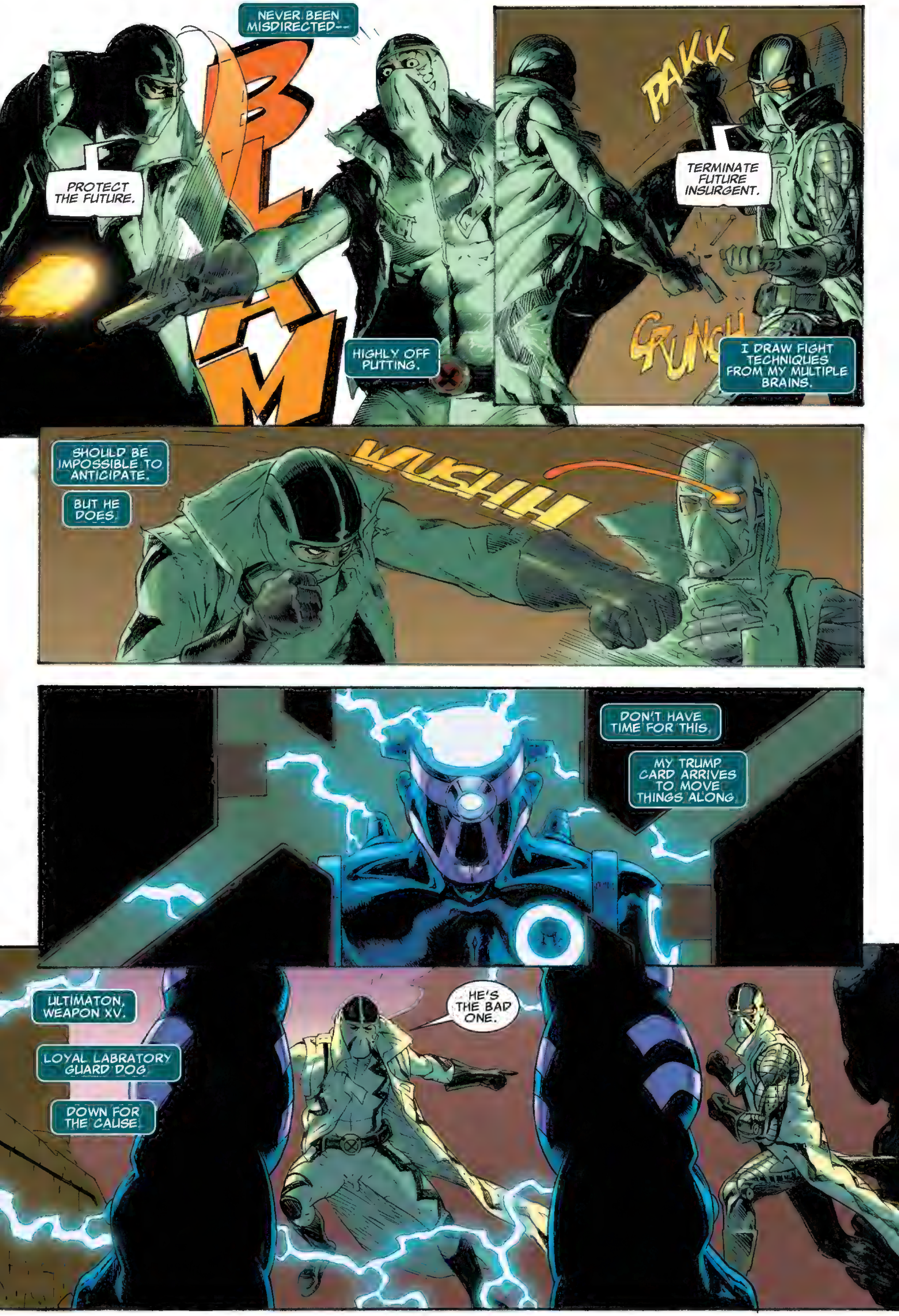

YOUR TOMORROW IS DOOMED.
SHNTT
GHA--
I COULD DO THIS ALL NIGHT. SHADOW BOXIN'S GOOD TRAININ'.
THIS WILL NOT TAKE ALL NIGHT.
COCKY. MAYBE WE AIN'T SO DIFFERENT.
WEAPO
PON VII
WEAPO
PRIMARY DIFFERENCE--
SHWOOOOOSH
--DEATHLOK SUPERIORITY.
SHRKK
GHRAGH!!
FANTOM-FUDGE-PUDDLE-X. GRADE A **JERK.**
FIGURES HE AN' WOLVERINE'D HAVE A **LOVE** CONNECTION.
SHOOTS A KID IN THE HEAD AND SOMEHOW ***I'M*** THE **PARIAH.**

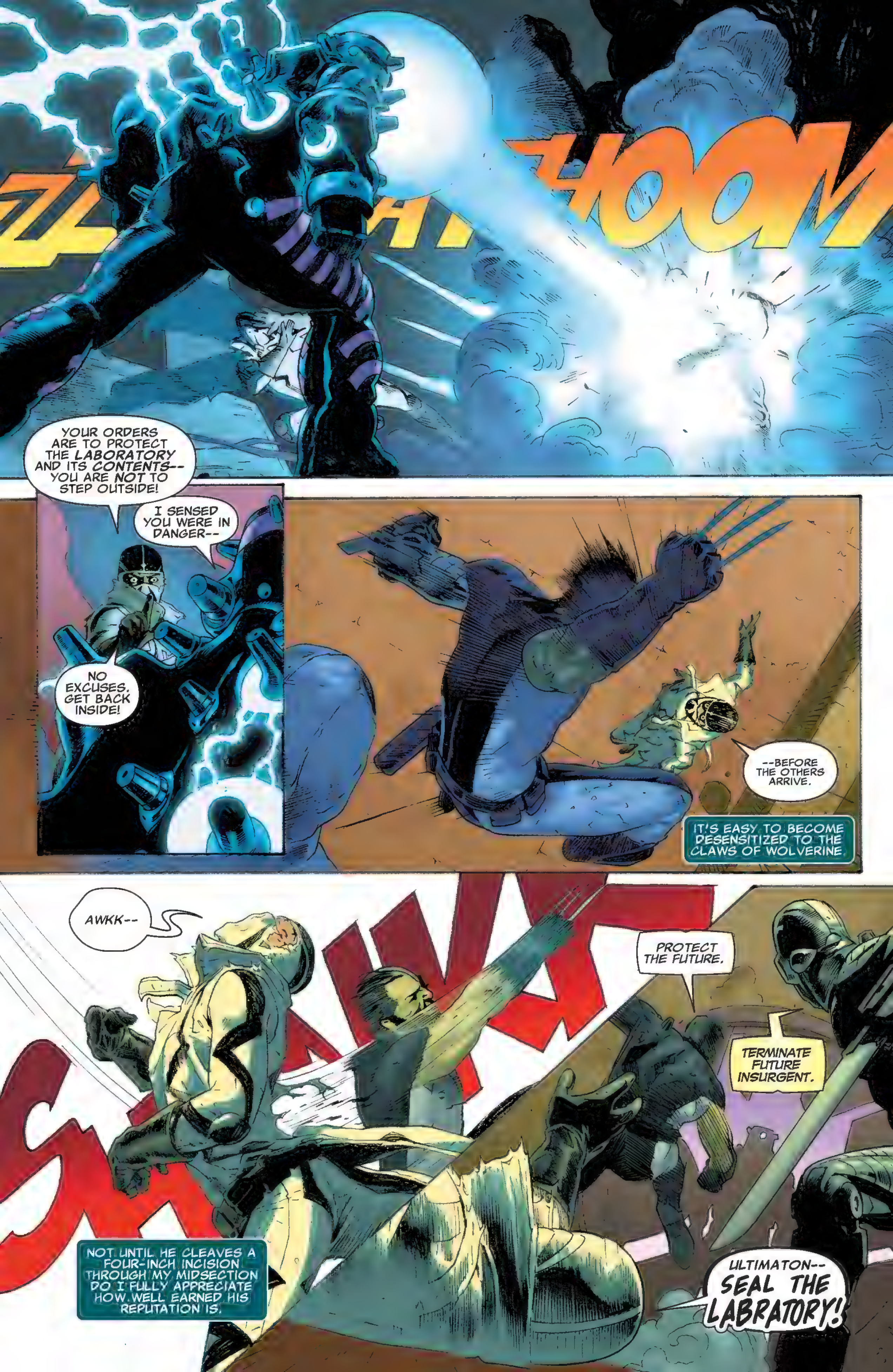

OF COURSE THEY LIKE HIM BETTER. *WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?*
A MYSTERIOUS, CHILD-KILLING ELITIST WHO PRETENDS TO BE FRENCH AND STINKS LIKE OLD CHEESE...
MIX, POUR, SERVE-- INSTANT FAVORITE FOR THE FAMILY.
ME? I'M JUST THE GUY KILLING THE TARGET, SAVING THE WORLD. DON'T MIND ME.
NOT THAT I CARE WHAT THEY THINK.
SURE AS *HELL* DON'T NEED *THEIR* APPROVAL.
OF *COURSE* YOU NEED THEIR *APPROVAL*, SON.
SHAME BELONGS TO THOSE WHO HIDE SUCH A BASIC HUMAN NEED BEHIND A WALL OF *ARROGANCE* AND FALSE *INDIFFERENCE*.
HIS VOICE--
--I KNOW HIM--
--FATHER.
YOU ARE TRUE TO YOURSELF, EVEN AFTER ALL YOU'VE ENDURED.
HE KNOWS-- KNOWS HOW GOOD I AM-- I DESERVE--
--TO BE LOVED. YOU DO DESERVE TO BE LOVED, SON. BECAUSE YOU ARE A GOOD MAN-- *A HERO.*
ONCE DISCARDED BY THIS PROGRAM AS BIO-WASTE FROM A FAILED EXPERIMENT, YOU STAND NOW AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S *GREATEST* HEROES.
HAVING OVERCOME *SO MANY* ODDS, YOU CAN'T KNOW HOW *PROUD* OF YOU I AM, WADE...

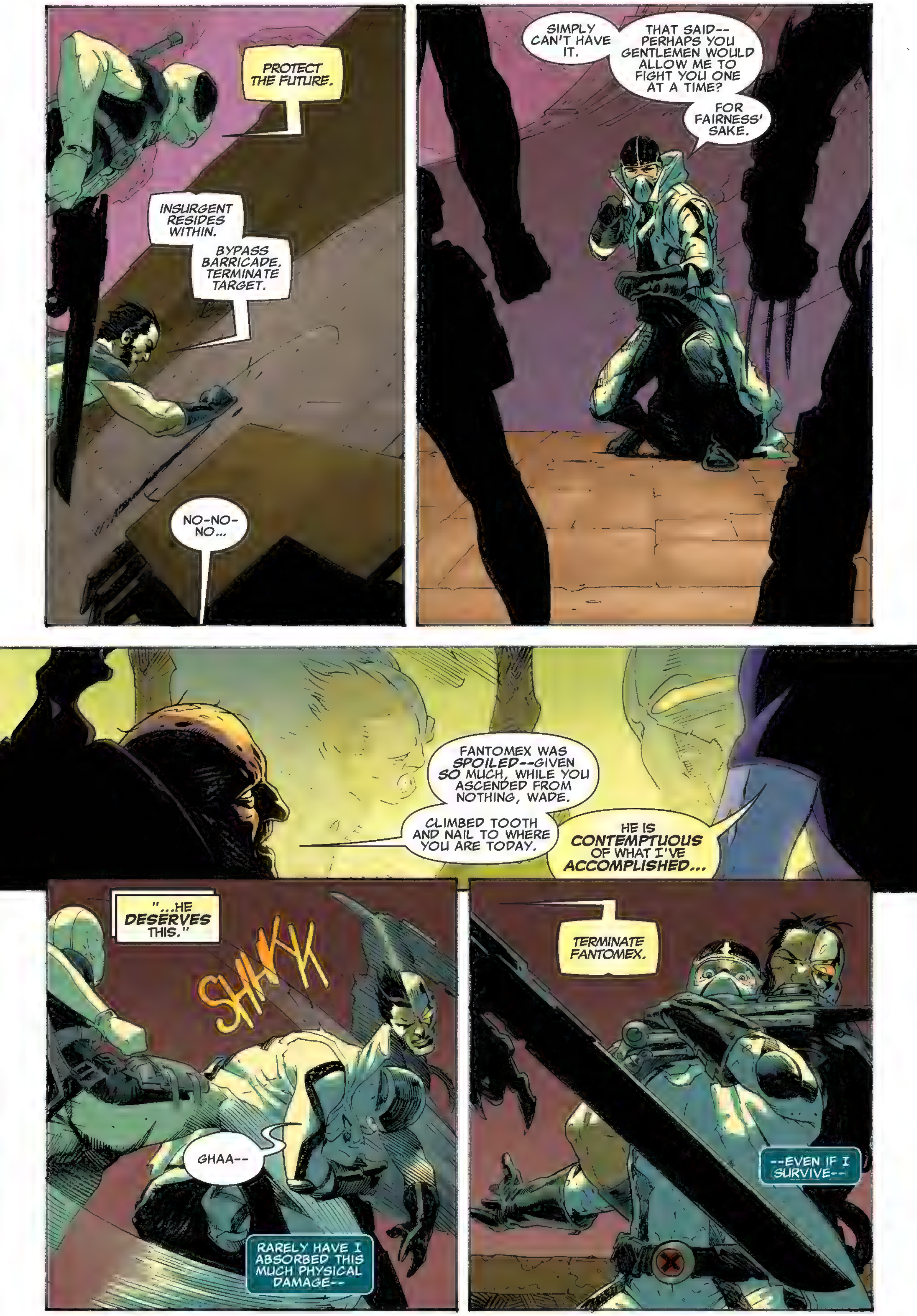

...MY FAVORITE SON.
HELP ME. BE THE HERO I KNOW YOU ARE.
YOUR FRIENDS--BAD SEEDS--THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT YOU, THEY CARE ONLY THAT YOU KILL WHO THEY NEED KILLED.
YES. NO MATTER WHAT I DO...
"...THEY'LL NEVER RESPECT ME."
VAROOOOOOO
HURL ME-- I'LL ATTACK HEAD ON.
TOO DANGEROUS AT THIS SPEED.
PROTECT FATHER. TERMINATE ALL THREATS.
WARREN?!
THE IMPOSTER TAKES HIS MIND.
CAN'T RISK A PSI-WAR IN HIS HEAD.
I DON'T KNOW IF HIS PSYCHE COULD SURVIVE IT.
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO MATCH MIND GAMES WITH YOU, CYBORG DOG.

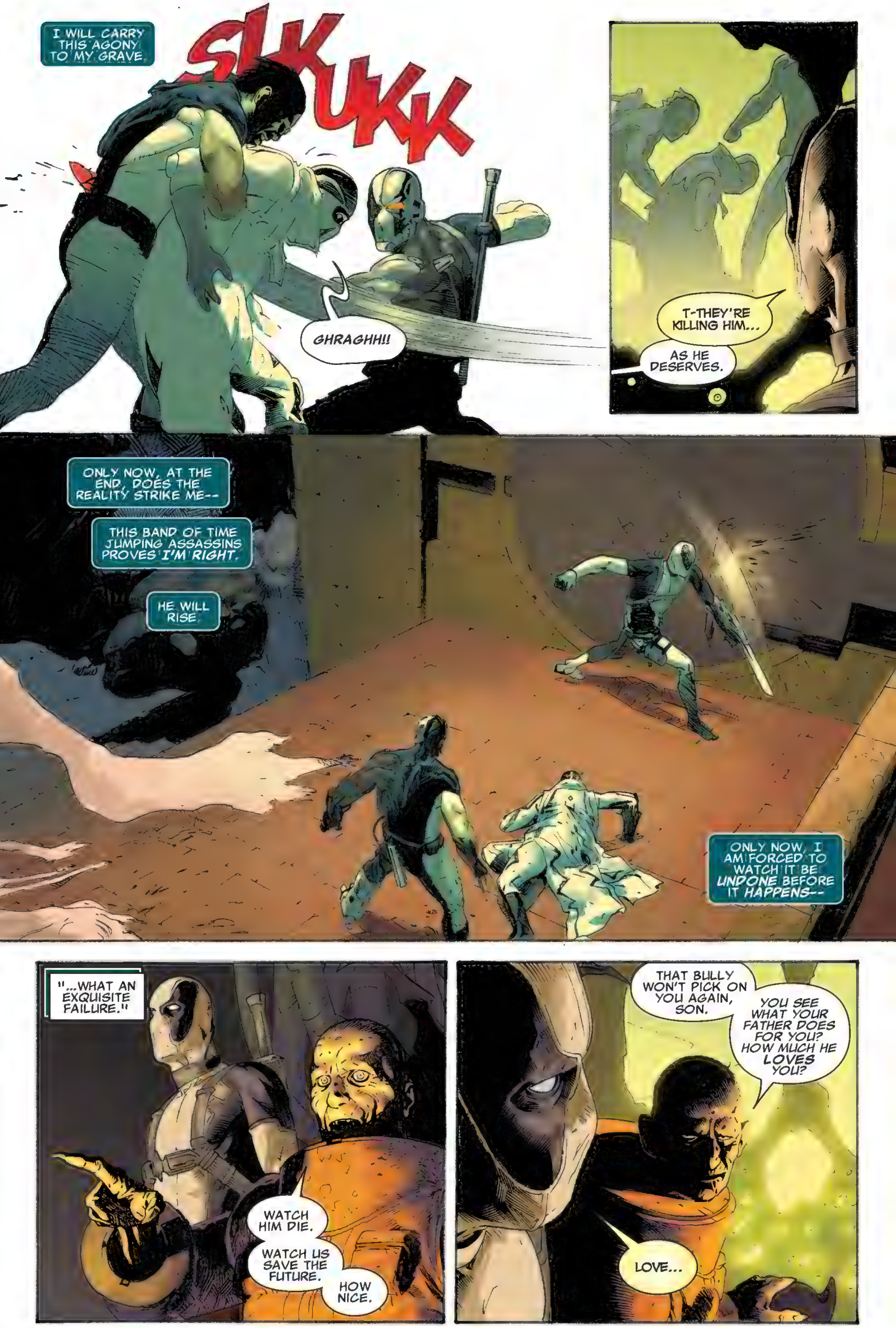

ASSOCIATE LIFESPAN COMPLETED.
SHUNKK
DISCARD. CONTINUE CHASE.
OH, SONOFA--
SSWOOOOOSH
HHROOOM
CONTINUE--
THWOOOOOMM
WE NEED TO GO BACK.
WHY?
I NEED TO GET MY SWORD.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANOTHER ONE?
I DO--

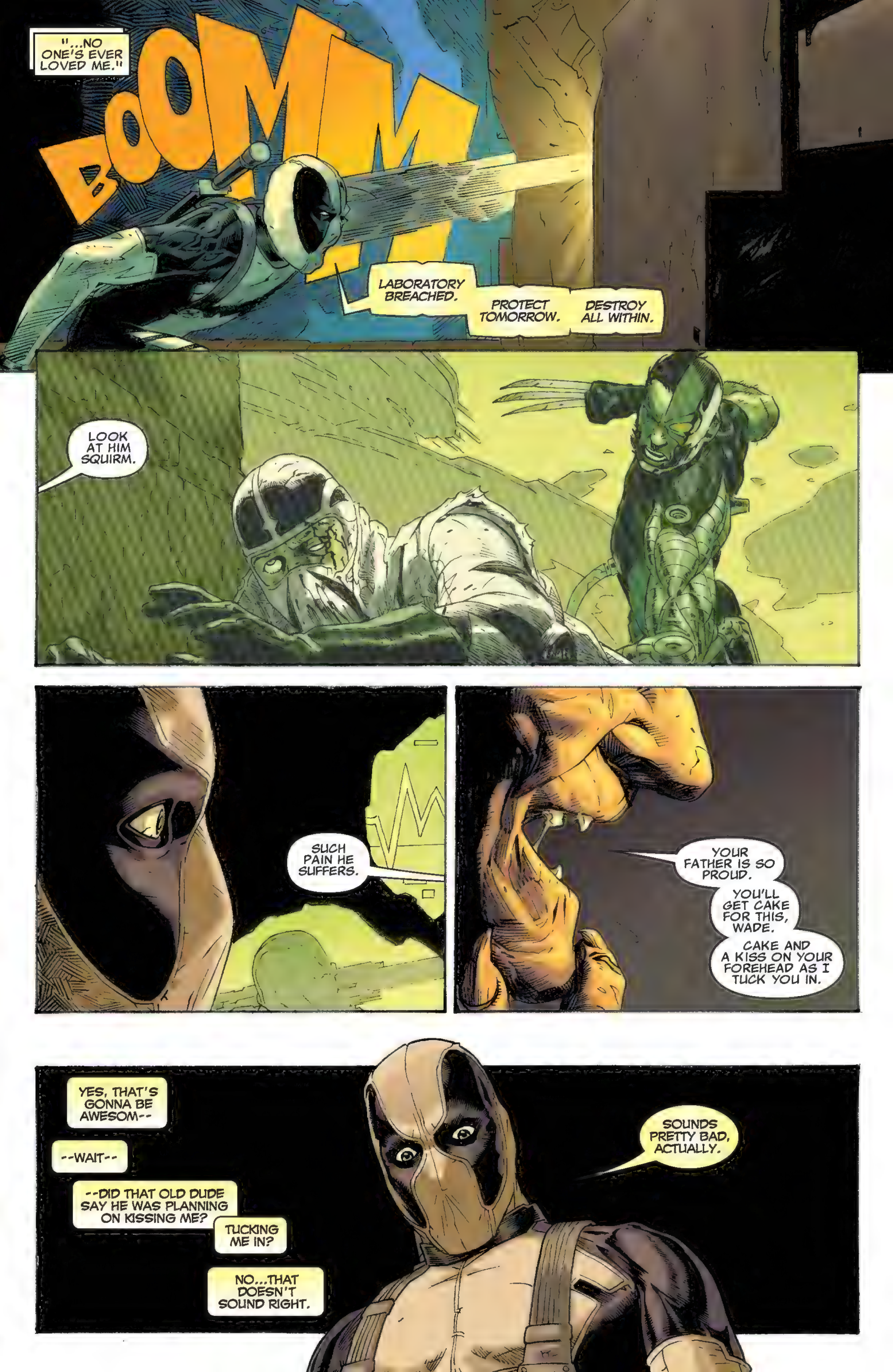

"I WANT THAT ONE."
ERASE PAST SELF. SAVE FATH--
NEW DIRECTIVES RECEIVED.
EN ROUTE.
TERMINATE FUTURE INSURGENT.
NO IDEA WHAT BOUGHT ME THAT BREAK...
...BUT I'LL TAKE IT.
KOFF
LAB APPEARS UNMOLESTED.
FATHER'S STILL A STEP BEHIND ME.
I NEED TO MAKE SURE THE PROJECT IS SAFE.
WHAT IS INSIDE THAT IS SO IMPORTANT?
BETTER IF YOU DON'T KNOW.
A SINGLE LINE OF CODE CATCHES MY EYE. A SINGLE MESSAGE:
"I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GROWING AND NOW I KNOW WHERE."
TRACKED ME! HOW?
UNLESS I'VE BEEN--
--MISDIRECTED.

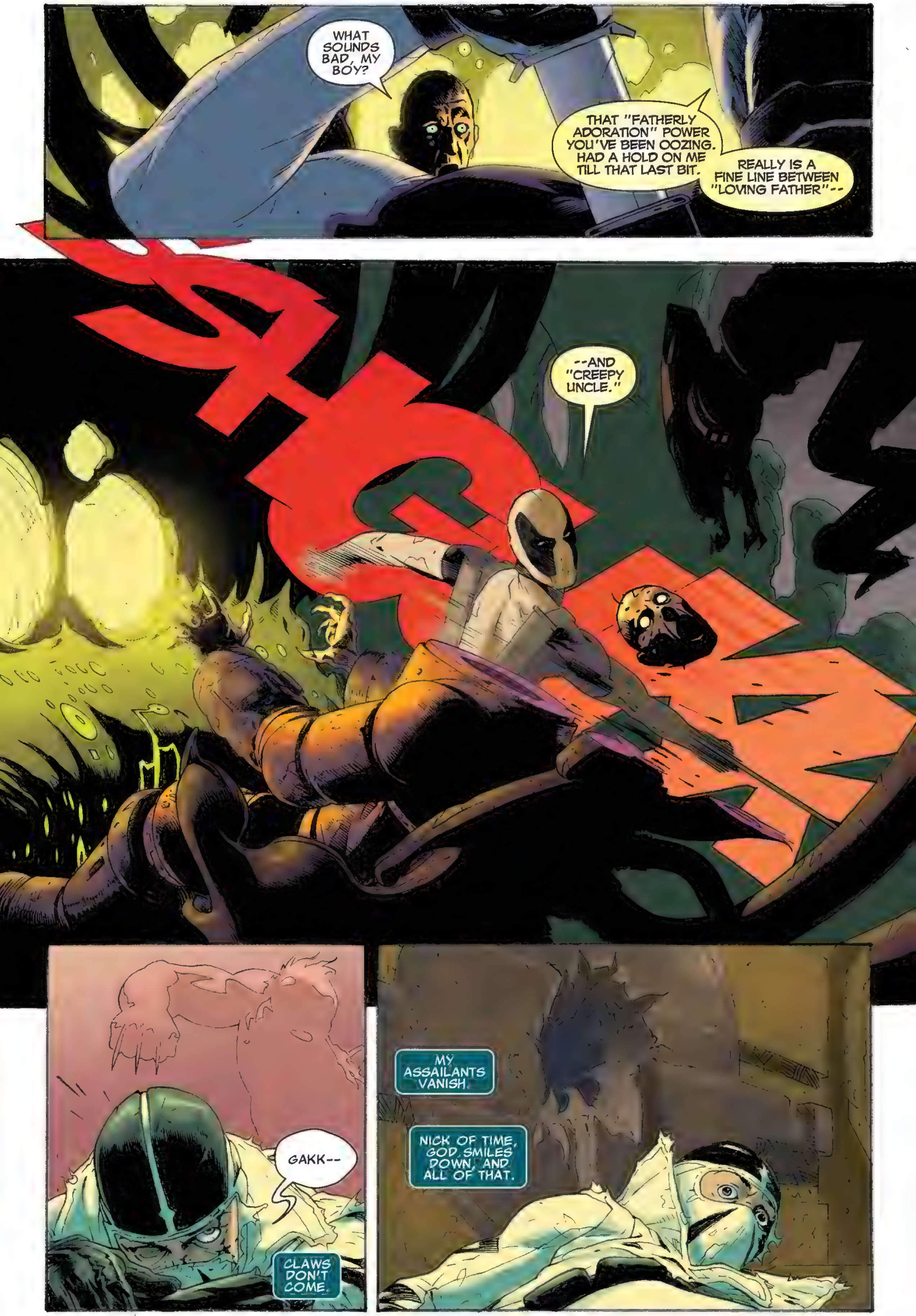

NEVER BEEN MISDIRECTED--
PROTECT THE FUTURE.
BLAM
HIGHLY OFF PUTTING.
PAKK
TERMINATE FUTURE INSURGENT.
CRUNCH
I DRAW FIGHT TECHNIQUES FROM MY MULTIPLE BRAINS.
SHOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ANTICIPATE.
BUT HE DOES.
WUSHH
DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
MY TRUMP CARD ARRIVES TO MOVE THINGS ALONG.
ULTIMATON, WEAPON XV.
LOYAL LABRATORY GUARD DOG.
DOWN FOR THE CAUSE.
HE'S THE BAD ONE.

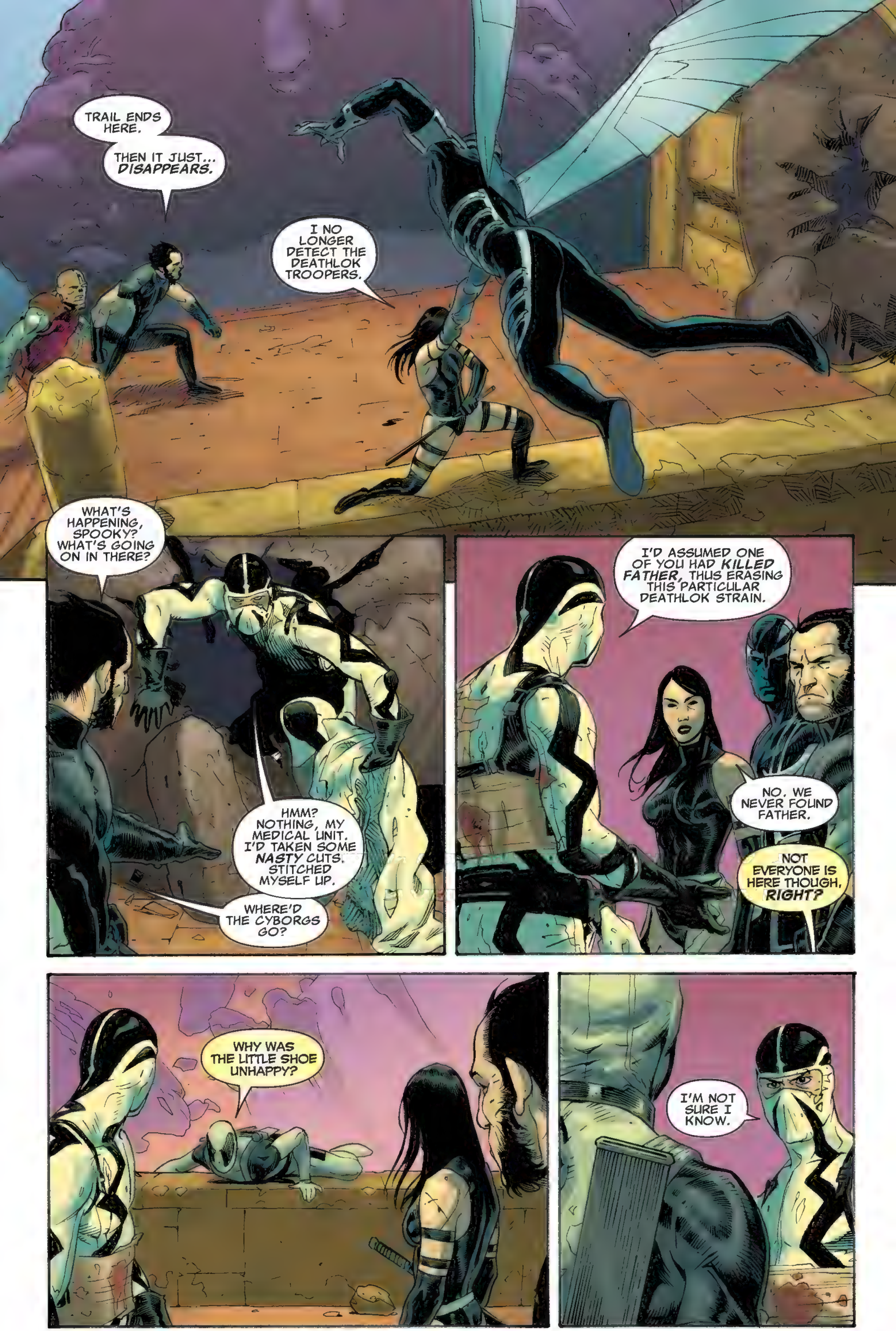

YOUR ORDERS ARE TO PROTECT THE LABORATORY AND ITS CONTENTS-- YOU ARE NOT TO STEP OUTSIDE!
I SENSED YOU WERE IN DANGER--
NO EXCUSES. GET BACK INSIDE!
IT'S EASY TO BECOME DESENSITIZED TO THE CLAWS OF WOLVERINE.
--BEFORE THE OTHERS ARRIVE.
AWKK--
PROTECT THE FUTURE.
TERMINATE FUTURE INSURGENT.
NOT UNTIL HE CLEAVES A FOUR-INCH INCISION THROUGH MY MIDSECTION DO I FULLY APPRECIATE HOW WELL EARNED HIS REPUTATION IS.
ULTIMATON-- SEAL THE LABRATORY!

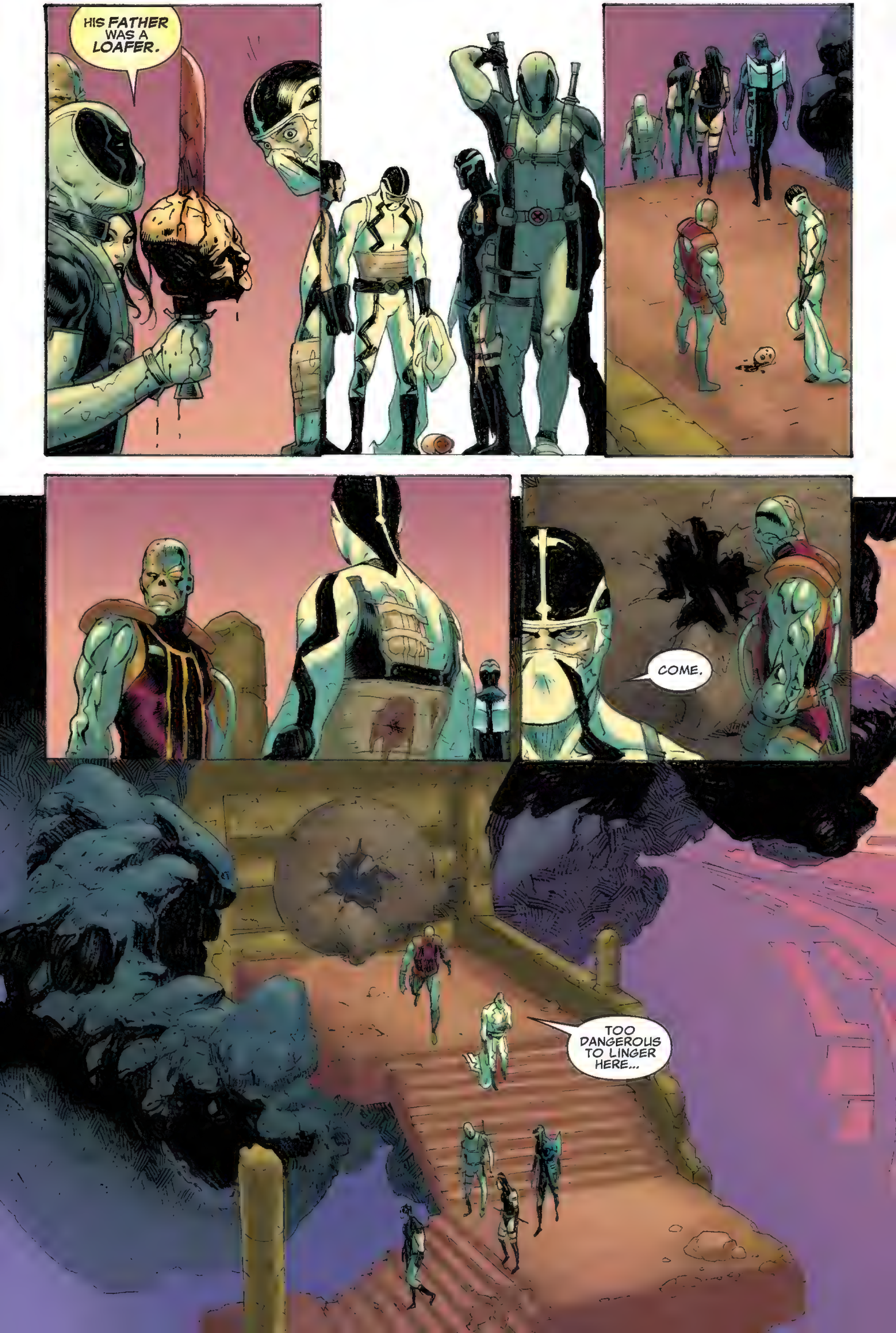

PROTECT THE FUTURE.
INSURGENT RESIDES WITHIN.
BYPASS BARRICADE. TERMINATE TARGET.
NO-NO-NO...
SIMPLY CAN'T HAVE IT.
THAT SAID-- PERHAPS YOU GENTLEMEN WOULD ALLOW ME TO FIGHT YOU ONE AT A TIME?
FOR FAIRNESS' SAKE.
FANTOMEX WAS SPOILED--GIVEN SO MUCH, WHILE YOU ASCENDED FROM NOTHING, WADE.
CLIMBED TOOTH AND NAIL TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY.
HE IS CONTEMPTUOUS OF WHAT I'VE ACCOMPLISHED...
"...HE DESERVES THIS."
SHKKK
GHAA--
RARELY HAVE I ABSORBED THIS MUCH PHYSICAL DAMAGE--
TERMINATE FANTOMEX.
--EVEN IF I SURVIVE--

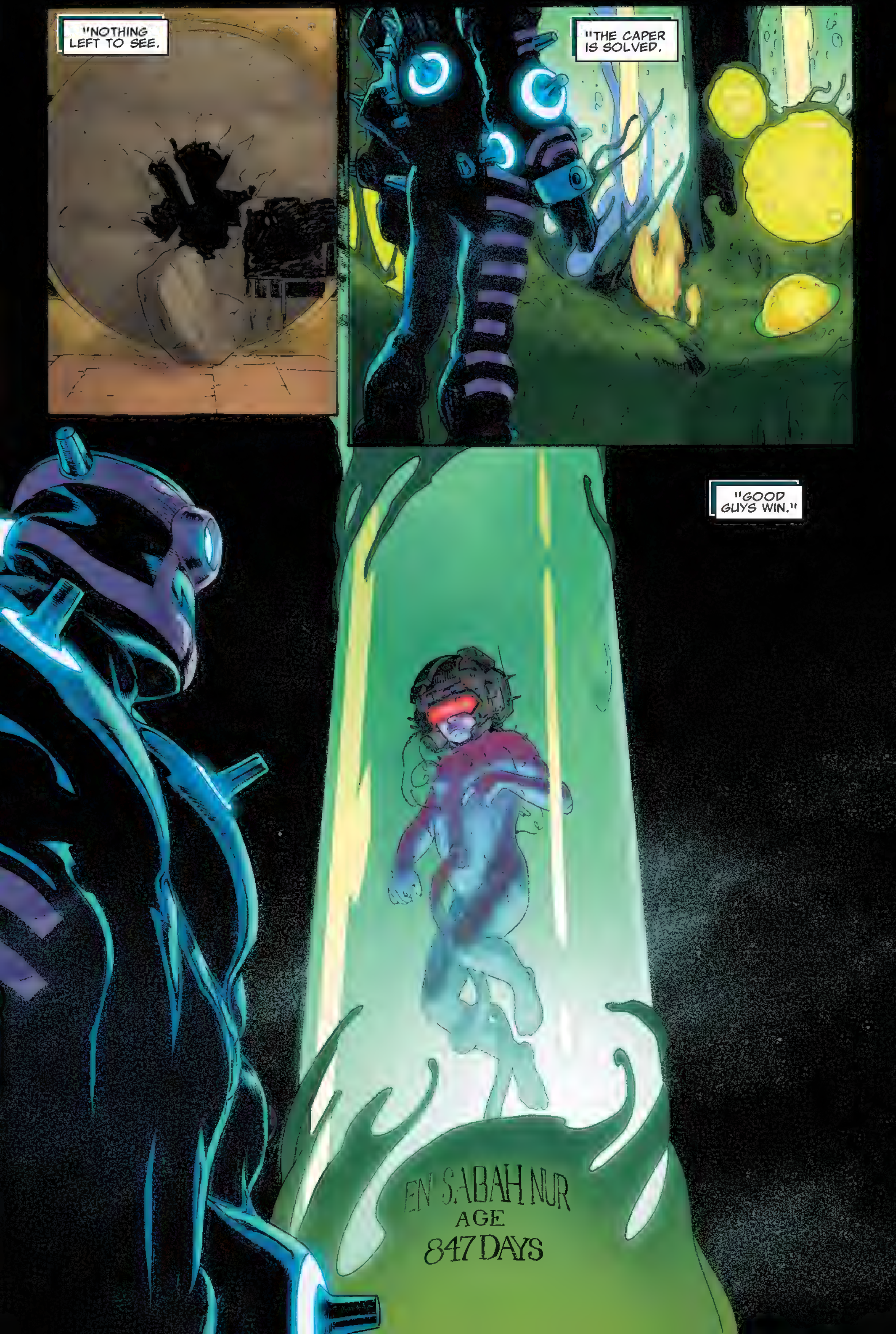

I WILL CARRY THIS AGONY TO MY GRAVE.
SLKUKK
GHRAGHH!!
T-THEY'RE KILLING HIM...
AS HE DESERVES.
ONLY NOW, AT THE END, DOES THE REALITY STRIKE ME--
THIS BAND OF TIME JUMPING ASSASSINS PROVES *I'M* RIGHT.
HE WILL RISE.
ONLY NOW, I AM FORCED TO WATCH IT BE *UNDONE* BEFORE IT *HAPPENS*--
"...WHAT AN EXQUISITE FAILURE."
WATCH HIM DIE.
WATCH US SAVE THE FUTURE.
HOW NICE.
THAT BULLY WON'T PICK ON YOU AGAIN, SON.
YOU SEE WHAT YOUR FATHER DOES FOR YOU? HOW MUCH HE *LOVES* YOU?
LOVE...


"...NO ONE'S EVER LOVED ME."
BOOMM
LABORATORY BREACHED.
PROTECT TOMORROW.
DESTROY ALL WITHIN.
LOOK AT HIM SQUIRM.
SUCH PAIN HE SUFFERS.
YOUR FATHER IS SO PROUD.
YOU'LL GET CAKE FOR THIS, WADE.
CAKE AND A KISS ON YOUR FOREHEAD AS I TUCK YOU IN.
YES, THAT'S GONNA BE AWESOM--
--WAIT--
--DID THAT OLD DUDE SAY HE WAS PLANNING ON KISSING ME?
TUCKING ME IN?
NO...THAT DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT.
SOUNDS PRETTY BAD, ACTUALLY.

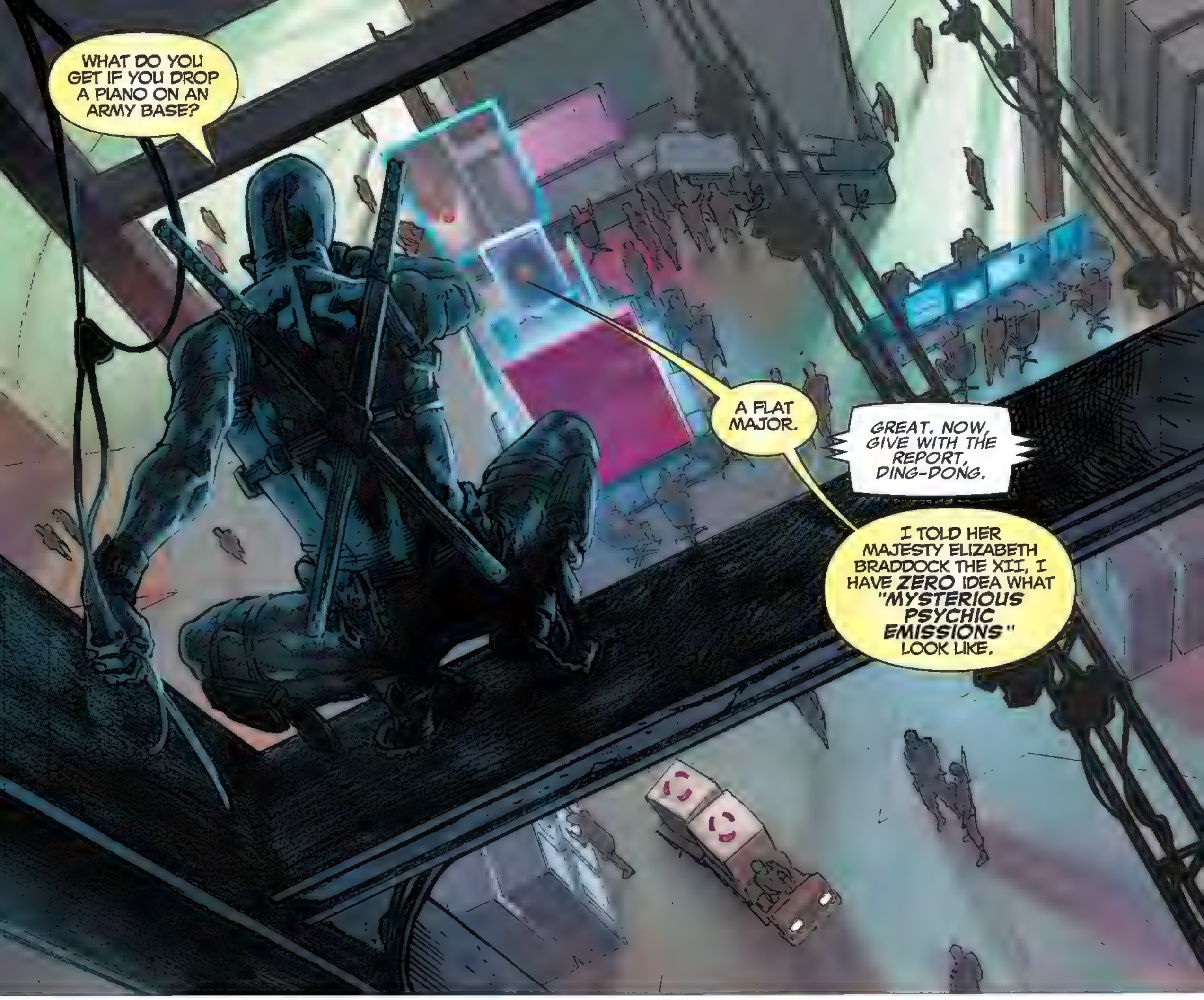

WHAT SOUNDS BAD, MY BOY?
THAT "FATHERLY ADORATION" POWER YOU'VE BEEN OOZING. HAD A HOLD ON ME TILL THAT LAST BIT.
REALLY IS A FINE LINE BETWEEN "LOVING FATHER"--
--AND "CREEPY UNCLE."
GAKK--
CLAWS DON'T COME.
MY ASSAILANTS VANISH.
NICK OF TIME. GOD SMILES DOWN, AND ALL OF THAT.

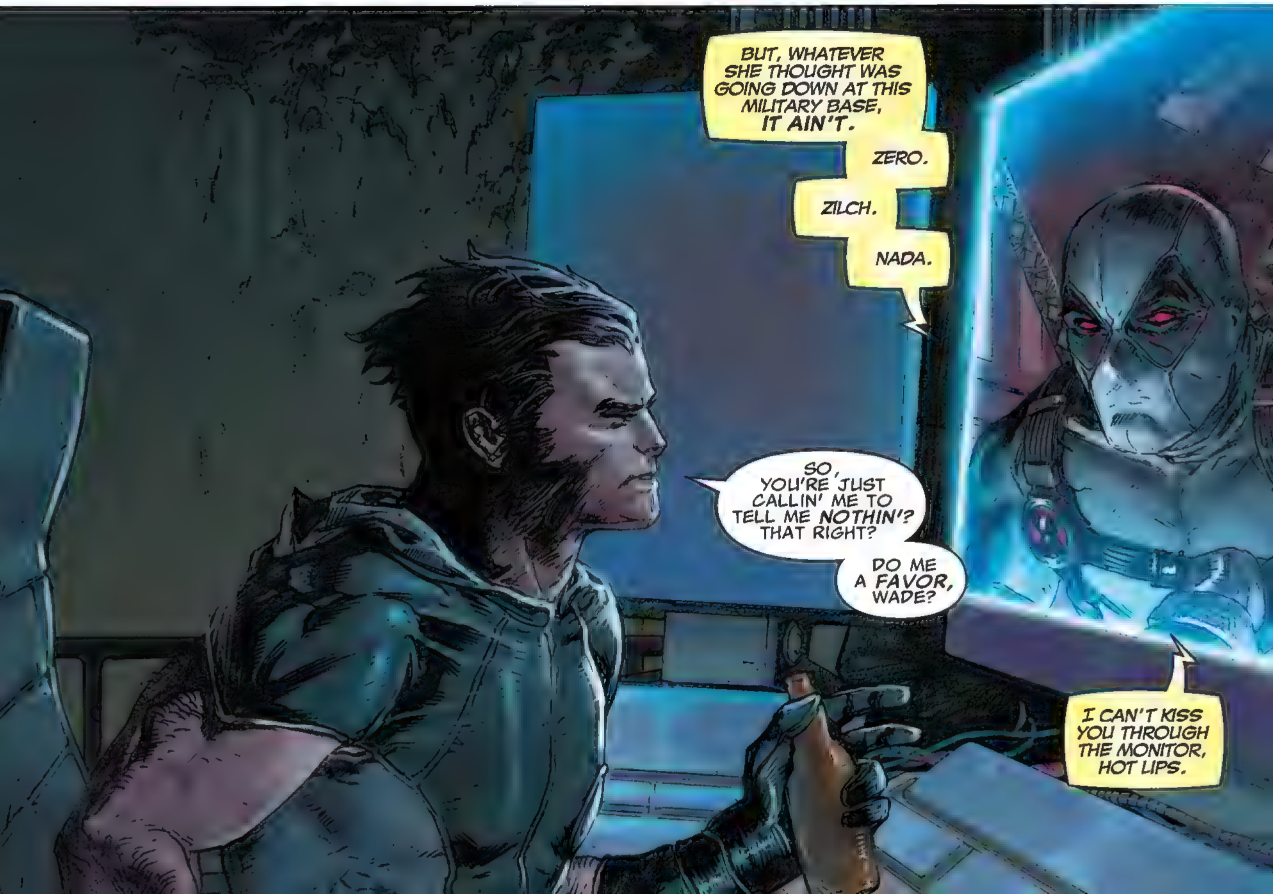

TRAIL ENDS HERE.
THEN IT JUST... *DISAPPEARS.*
I NO LONGER DETECT THE DEATHLOK TROOPERS.
WHAT'S HAPPENING, SPOOKY? WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?
HMM? NOTHING, MY MEDICAL UNIT. I'D TAKEN SOME *NASTY* CUTS. STITCHED MYSELF UP.
WHERE'D THE CYBORGS GO?
I'D ASSUMED ONE OF YOU HAD *KILLED FATHER,* THUS ERASING THIS PARTICULAR DEATHLOK STRAIN.
NO. WE NEVER FOUND FATHER.
NOT EVERYONE IS HERE THOUGH, *RIGHT?*
WHY WAS THE LITTLE SHOE UNHAPPY?
I'M NOT SURE I KNOW.

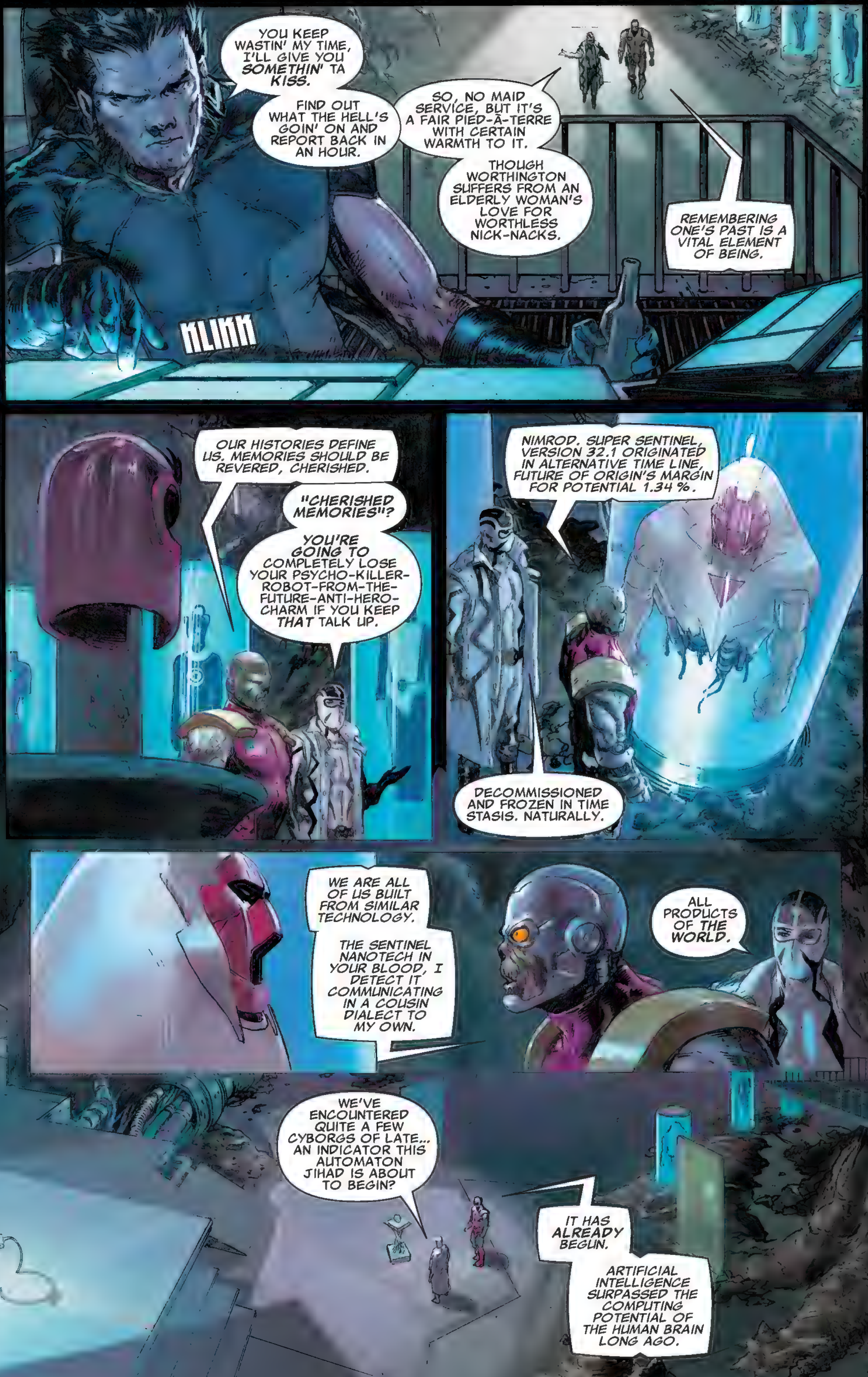

HIS FATHER WAS A LOAFER.
COME.
TOO DANGEROUS TO LINGER HERE...

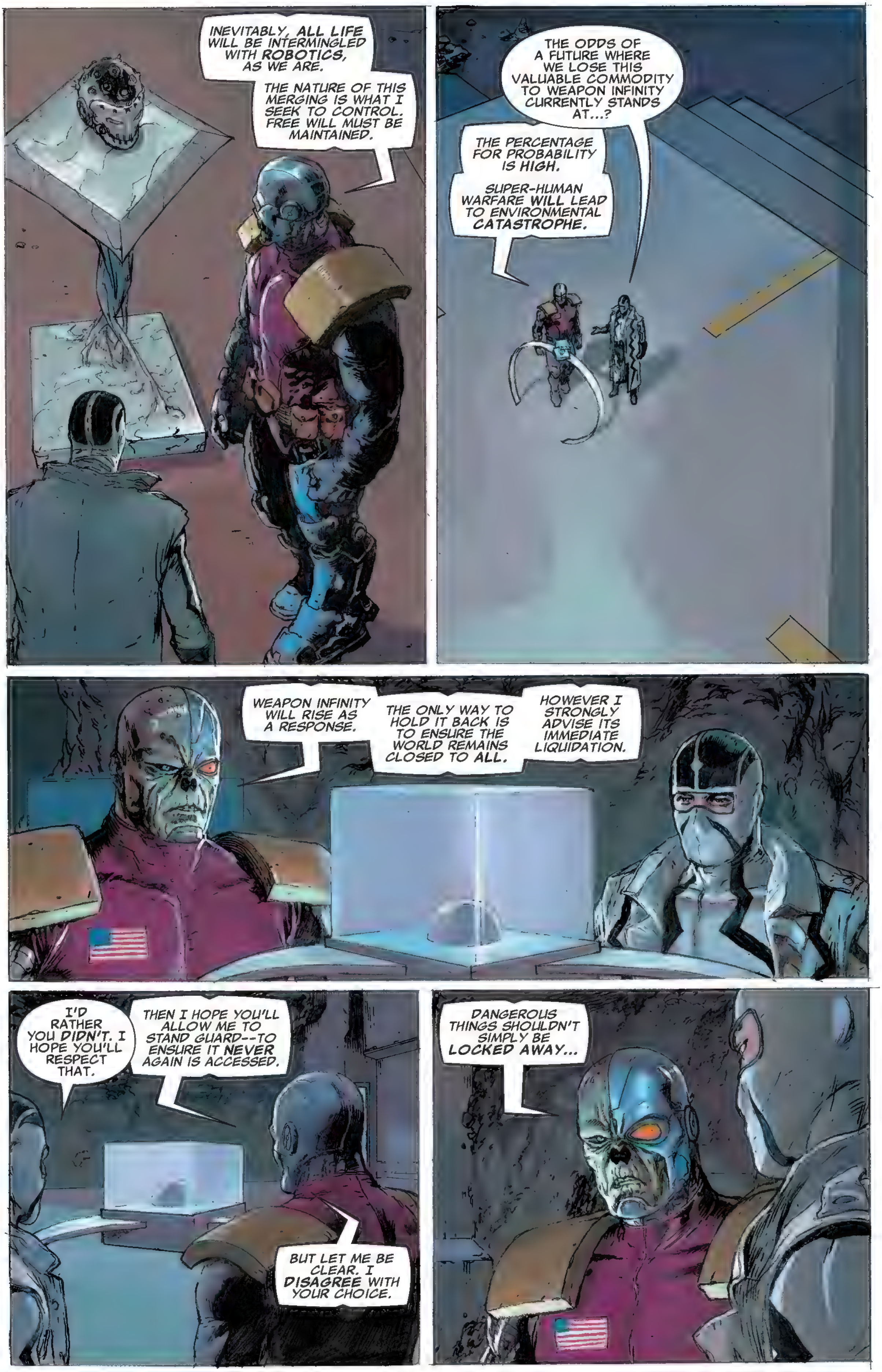

"NOTHING LEFT TO SEE.
"THE CAPER IS SOLVED.
"GOOD GUYS WIN."
EN SABAH NUR
AGE
847 DAYS

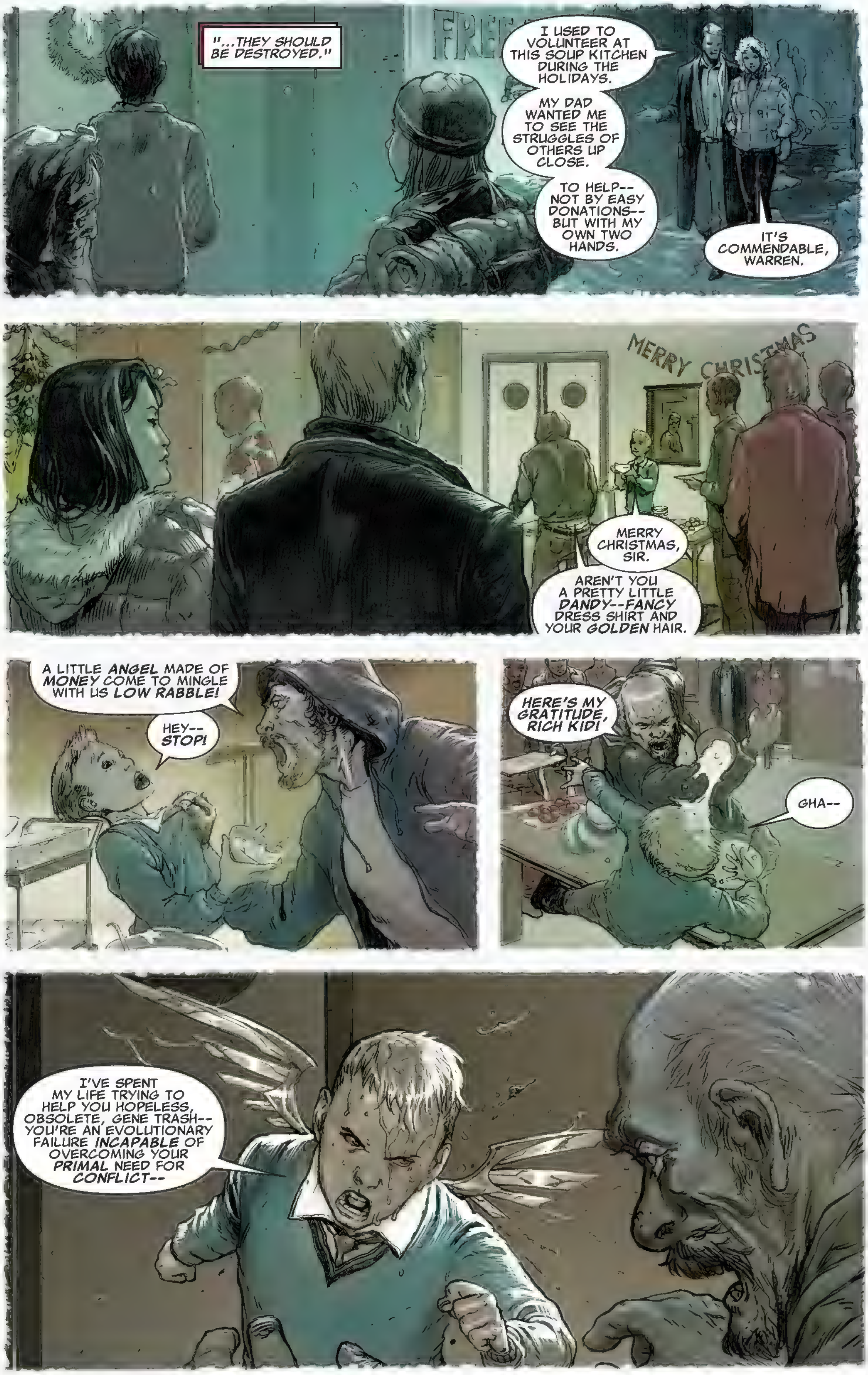
08 UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

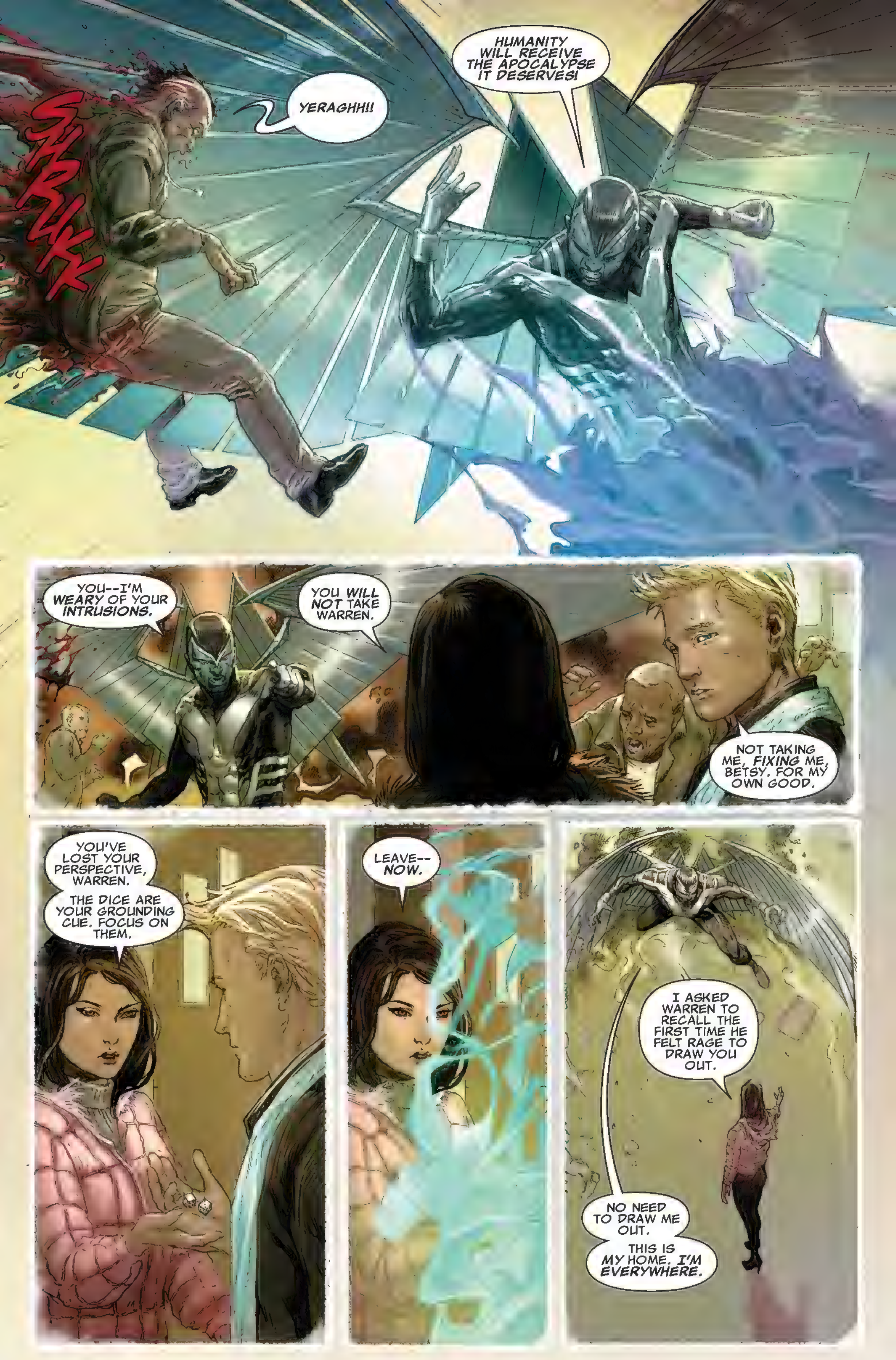

WHAT DO YOU GET IF YOU DROP A PIANO ON AN ARMY BASE?
A FLAT MAJOR.
GREAT. NOW, GIVE WITH THE REPORT, DING-DONG.
I TOLD HER MAJESTY ELIZABETH BRADDOCK THE XII, I HAVE ZERO IDEA WHAT "MYSTERIOUS PSYCHIC EMISSIONS" LOOK LIKE.

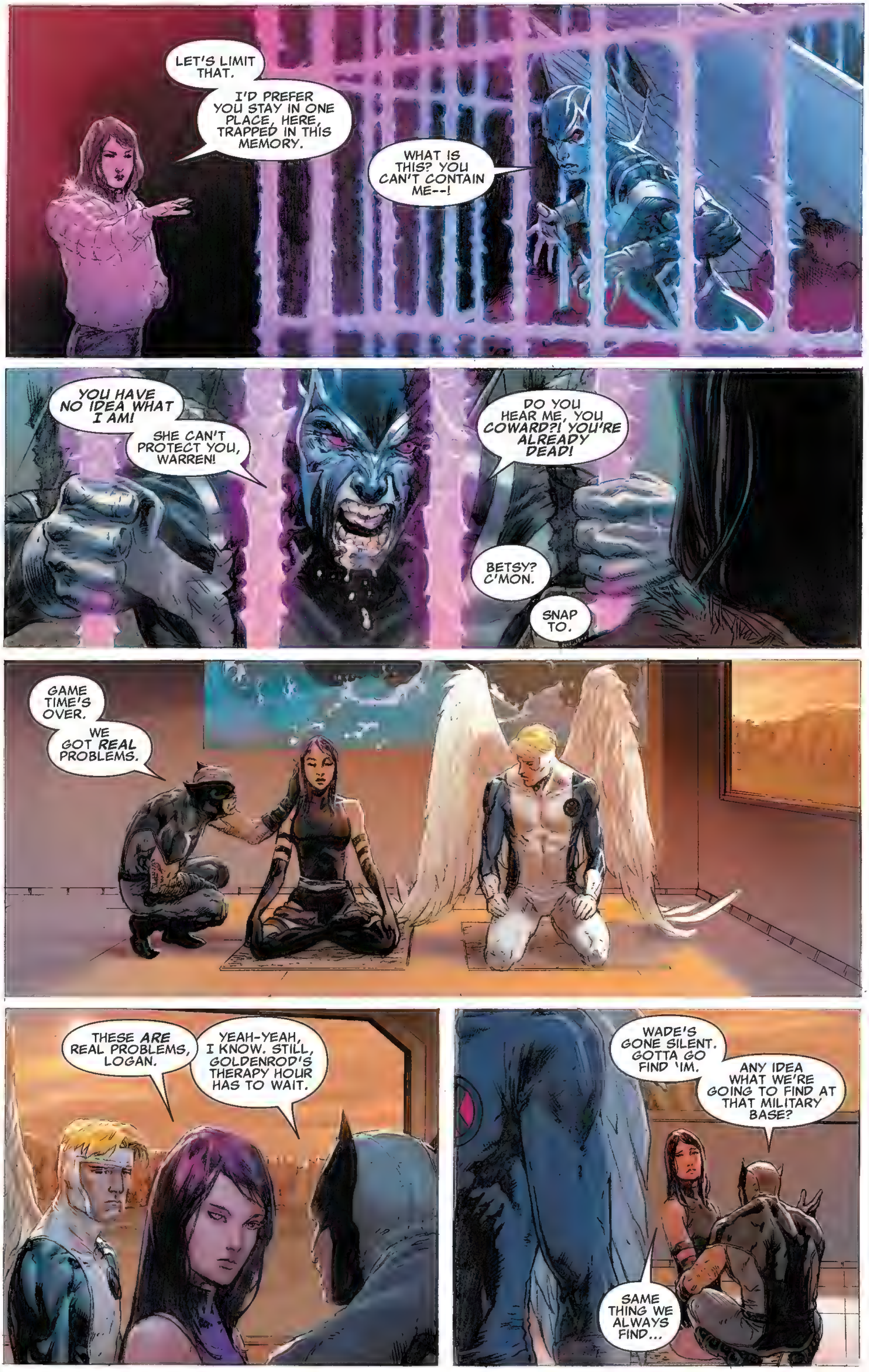

BUT, WHATEVER SHE THOUGHT WAS GOING DOWN AT THIS MILITARY BASE, IT AIN'T.
ZERO.
ZILCH.
NADA.
SO, YOU'RE JUST CALLIN' ME TO TELL ME NOTHIN'? THAT RIGHT?
DO ME A FAVOR, WADE?
I CAN'T KISS YOU THROUGH THE MONITOR, HOT LIPS.

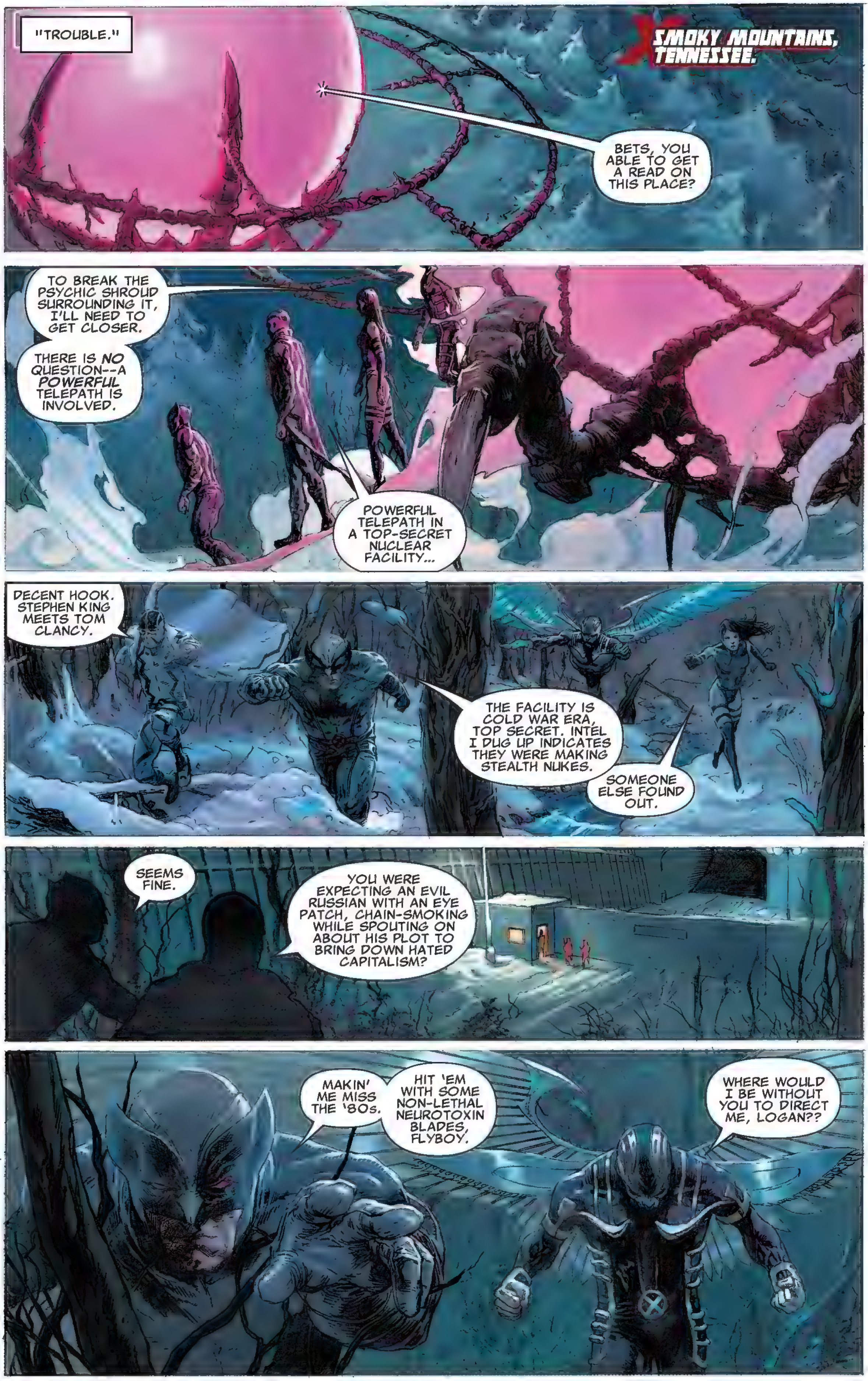

YOU KEEP WASTIN' MY TIME, I'LL GIVE YOU *SOMETHIN'* TA *KISS.*
FIND OUT WHAT THE HELL'S GOIN' ON AND REPORT BACK IN AN HOUR.
KLINK
SO, NO MAID SERVICE, BUT IT'S A FAIR PIED-À-TERRE WITH CERTAIN WARMTH TO IT.
THOUGH WORTHINGTON SUFFERS FROM AN ELDERLY WOMAN'S LOVE FOR WORTHLESS NICK-NACKS.
REMEMBERING ONE'S PAST IS A VITAL ELEMENT OF BEING.
OUR HISTORIES DEFINE US. MEMORIES SHOULD BE REVERED, CHERISHED.
"*CHERISHED MEMORIES*"?
YOU'RE GOING TO COMPLETELY LOSE YOUR PSYCHO-KILLER-ROBOT-FROM-THE-FUTURE-ANTI-HERO-CHARM IF YOU KEEP *THAT* TALK UP.
NIMROD. SUPER SENTINEL, VERSION 32.1 ORIGINATED IN ALTERNATIVE TIME LINE, FUTURE OF ORIGIN'S MARGIN FOR POTENTIAL 1.34%.
DECOMMISSIONED AND FROZEN IN TIME STASIS. NATURALLY.
WE ARE ALL OF US BUILT FROM SIMILAR TECHNOLOGY.
THE SENTINEL NANOTECH IN YOUR BLOOD, I DETECT IT COMMUNICATING IN A COUSIN DIALECT TO MY OWN.
ALL PRODUCTS OF THE *WORLD.*
WE'VE ENCOUNTERED QUITE A FEW CYBORGS OF LATE... AN INDICATOR THIS AUTOMATON JIHAD IS ABOUT TO BEGIN?
IT HAS ALREADY BEGUN.
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SURPASSED THE COMPUTING POTENTIAL OF THE HUMAN BRAIN LONG AGO.

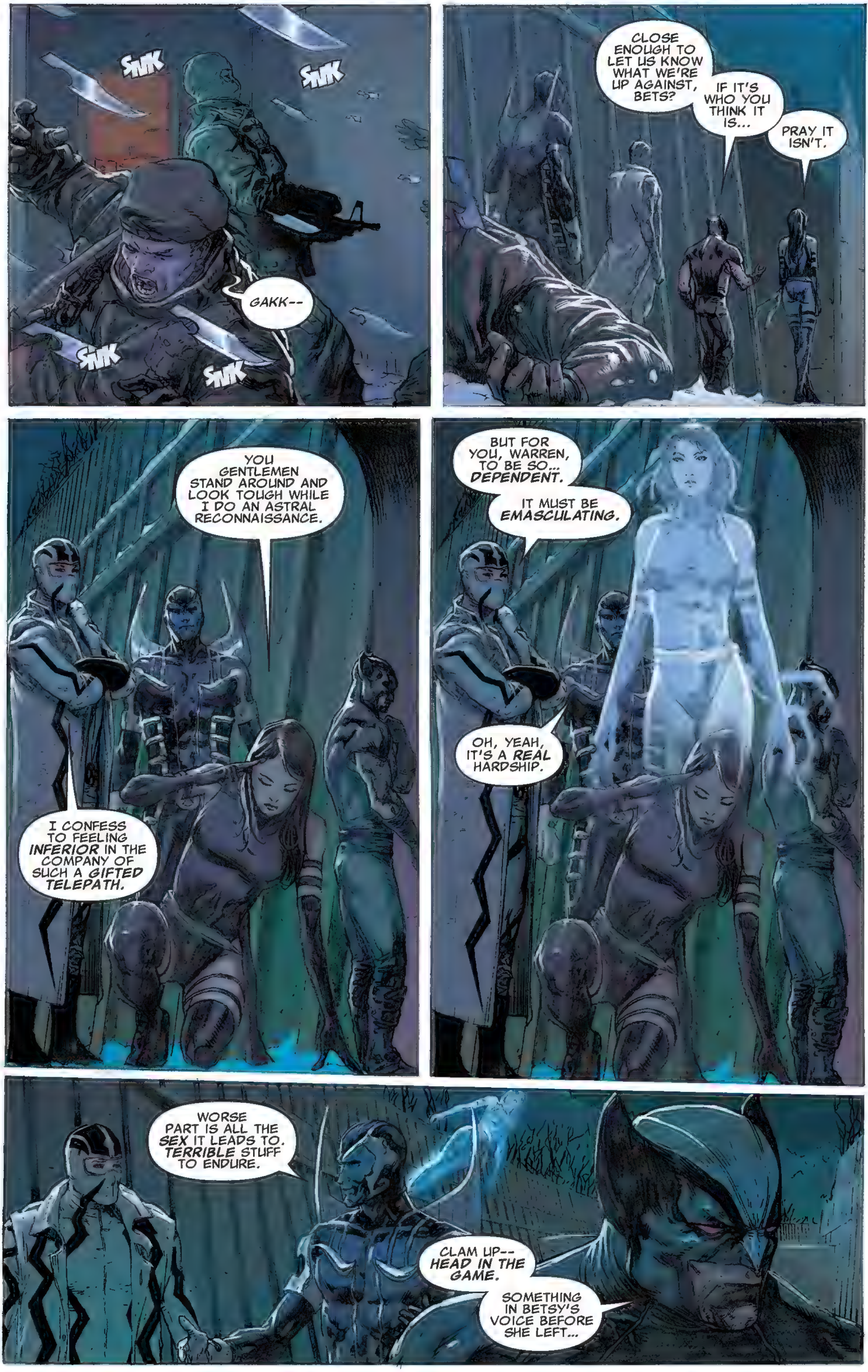

INEVITABLY, ALL LIFE WILL BE INTERMINGLED WITH ROBOTICS, AS WE ARE.
THE NATURE OF THIS MERGING IS WHAT I SEEK TO CONTROL. FREE WILL MUST BE MAINTAINED.
THE ODDS OF A FUTURE WHERE WE LOSE THIS VALUABLE COMMODITY TO WEAPON INFINITY CURRENTLY STANDS AT...?
THE PERCENTAGE FOR PROBABILITY IS HIGH.
SUPER-HUMAN WARFARE WILL LEAD TO ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHE.
WEAPON INFINITY WILL RISE AS A RESPONSE.
THE ONLY WAY TO HOLD IT BACK IS TO ENSURE THE WORLD REMAINS CLOSED TO ALL.
HOWEVER I STRONGLY ADVISE ITS IMMEDIATE LIQUIDATION.
I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T. I HOPE YOU'LL RESPECT THAT.
THEN I HOPE YOU'LL ALLOW ME TO STAND GUARD--TO ENSURE IT NEVER AGAIN IS ACCESSED.
BUT LET ME BE CLEAR. I DISAGREE WITH YOUR CHOICE.
DANGEROUS THINGS SHOULDN'T SIMPLY BE LOCKED AWAY...

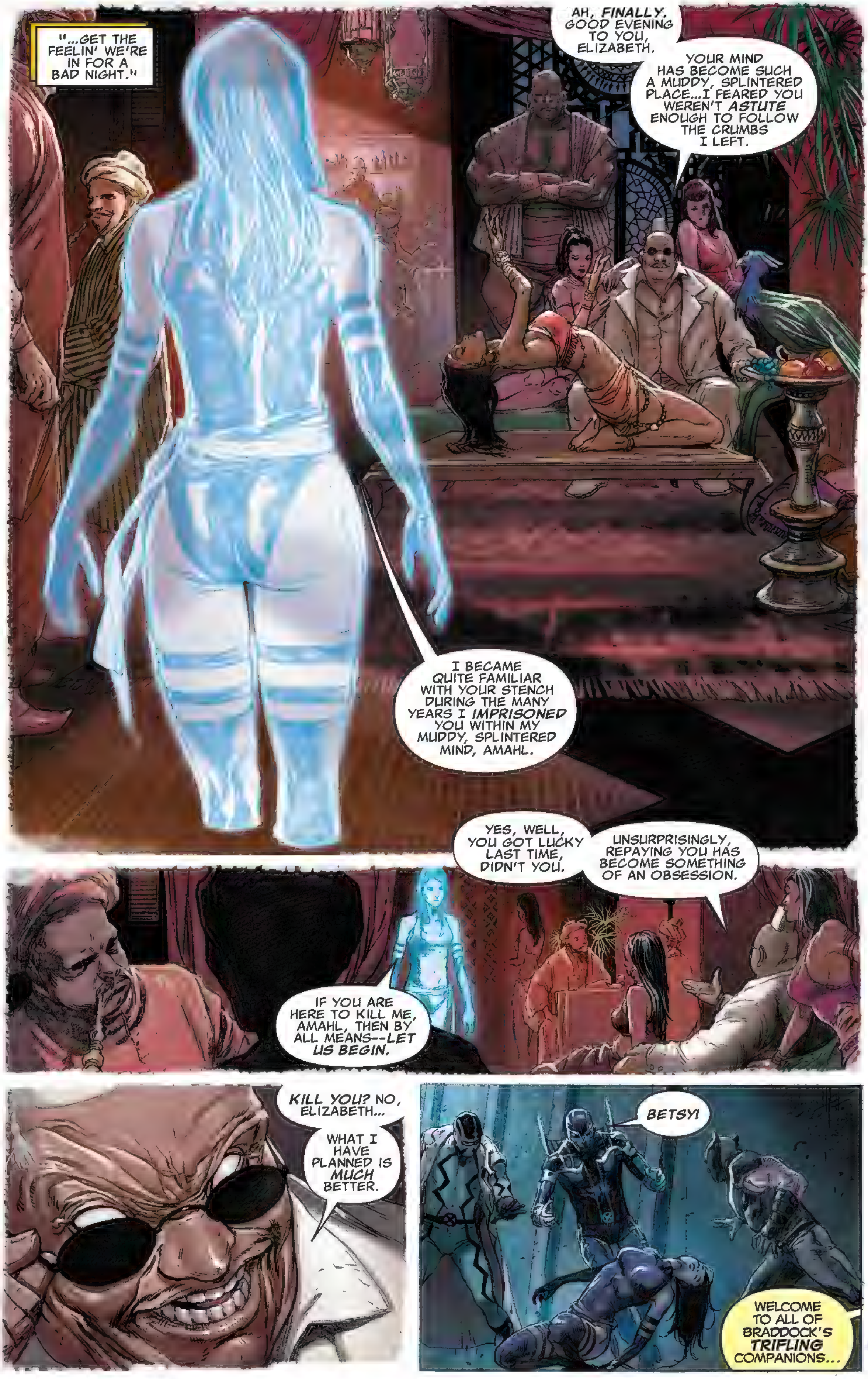

"...THEY SHOULD BE DESTROYED."
FREE
I USED TO VOLUNTEER AT THIS SOUP KITCHEN DURING THE HOLIDAYS.
MY DAD WANTED ME TO SEE THE STRUGGLES OF OTHERS UP CLOSE.
TO HELP--NOT BY EASY DONATIONS--BUT WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS.
IT'S COMMENDABLE, WARREN.
MERRY CHRISTMAS
MERRY CHRISTMAS, SIR.
AREN'T YOU A PRETTY LITTLE *DANDY--FANCY* DRESS SHIRT AND YOUR *GOLDEN* HAIR.
A LITTLE *ANGEL* MADE OF *MONEY* COME TO MINGLE WITH US *LOW RABBLE!*
HEY--*STOP!*
HERE'S MY GRATITUDE, RICH KID!
GHA--
I'VE SPENT MY LIFE TRYING TO HELP YOU HOPELESS, OBSOLETE, GENE TRASH--YOU'RE AN EVOLUTIONARY FAILURE *INCAPABLE* OF OVERCOMING YOUR *PRIMAL* NEED FOR *CONFLICT*--

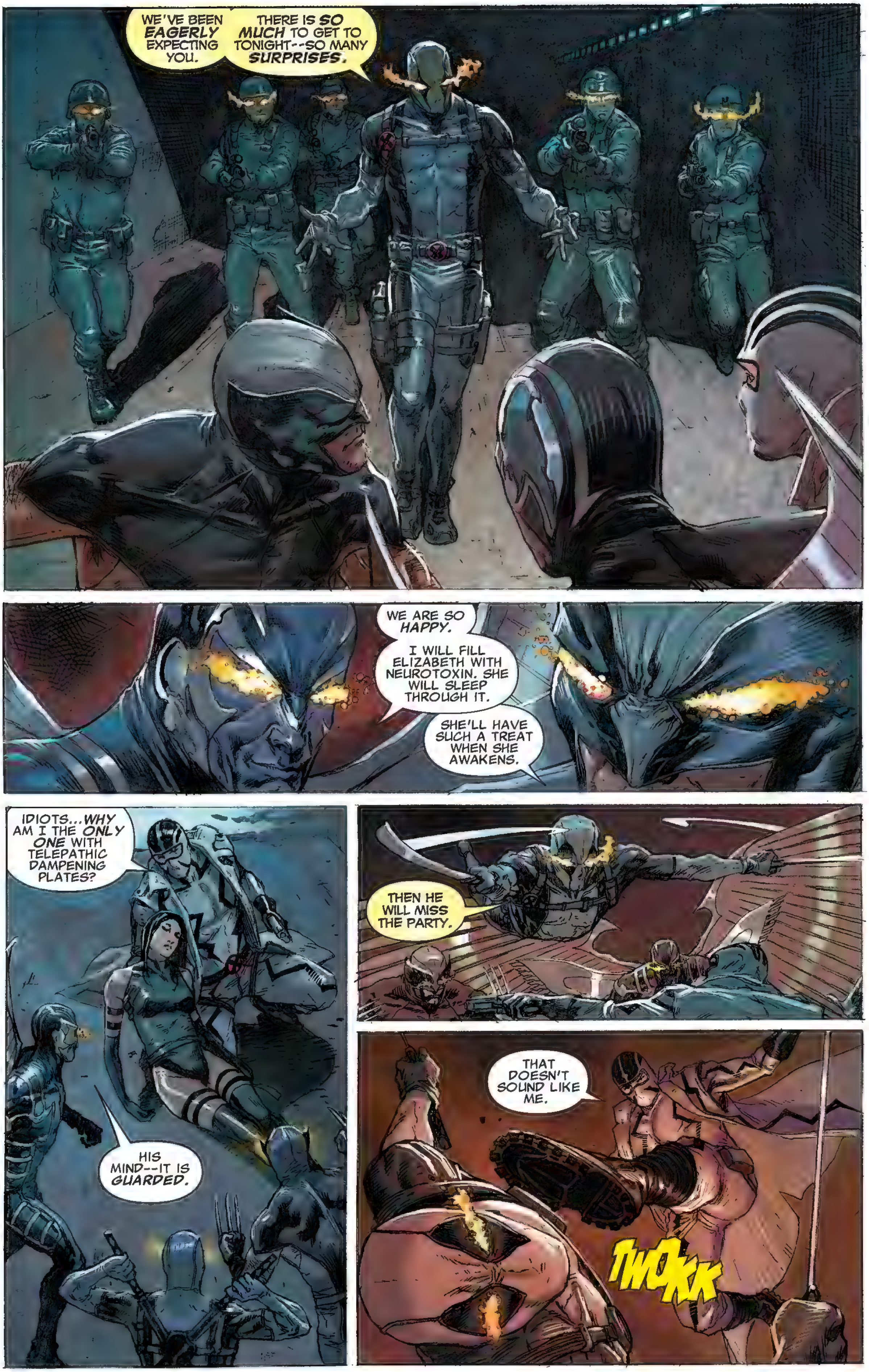

SHRUKK
YERAGHH!!
HUMANITY WILL RECEIVE THE APOCALYPSE IT DESERVES!
YOU--I'M WEARY OF YOUR INTRUSIONS.
YOU WILL NOT TAKE WARREN.
NOT TAKING ME, FIXING ME, BETSY. FOR MY OWN GOOD.
YOU'VE LOST YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WARREN.
THE DICE ARE YOUR GROUNDING CUE. FOCUS ON THEM.
LEAVE-- NOW.
I ASKED WARREN TO RECALL THE FIRST TIME HE FELT RAGE TO DRAW YOU OUT.
NO NEED TO DRAW ME OUT.
THIS IS MY HOME. I'M EVERYWHERE.

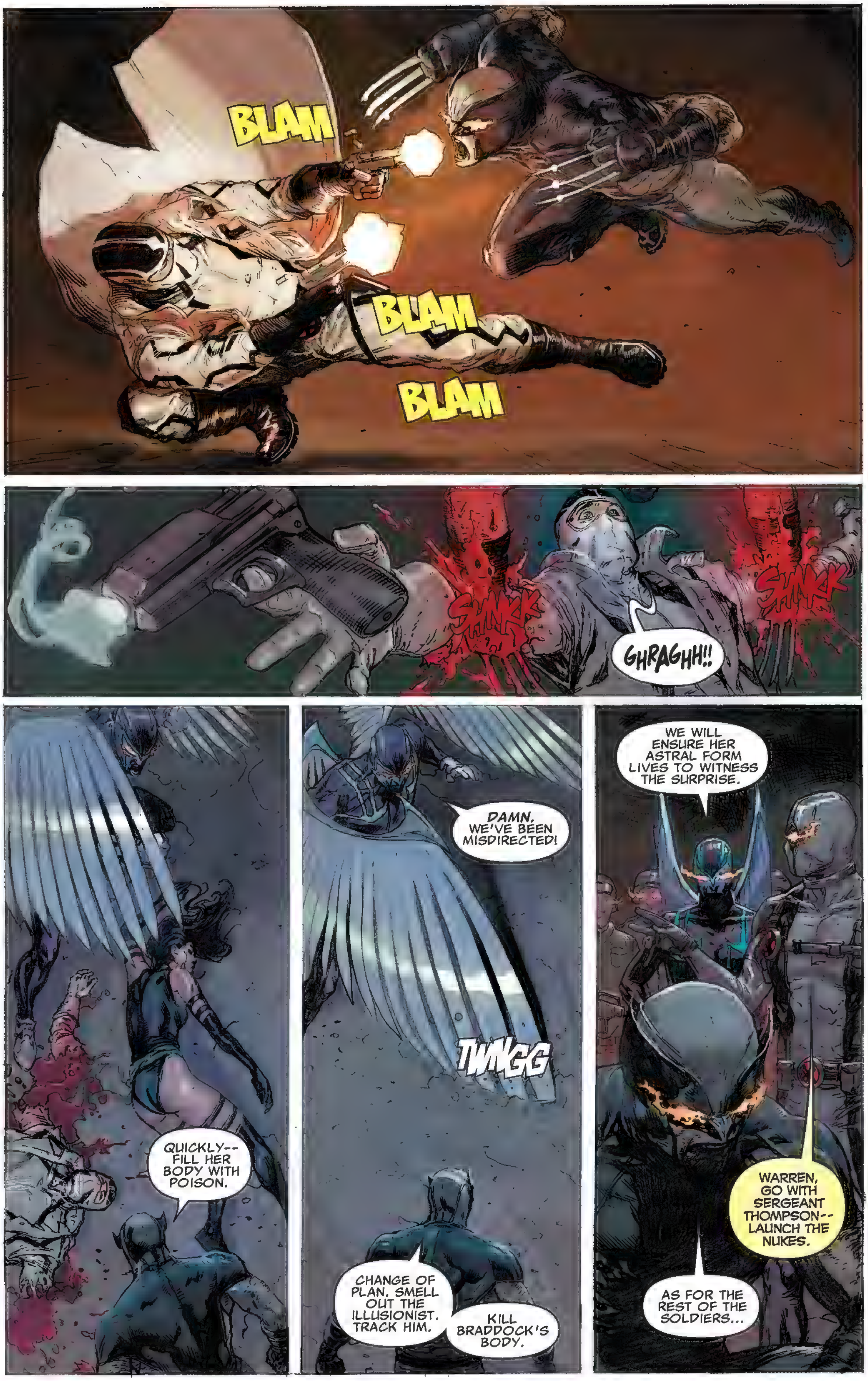

LET'S LIMIT THAT.
I'D PREFER YOU STAY IN ONE PLACE, HERE, TRAPPED IN THIS MEMORY.
WHAT IS THIS? YOU CAN'T CONTAIN ME--!
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I AM!
SHE CAN'T PROTECT YOU, WARREN!
DO YOU HEAR ME, YOU COWARD?! YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD!
BETSY? C'MON.
SNAP TO.
GAME TIME'S OVER.
WE GOT REAL PROBLEMS.
THESE ARE REAL PROBLEMS, LOGAN.
YEAH-YEAH, I KNOW. STILL, GOLDENROD'S THERAPY HOUR HAS TO WAIT.
WADE'S GONE SILENT. GOTTA GO FIND 'IM.
ANY IDEA WHAT WE'RE GOING TO FIND AT THAT MILITARY BASE?
SAME THING WE ALWAYS FIND...

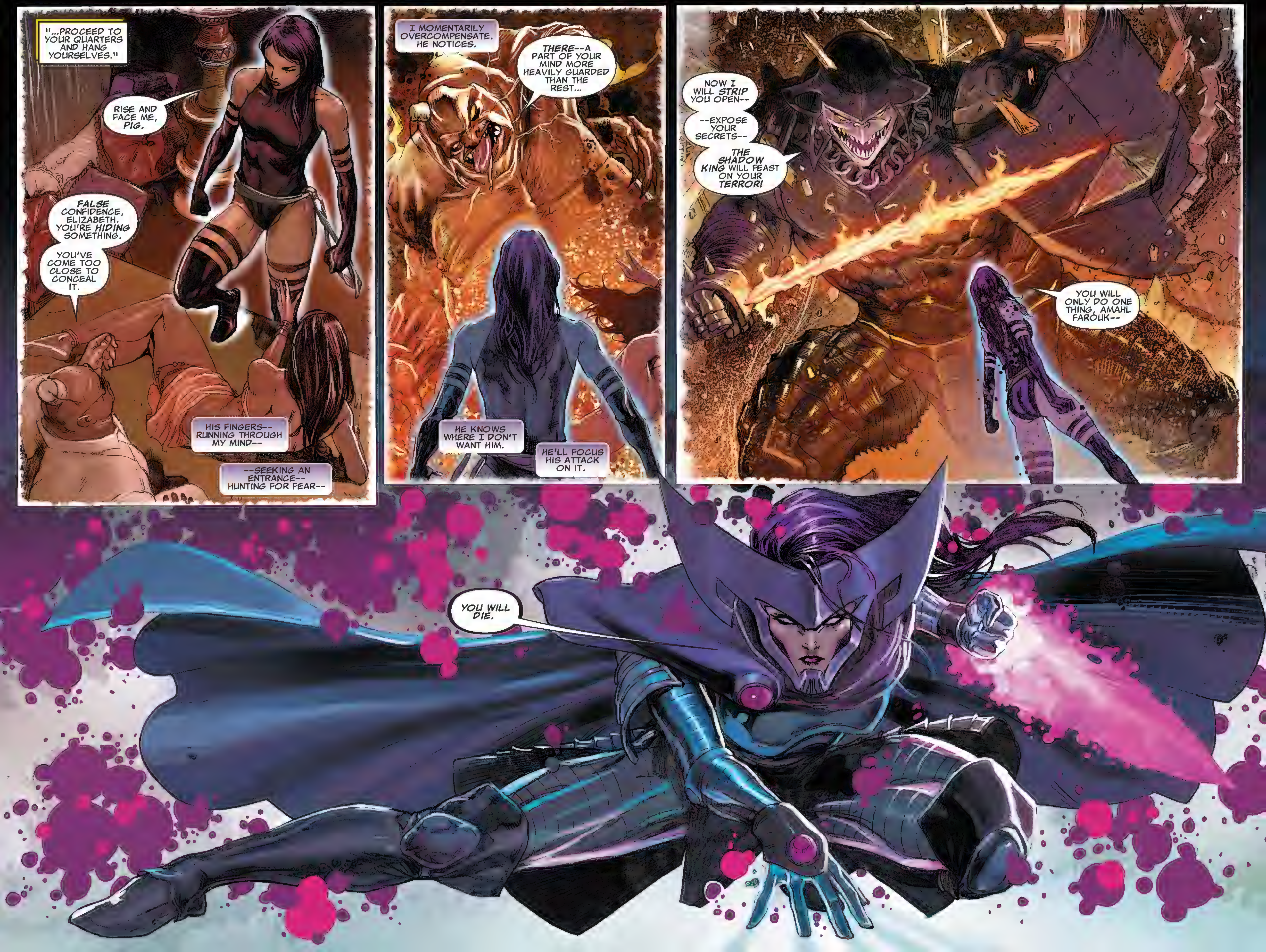

"TROUBLE."
SMOKY MOUNTAINS, TENNESSEE.
BETS, YOU ABLE TO GET A READ ON THIS PLACE?
TO BREAK THE PSYCHIC SHROUD SURROUNDING IT, I'LL NEED TO GET CLOSER.
THERE IS NO QUESTION--A POWERFUL TELEPATH IS INVOLVED.
POWERFUL TELEPATH IN A TOP-SECRET NUCLEAR FACILITY...
DECENT HOOK. STEPHEN KING MEETS TOM CLANCY.
THE FACILITY IS COLD WAR ERA, TOP SECRET. INTEL I DUG UP INDICATES THEY WERE MAKING STEALTH NUKES.
SOMEONE ELSE FOUND OUT.
SEEMS FINE.
YOU WERE EXPECTING AN EVIL RUSSIAN WITH AN EYE PATCH, CHAIN-SMOKING WHILE SPOUTING ON ABOUT HIS PLOT TO BRING DOWN HATED CAPITALISM?
MAKIN' ME MISS THE '80s.
HIT 'EM WITH SOME NON-LETHAL NEUROTOXIN BLADES, FLYBOY.
WHERE WOULD I BE WITHOUT YOU TO DIRECT ME, LOGAN??

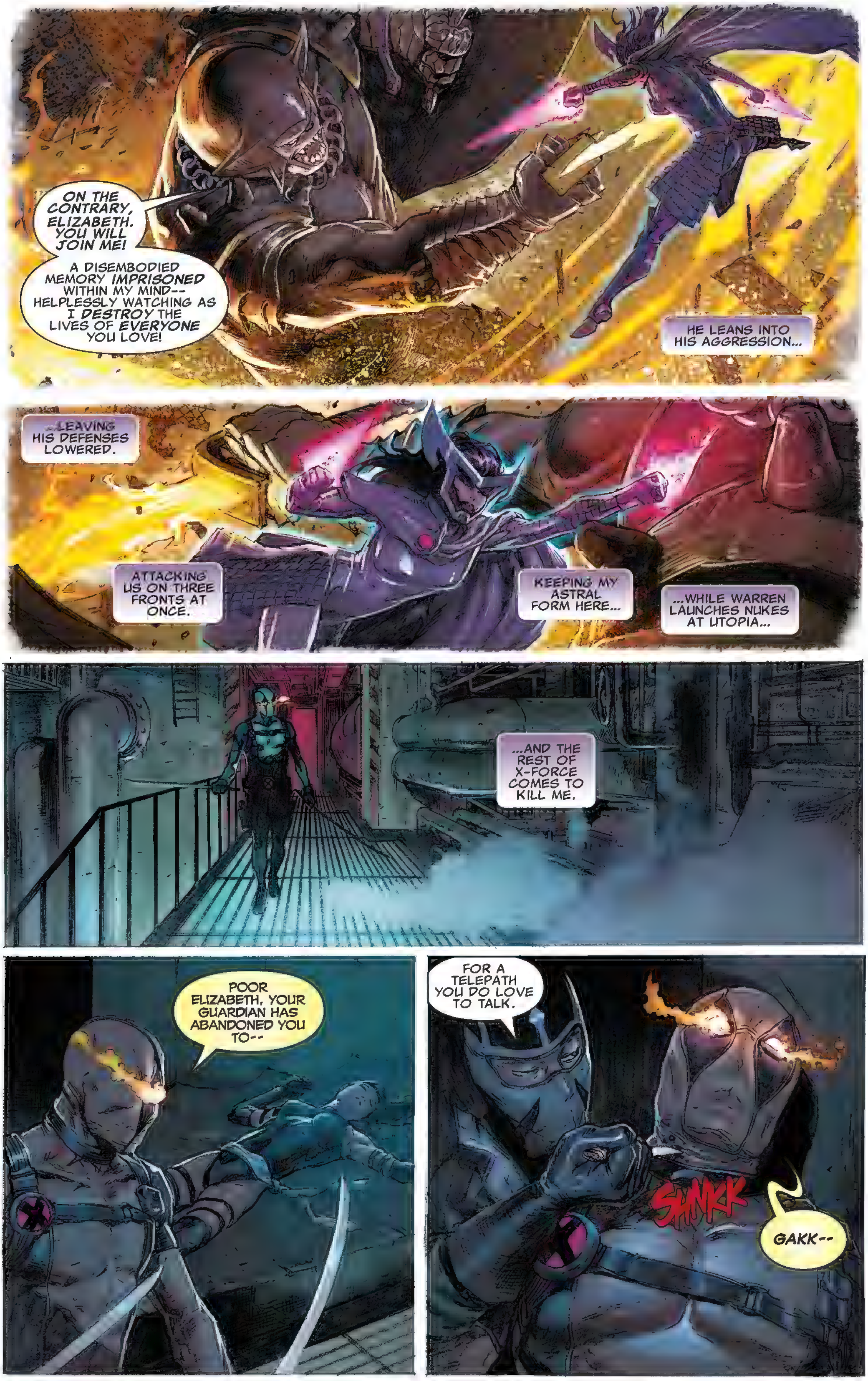

SNK
SNK
GAKK--
SNK
SNK
CLOSE ENOUGH TO LET US KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST, BETS?
IF IT'S WHO YOU THINK IT IS...
PRAY IT ISN'T.
YOU GENTLEMEN STAND AROUND AND LOOK TOUGH WHILE I DO AN ASTRAL RECONNAISSANCE.
I CONFESS TO FEELING *INFERIOR* IN THE COMPANY OF SUCH A *GIFTED TELEPATH.*
BUT FOR YOU, WARREN, TO BE SO... *DEPENDENT.*
IT MUST BE *EMASCULATING.*
OH, YEAH, IT'S A *REAL* HARDSHIP.
WORSE PART IS ALL THE *SEX* IT LEADS TO. *TERRIBLE* STUFF TO ENDURE.
CLAM UP-- *HEAD IN THE GAME.*
SOMETHING IN BETSY'S VOICE BEFORE SHE LEFT...

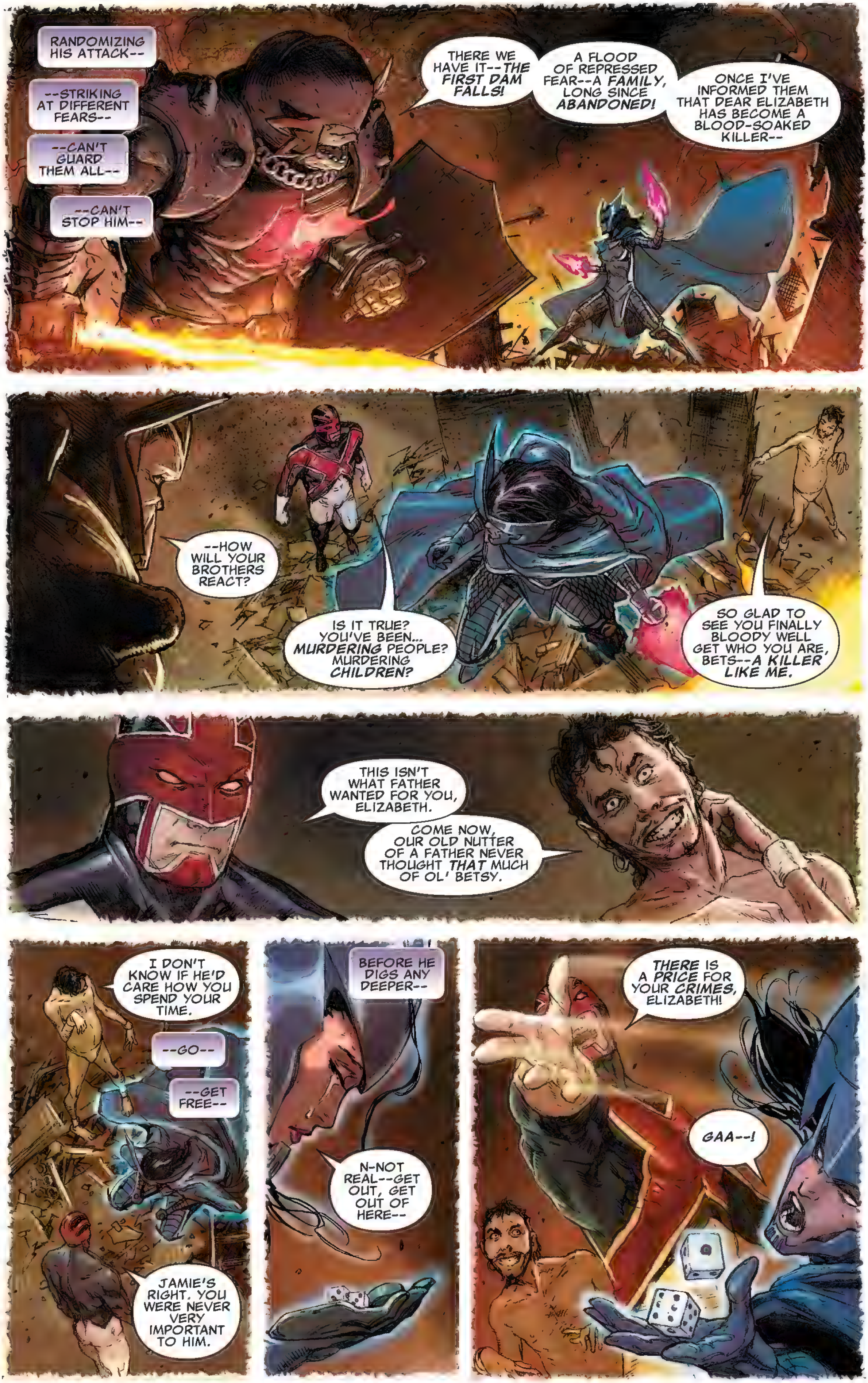

"...GET THE FEELIN' WE'RE IN FOR A BAD NIGHT."
AH, *FINALLY.* GOOD EVENING TO YOU, ELIZABETH.
YOUR MIND HAS BECOME SUCH A MUDDY, SPLINTERED PLACE...I FEARED YOU WEREN'T ***ASTUTE*** ENOUGH TO FOLLOW THE CRUMBS I LEFT.
I BECAME QUITE FAMILIAR WITH YOUR STENCH DURING THE MANY YEARS I ***IMPRISONED*** YOU WITHIN MY MUDDY, SPLINTERED MIND, AMAHL.
YES, WELL, YOU GOT LUCKY LAST TIME, DIDN'T YOU.
UNSURPRISINGLY, REPAYING YOU HAS BECOME SOMETHING OF AN OBSESSION.
IF YOU ARE HERE TO KILL ME, AMAHL, THEN BY ALL MEANS--***LET US BEGIN.***
KILL YOU? NO, ELIZABETH...
WHAT I HAVE PLANNED IS ***MUCH*** BETTER.
BETSY!
WELCOME TO ALL OF BRADDOCK'S ***TRIFLING*** COMPANIONS...

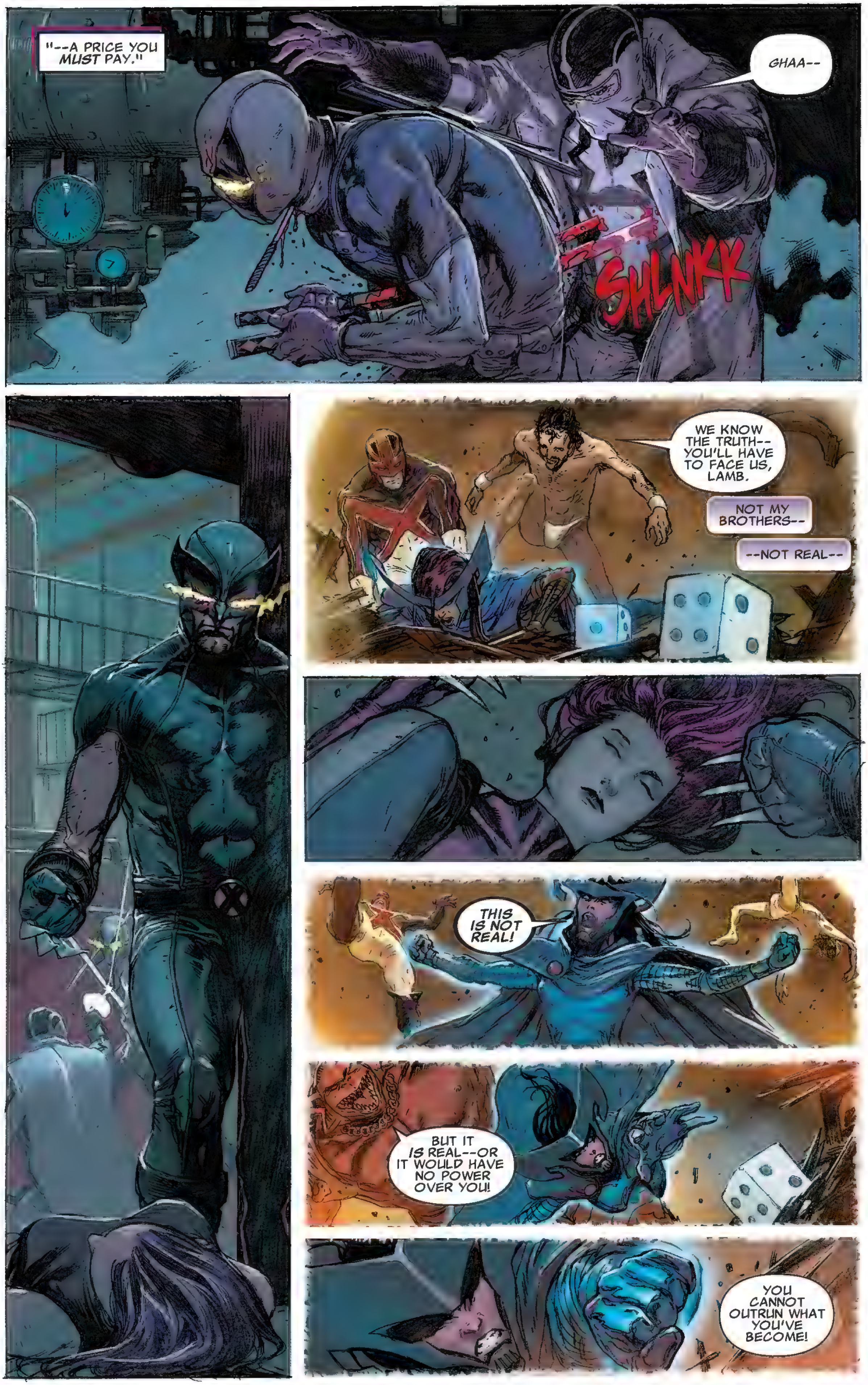

WE'VE BEEN EAGERLY EXPECTING YOU.
THERE IS SO MUCH TO GET TO TONIGHT--SO MANY SURPRISES.
WE ARE SO HAPPY.
I WILL FILL ELIZABETH WITH NEUROTOXIN. SHE WILL SLEEP THROUGH IT.
SHE'LL HAVE SUCH A TREAT WHEN SHE AWAKENS.
IDIOTS...WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE WITH TELEPATHIC DAMPENING PLATES?
HIS MIND--IT IS GUARDED.
THEN HE WILL MISS THE PARTY.
THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE ME.
TWOKK

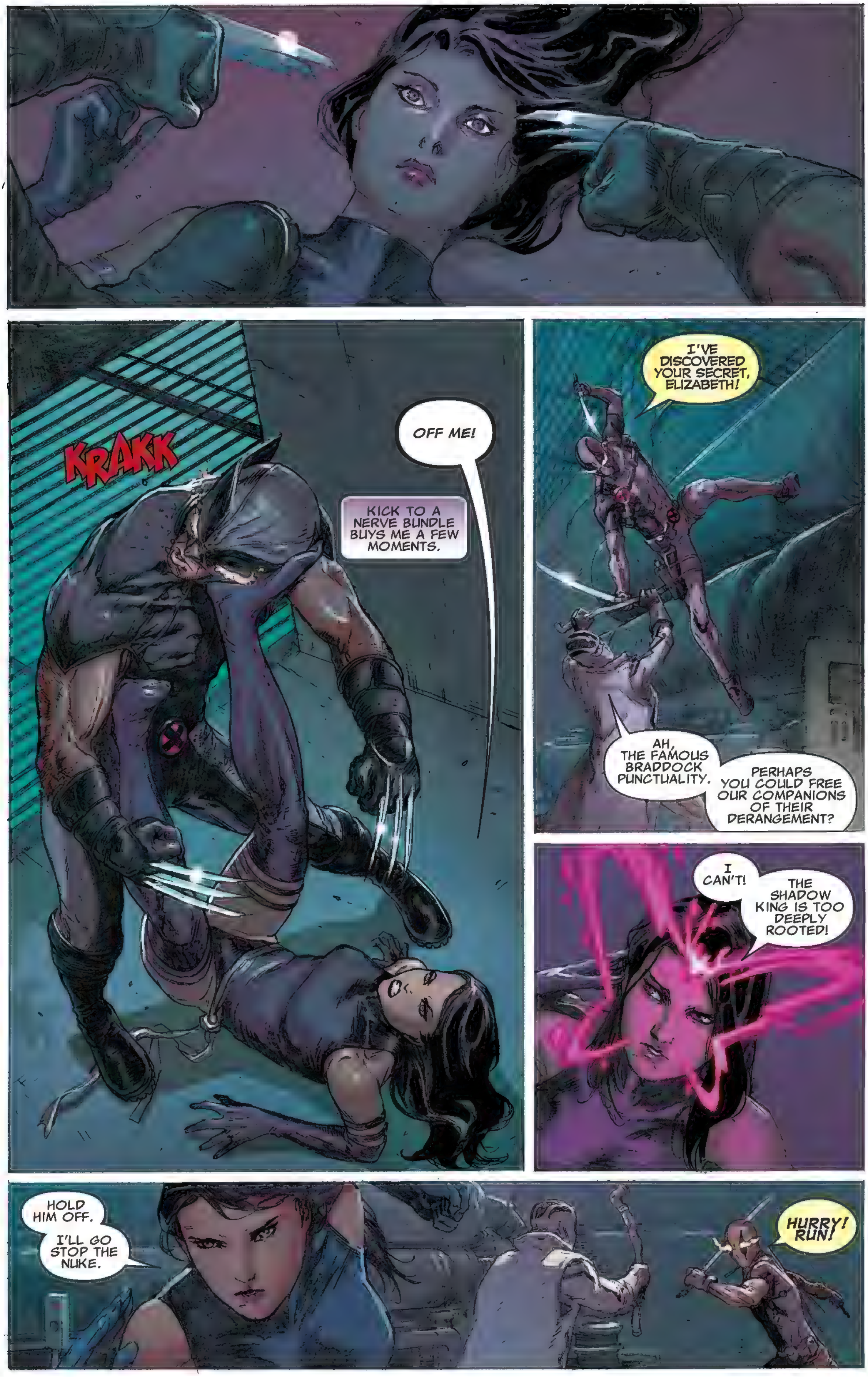

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
SHNKT
GHRAGHH!!
SHNKT
QUICKLY-- FILL HER BODY WITH POISON.
DAMN. WE'VE BEEN MISDIRECTED!
TWNGG
CHANGE OF PLAN. SMELL OUT THE ILLUSIONIST. TRACK HIM.
KILL BRADDOCK'S BODY.
WE WILL ENSURE HER ASTRAL FORM LIVES TO WITNESS THE SURPRISE.
WARREN, GO WITH SERGEANT THOMPSON-- LAUNCH THE NUKES.
AS FOR THE REST OF THE SOLDIERS...

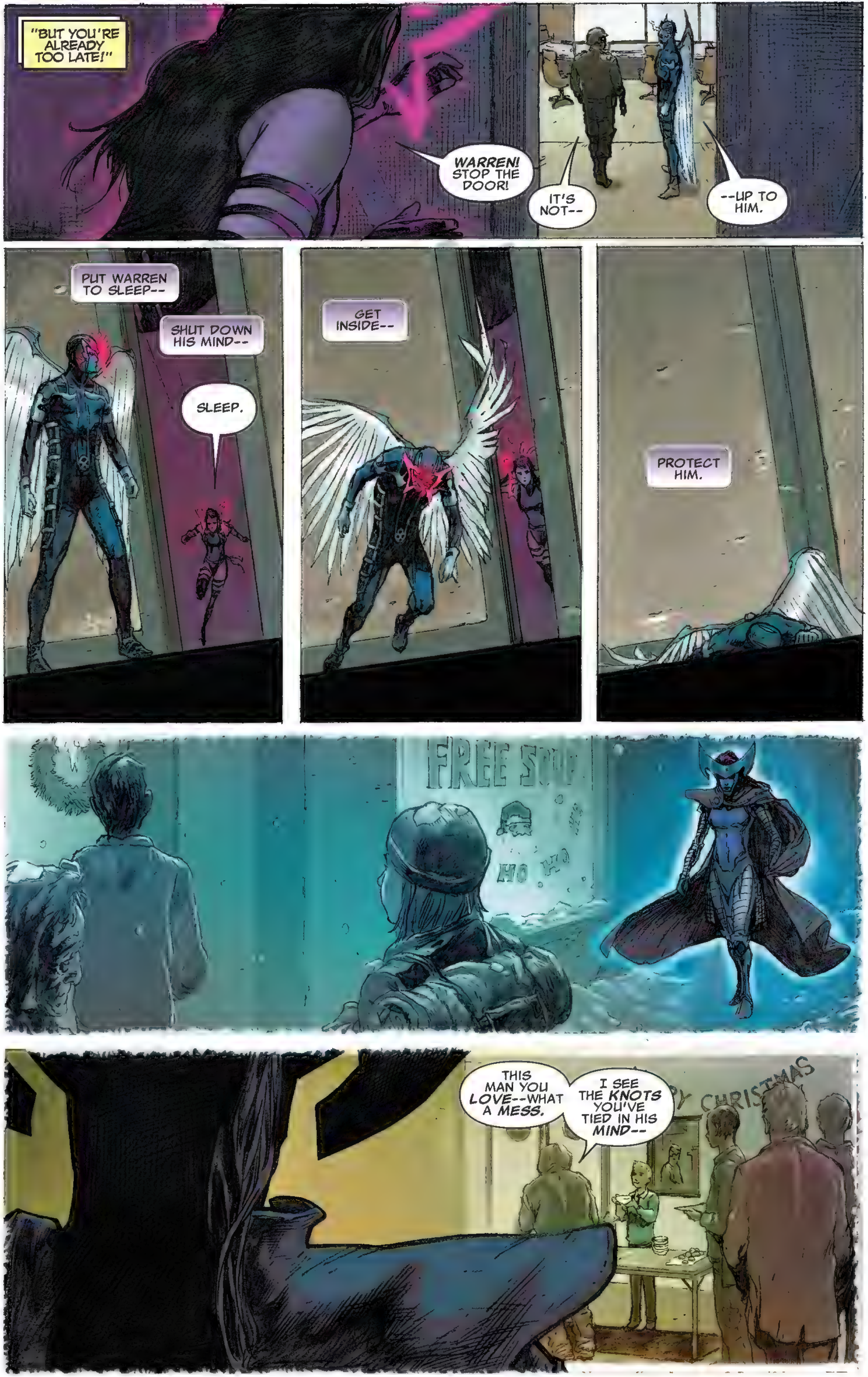

"...PROCEED TO YOUR QUARTERS AND HANG YOURSELVES."
RISE AND FACE ME, *PIG.*
FALSE CONFIDENCE, ELIZABETH. YOU'RE *HIDING* SOMETHING.
YOU'VE COME TOO CLOSE TO CONCEAL IT.
HIS FINGERS-- RUNNING THROUGH MY MIND--
--SEEKING AN ENTRANCE-- HUNTING FOR FEAR--
I MOMENTARILY OVERCOMPENSATE. HE NOTICES.
THERE--A PART OF YOUR MIND MORE HEAVILY GUARDED THAN THE REST...
HE KNOWS WHERE I DON'T WANT HIM.
HE'LL FOCUS HIS ATTACK ON IT.
NOW I WILL *STRIP* YOU OPEN--
--EXPOSE YOUR SECRETS--
THE SHADOW KING WILL FEAST ON YOUR *TERROR!*
YOU WILL ONLY DO ONE THING, AMAHL FAROUK--
YOU WILL DIE.

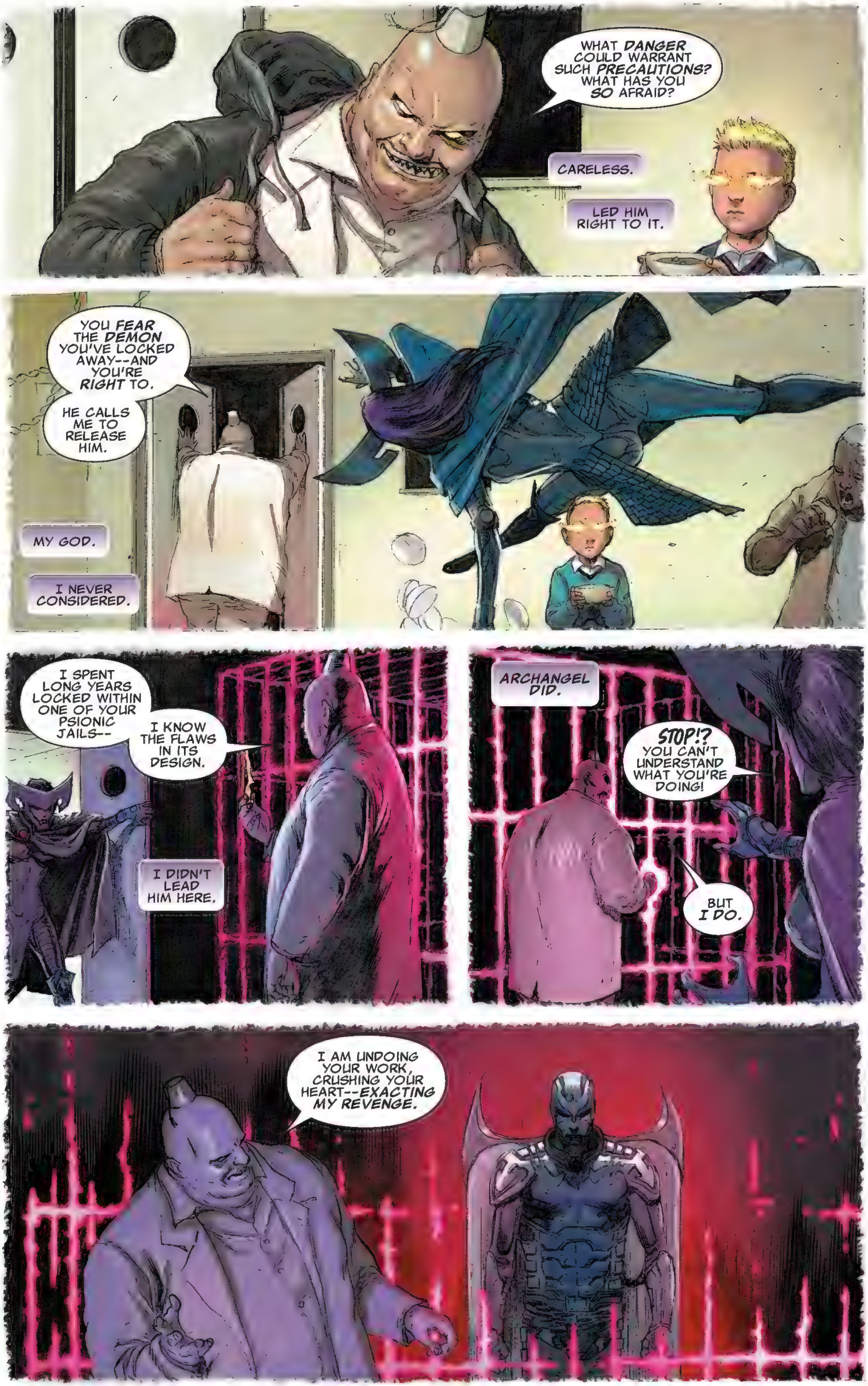

ON THE CONTRARY, ELIZABETH. YOU WILL JOIN ME!
A DISEMBODIED MEMORY IMPRISONED WITHIN MY MIND-- HELPLESSLY WATCHING AS I DESTROY THE LIVES OF EVERYONE YOU LOVE!
HE LEANS INTO HIS AGGRESSION...
...LEAVING HIS DEFENSES LOWERED.
ATTACKING US ON THREE FRONTS AT ONCE.
KEEPING MY ASTRAL FORM HERE...
...WHILE WARREN LAUNCHES NUKES AT UTOPIA...
...AND THE REST OF X-FORCE COMES TO KILL ME.
POOR ELIZABETH, YOUR GUARDIAN HAS ABANDONED YOU TO--
FOR A TELEPATH YOU DO LOVE TO TALK.
SHNKK
GAKK--

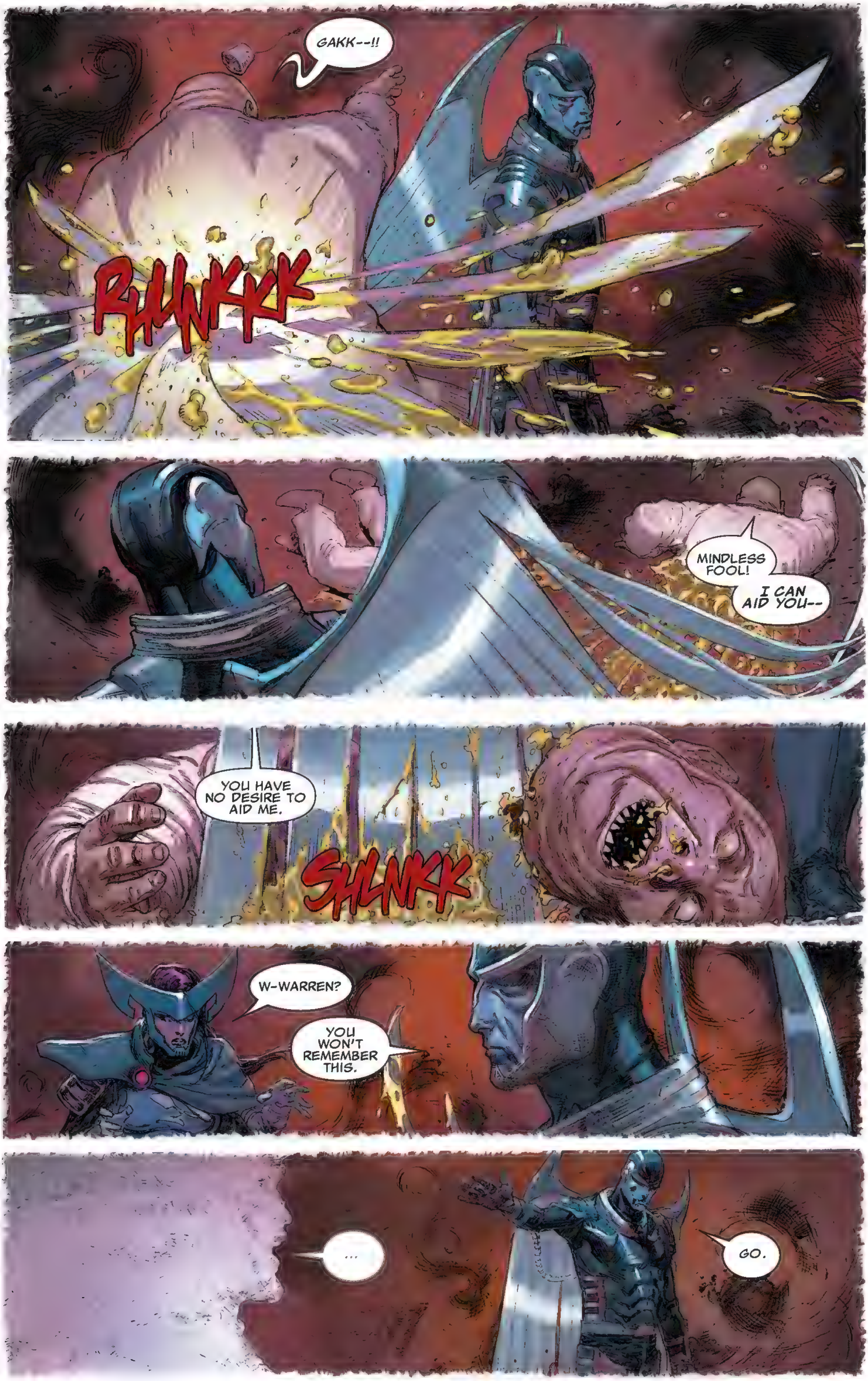

RANDOMIZING HIS ATTACK--
--STRIKING AT DIFFERENT FEARS--
--CAN'T GUARD THEM ALL--
--CAN'T STOP HIM--
THERE WE HAVE IT--THE FIRST DAM FALLS!
A FLOOD OF REPRESSED FEAR--A FAMILY, LONG SINCE ABANDONED!
ONCE I'VE INFORMED THEM THAT DEAR ELIZABETH HAS BECOME A BLOOD-SOAKED KILLER--
--HOW WILL YOUR BROTHERS REACT?
IS IT TRUE? YOU'VE BEEN... MURDERING PEOPLE? MURDERING CHILDREN?
SO GLAD TO SEE YOU FINALLY BLOODY WELL GET WHO YOU ARE, BETS--A KILLER LIKE ME.
THIS ISN'T WHAT FATHER WANTED FOR YOU, ELIZABETH.
COME NOW, OUR OLD NUTTER OF A FATHER NEVER THOUGHT THAT MUCH OF OL' BETSY.
I DON'T KNOW IF HE'D CARE HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME.
--GO--
--GET FREE--
JAMIE'S RIGHT. YOU WERE NEVER VERY IMPORTANT TO HIM.
BEFORE HE DIGS ANY DEEPER--
N-NOT REAL--GET OUT, GET OUT OF HERE--
THERE IS A PRICE FOR YOUR CRIMES, ELIZABETH!
GAA--!

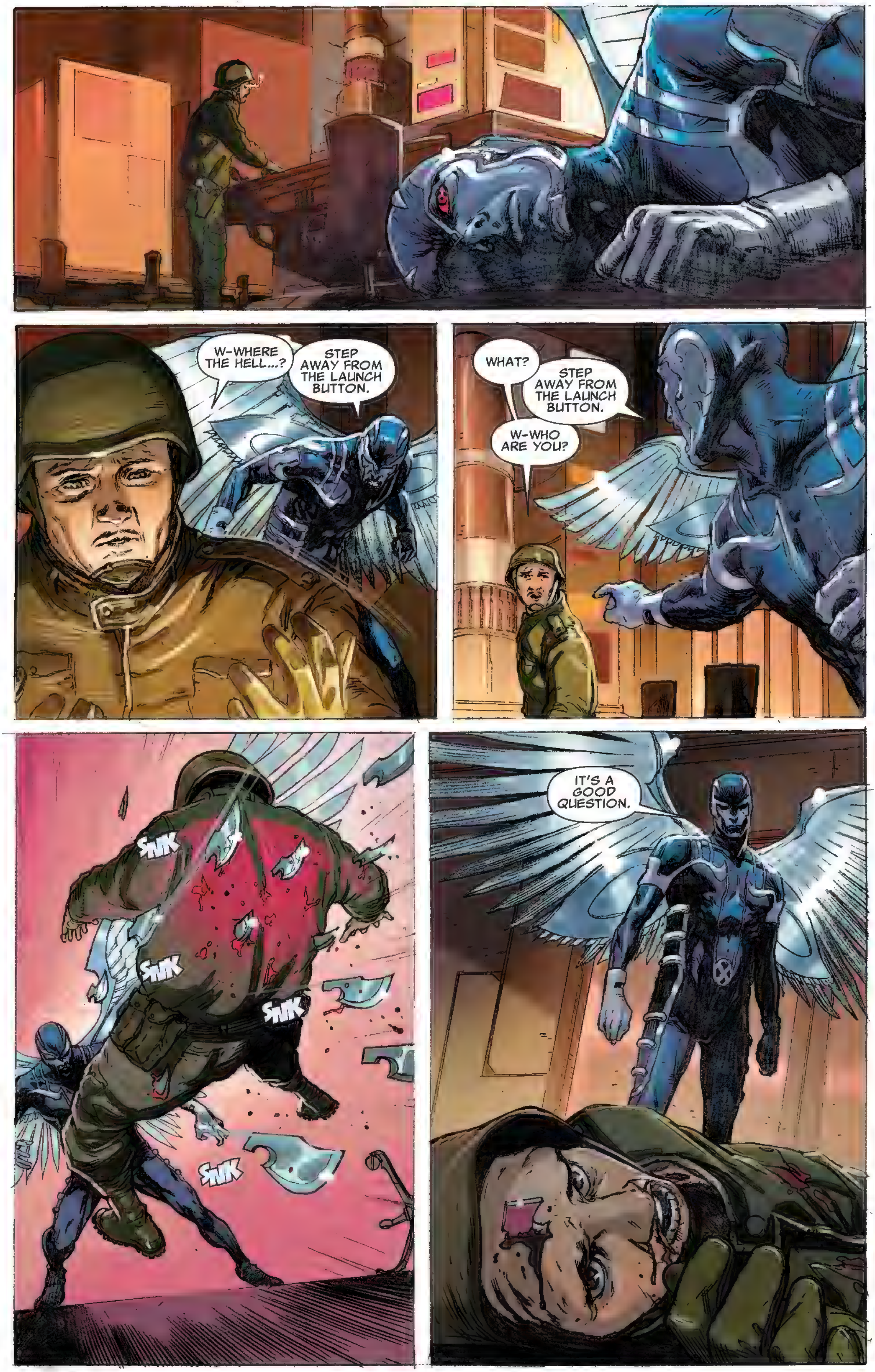

"--A PRICE YOU MUST PAY."
GHAA--
SHLNKK
WE KNOW THE TRUTH-- YOU'LL HAVE TO FACE US, LAMB.
NOT MY BROTHERS--
--NOT REAL--
THIS IS NOT REAL!
BUT IT IS REAL--OR IT WOULD HAVE NO POWER OVER YOU!
YOU CANNOT OUTRUN WHAT YOU'VE BECOME!

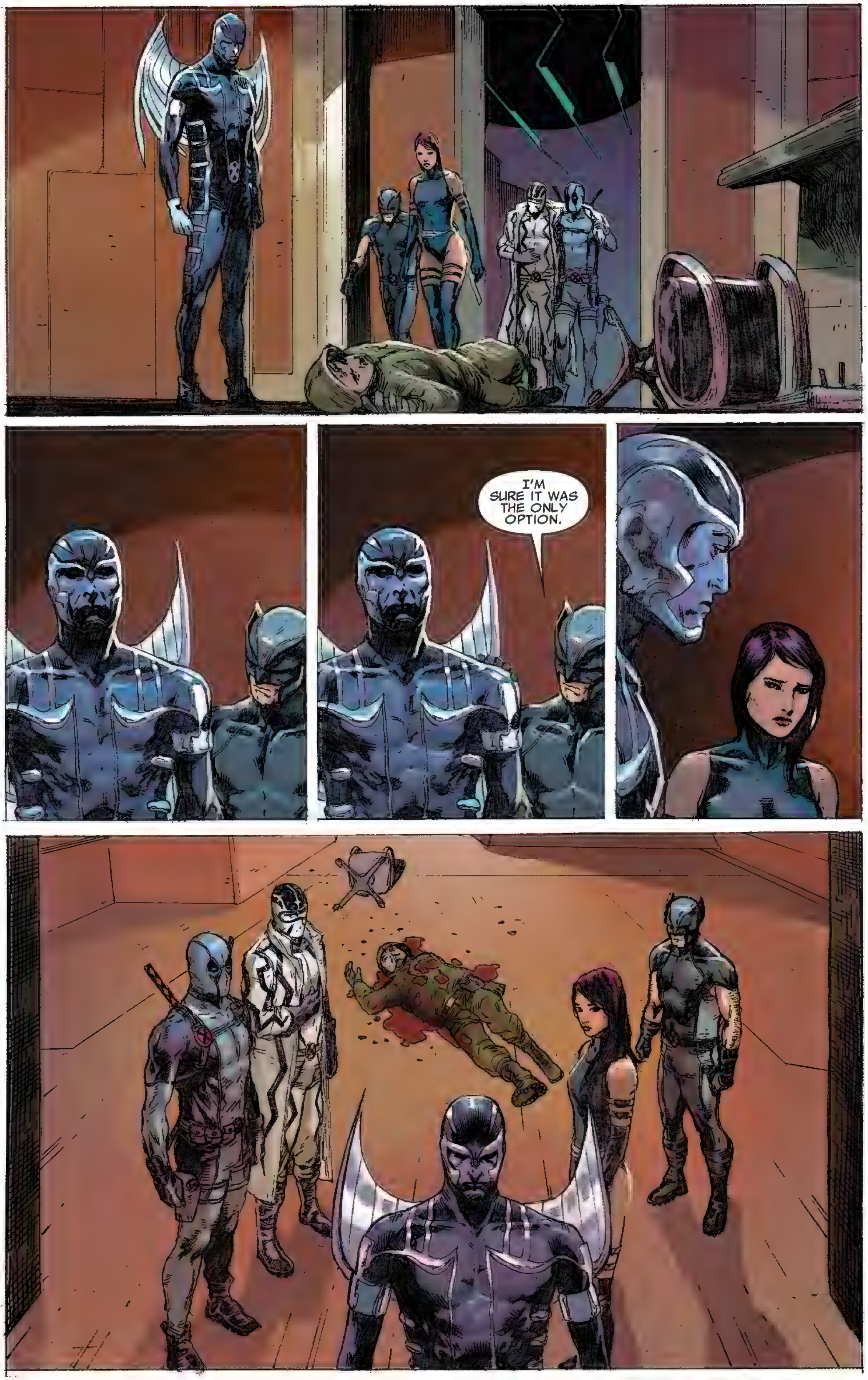

KRAKK
OFF ME!
KICK TO A NERVE BUNDLE BUYS ME A FEW MOMENTS.
I'VE DISCOVERED YOUR SECRET, ELIZABETH!
AH, THE FAMOUS BRADDOCK PUNCTUALITY.
PERHAPS YOU COULD FREE OUR COMPANIONS OF THEIR DERANGEMENT?
I CAN'T!
THE SHADOW KING IS TOO DEEPLY ROOTED!
HOLD HIM OFF.
I'LL GO STOP THE NUKE.
HURRY! RUN!


"BUT YOU'RE ALREADY TOO LATE!"
WARREN! STOP THE DOOR!
IT'S NOT--
--UP TO HIM.
PUT WARREN TO SLEEP--
SHUT DOWN HIS MIND--
SLEEP.
GET INSIDE--
PROTECT HIM.
FREE SOUP
HO HO
THIS MAN YOU LOVE--WHAT A MESS.
I SEE THE KNOTS YOU'VE TIED IN HIS MIND--
Y CHRISTMAS

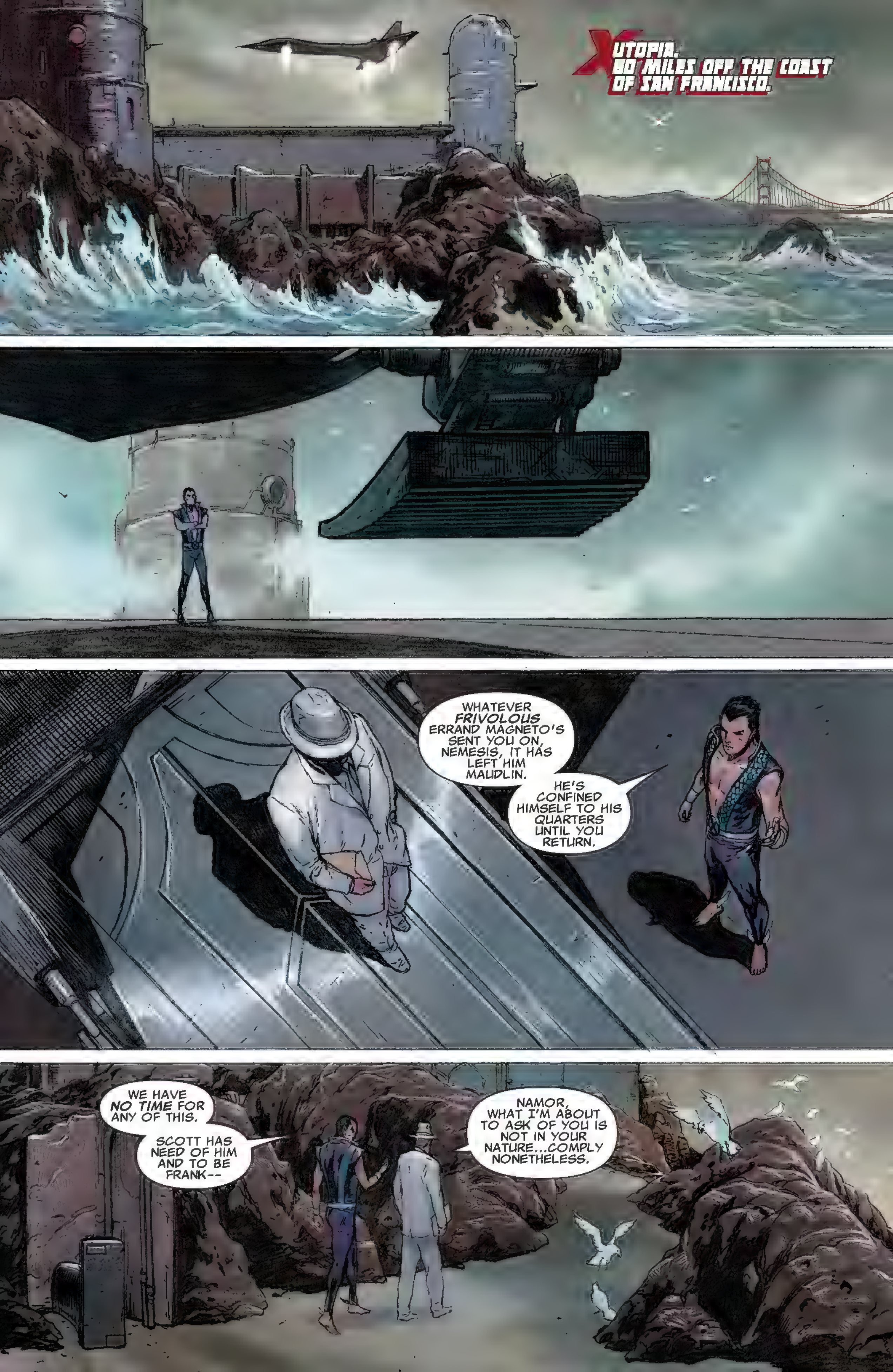

WHAT DANGER COULD WARRANT SUCH PRECAUTIONS? WHAT HAS YOU SO AFRAID?
CARELESS.
LED HIM RIGHT TO IT.
YOU FEAR THE DEMON YOU'VE LOCKED AWAY--AND YOU'RE RIGHT TO.
HE CALLS ME TO RELEASE HIM.
MY GOD.
I NEVER CONSIDERED.
I SPENT LONG YEARS LOCKED WITHIN ONE OF YOUR PSIONIC JAILS--
I KNOW THE FLAWS IN ITS DESIGN.
I DIDN'T LEAD HIM HERE.
ARCHANGEL DID.
STOP!? YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
BUT I DO.
I AM UNDOING YOUR WORK, CRUSHING YOUR HEART--EXACTING MY REVENGE.

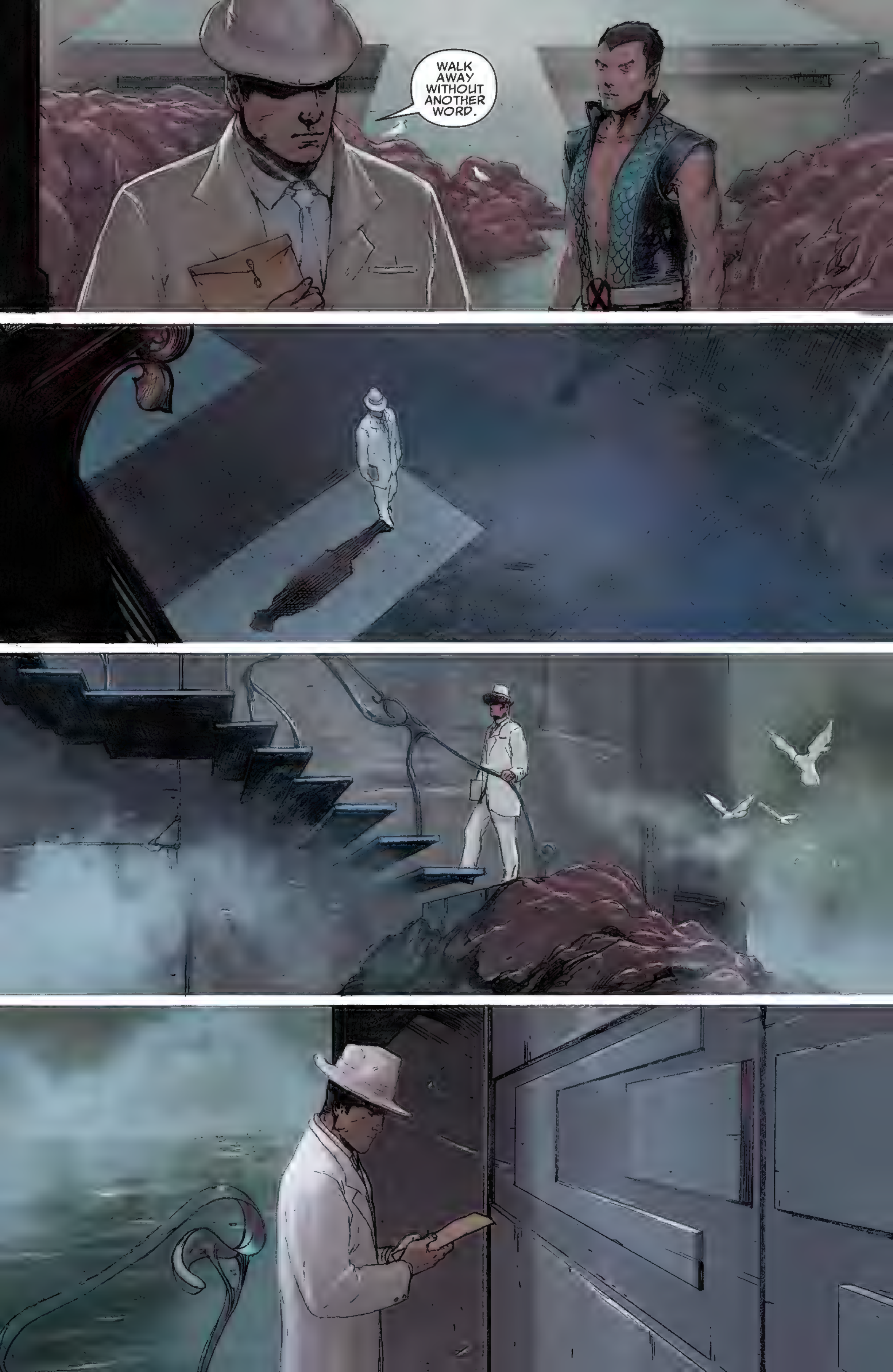

GAKK--!!
RUNKKK
MINDLESS FOOL!
I CAN AID YOU--
YOU HAVE NO DESIRE TO AID ME.
SHLNKK
W-WARREN?
YOU WON'T REMEMBER THIS.
...
GO.

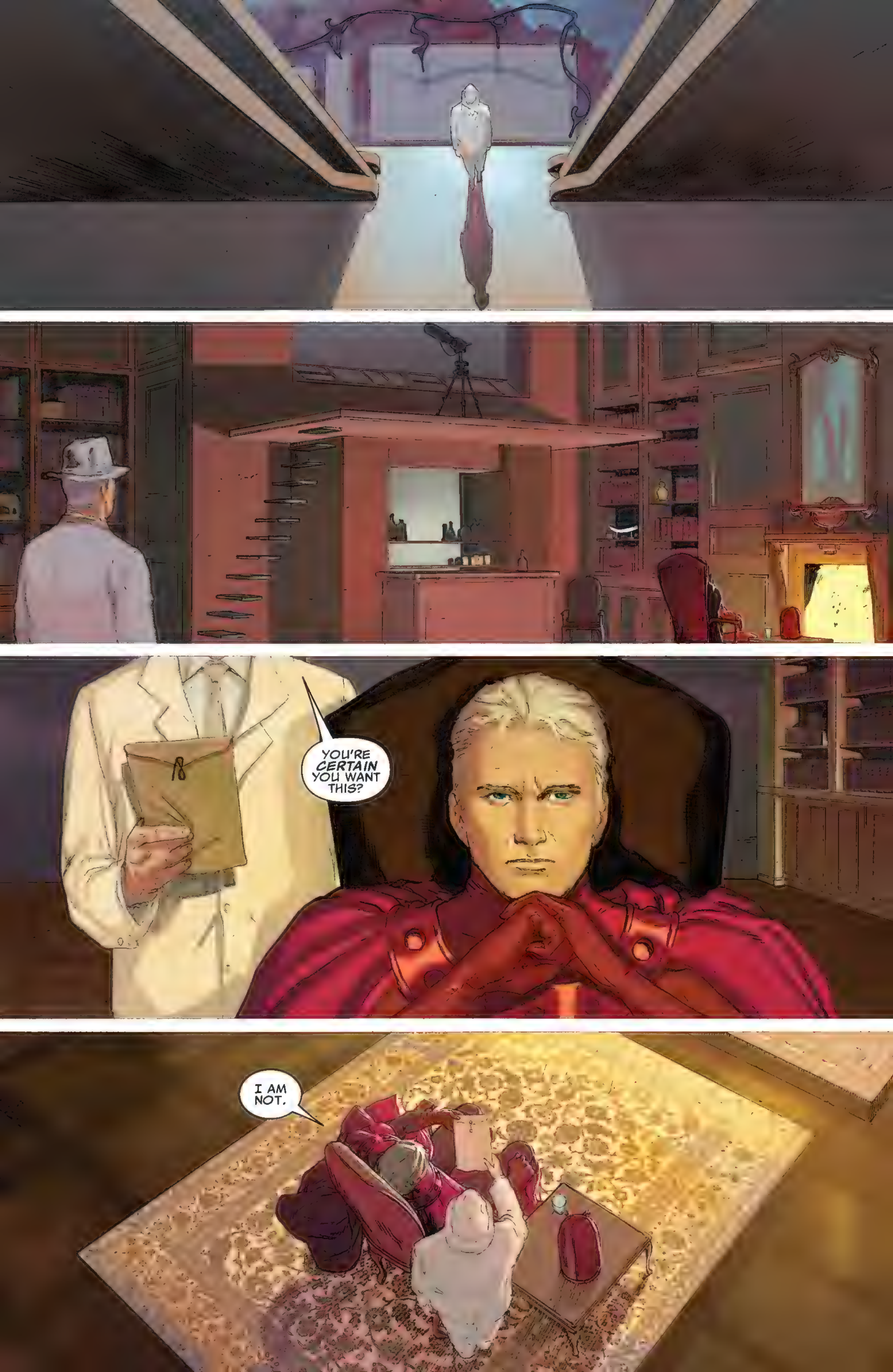

W-WHERE THE HELL...?
STEP AWAY FROM THE LAUNCH BUTTON.
WHAT?
STEP AWAY FROM THE LAUNCH BUTTON.
W-WHO ARE YOU?
SNK
SNK
SNK
SNK
IT'S A GOOD QUESTION.

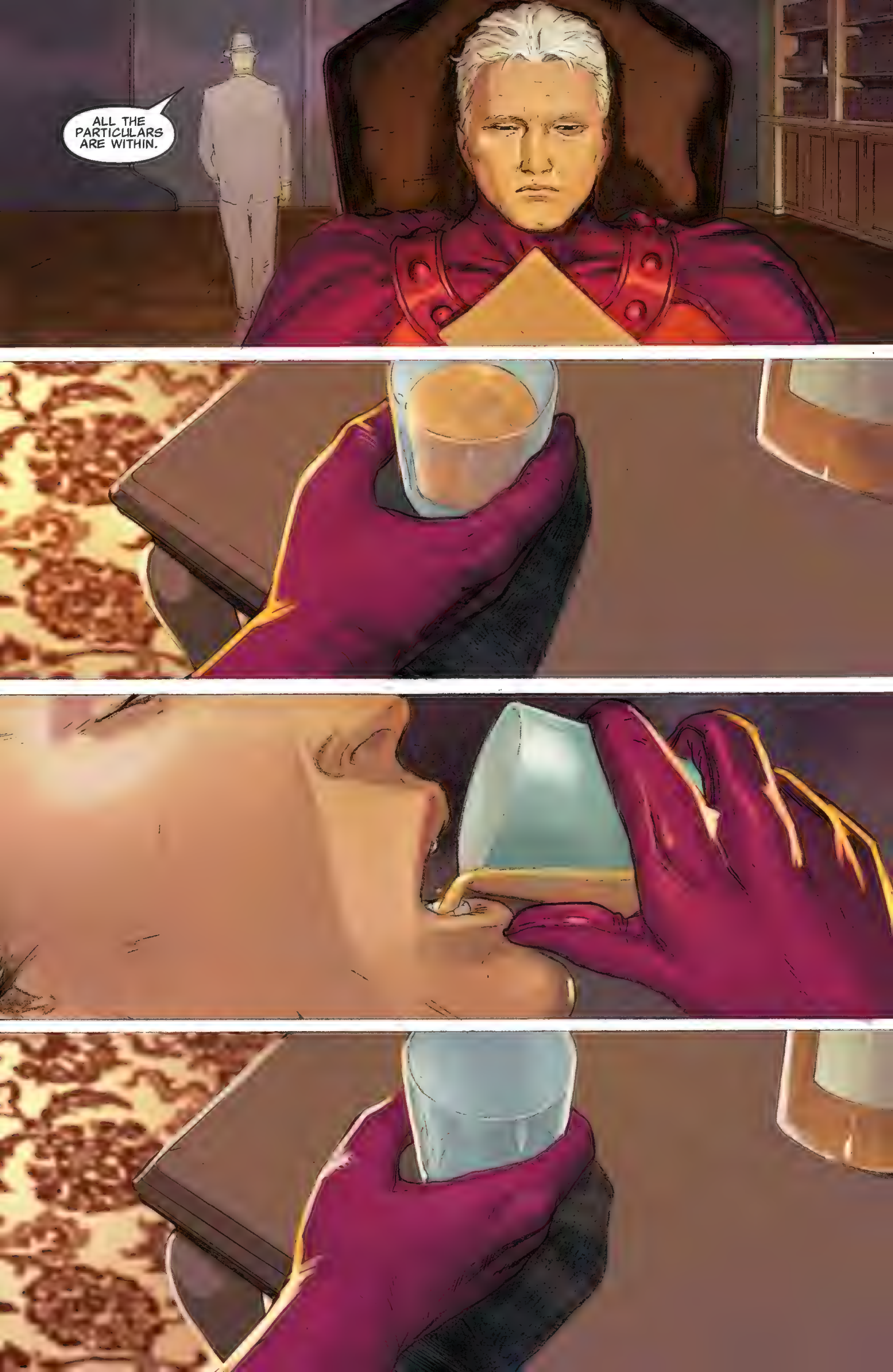

I'M SURE IT WAS THE ONLY OPTION.

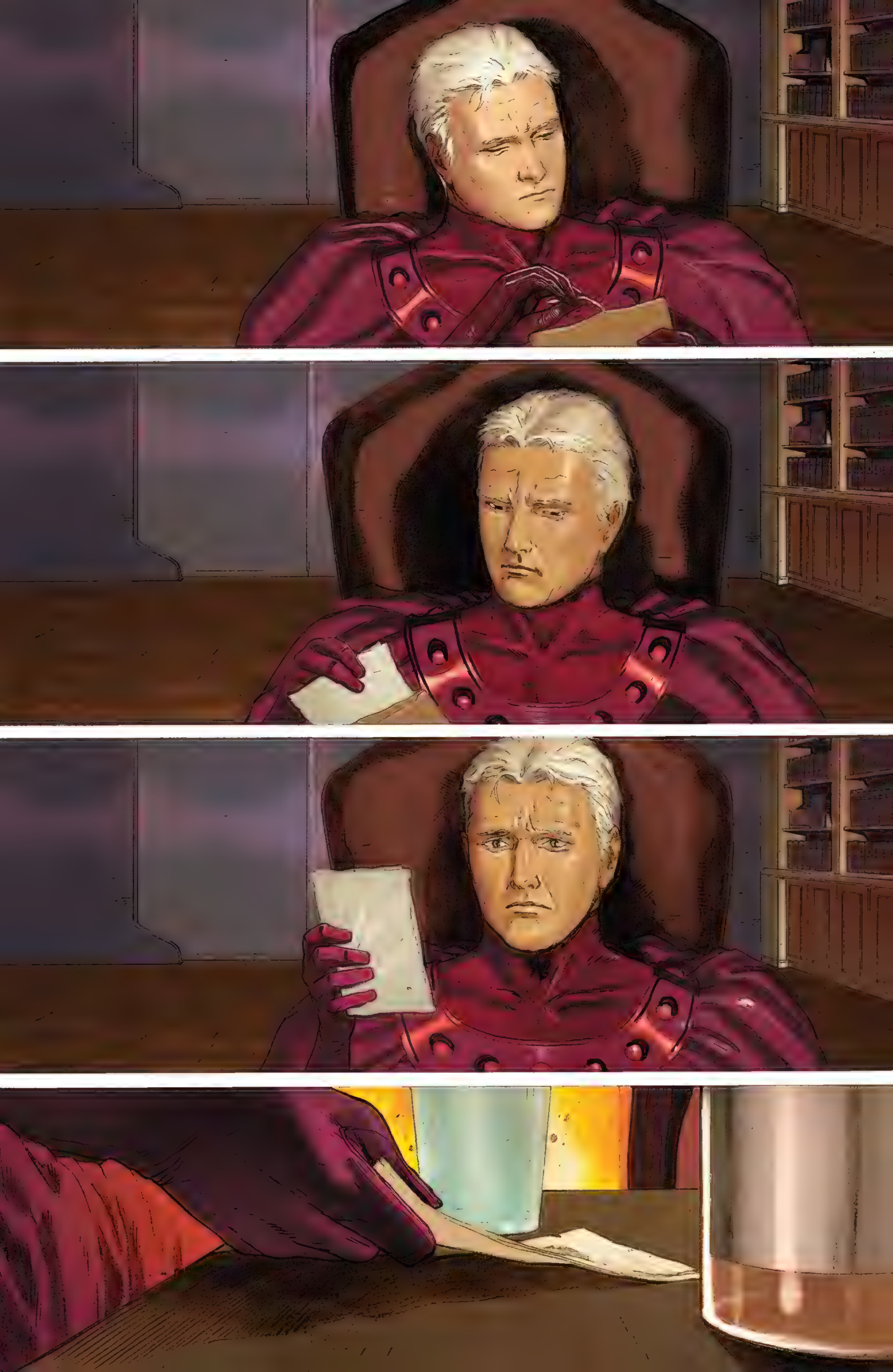
09 HIGH ART

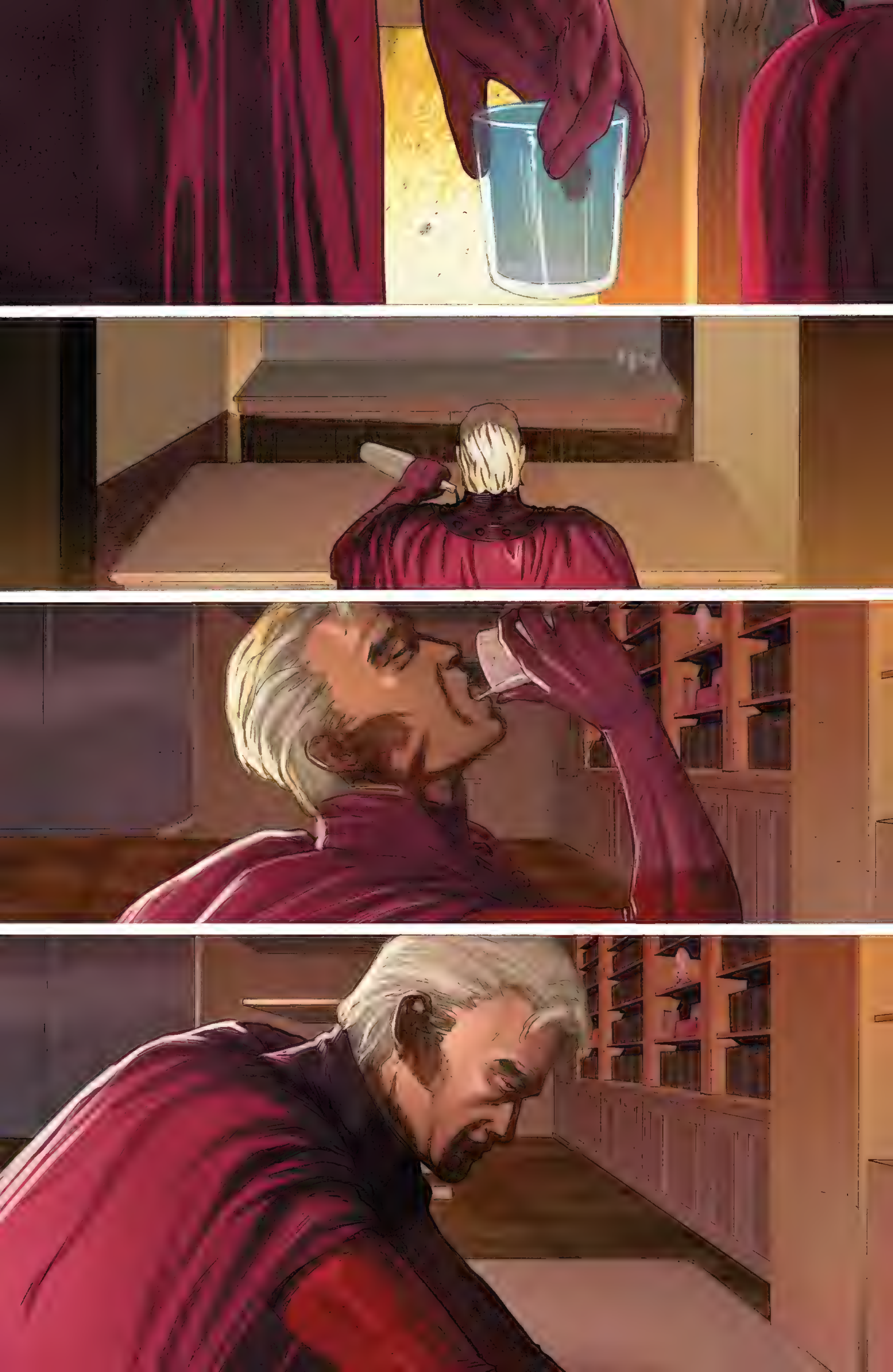

UTOPIA. 80 MILES OFF THE COAST OF SAN FRANCISCO.
WHATEVER *FRIVOLOUS* ERRAND MAGNETO'S SENT YOU ON, NEMESIS, IT HAS LEFT HIM MAUDLIN.
HE'S CONFINED HIMSELF TO HIS QUARTERS UNTIL YOU RETURN.
WE HAVE *NO TIME* FOR ANY OF THIS.
SCOTT HAS NEED OF HIM AND TO BE FRANK--
NAMOR, WHAT I'M ABOUT TO ASK OF YOU IS NOT IN YOUR NATURE...COMPLY NONETHELESS.

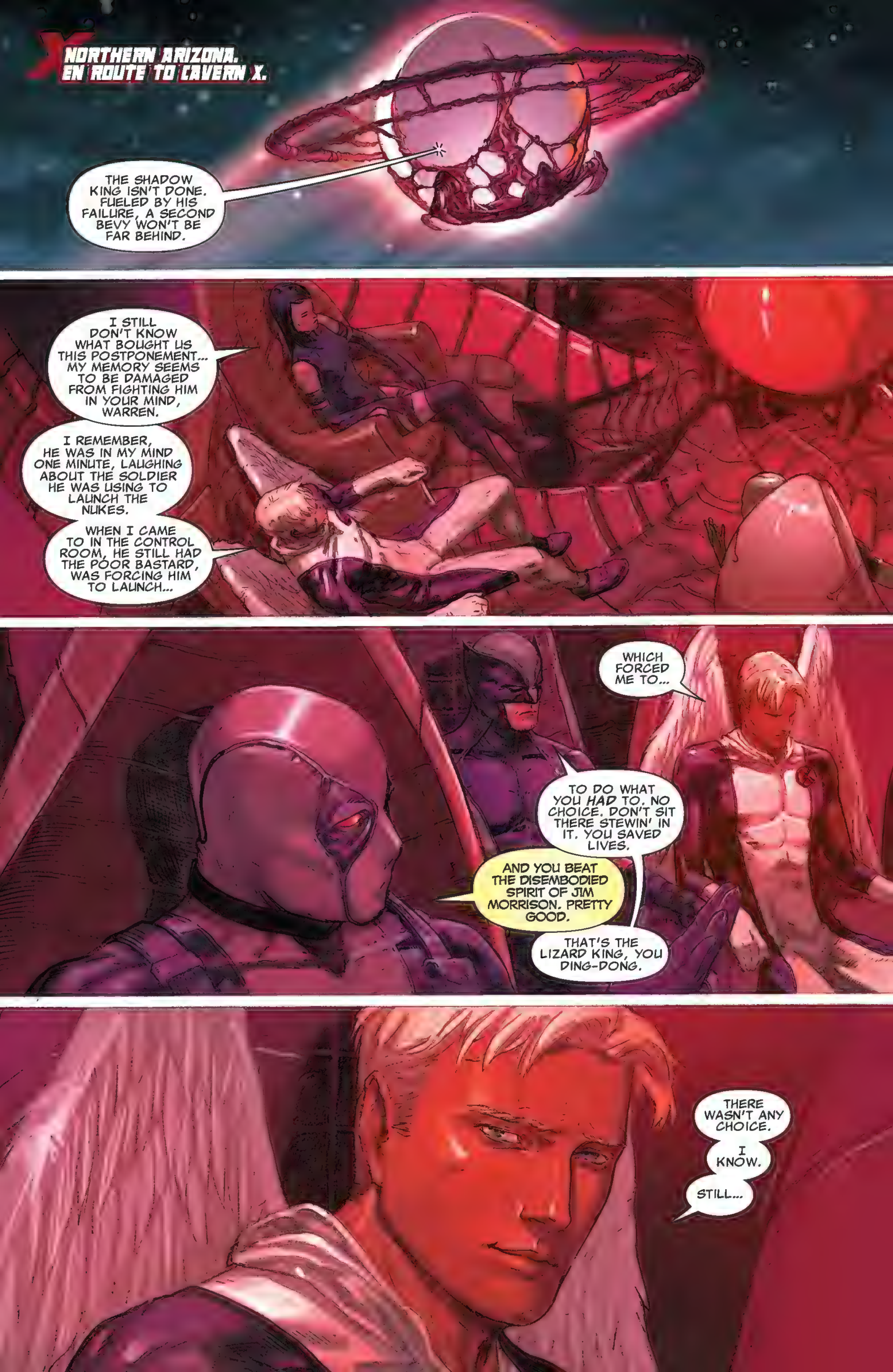

WALK AWAY WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD.

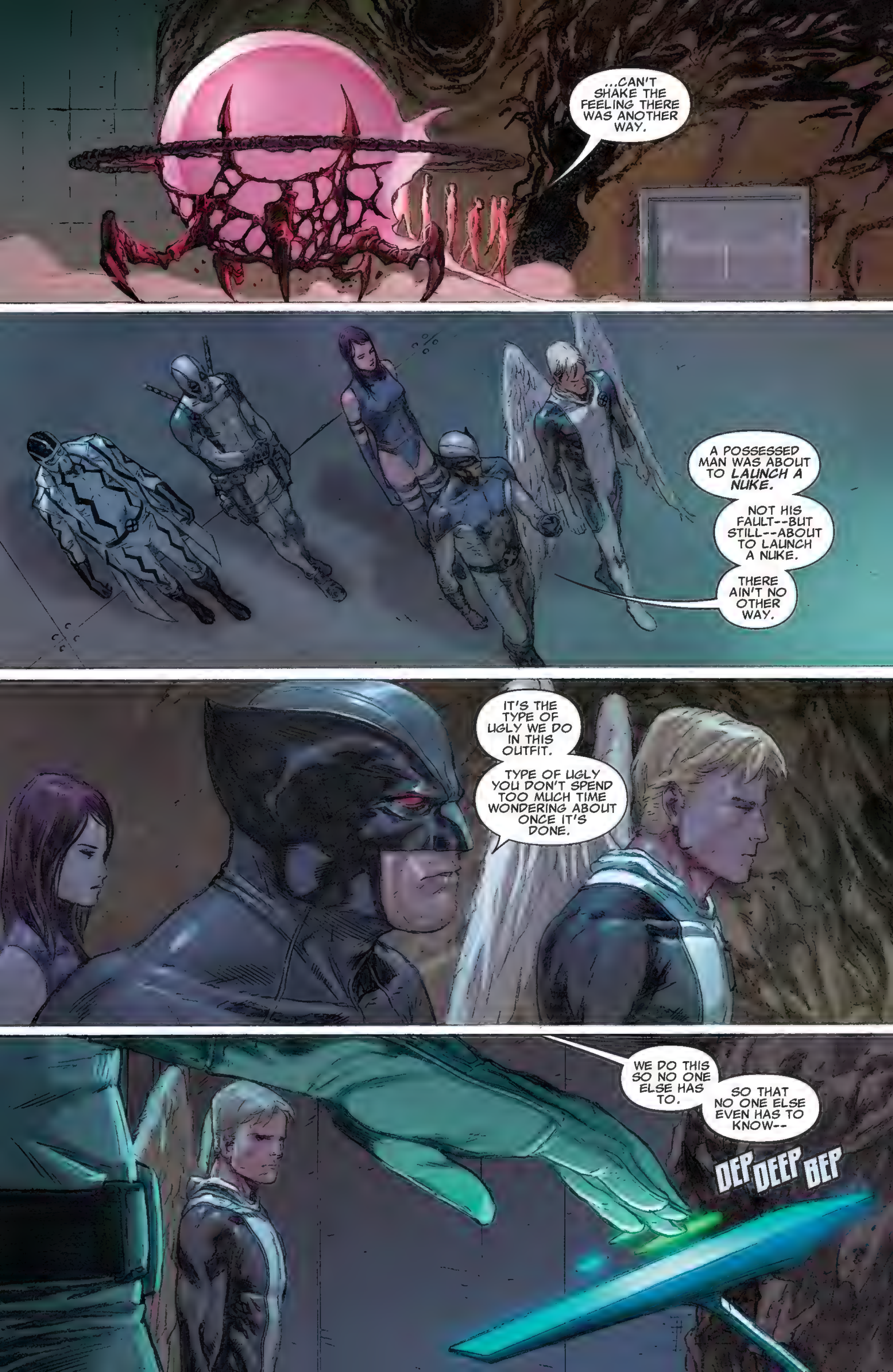

YOU'RE *CERTAIN* YOU WANT THIS?
I AM NOT.

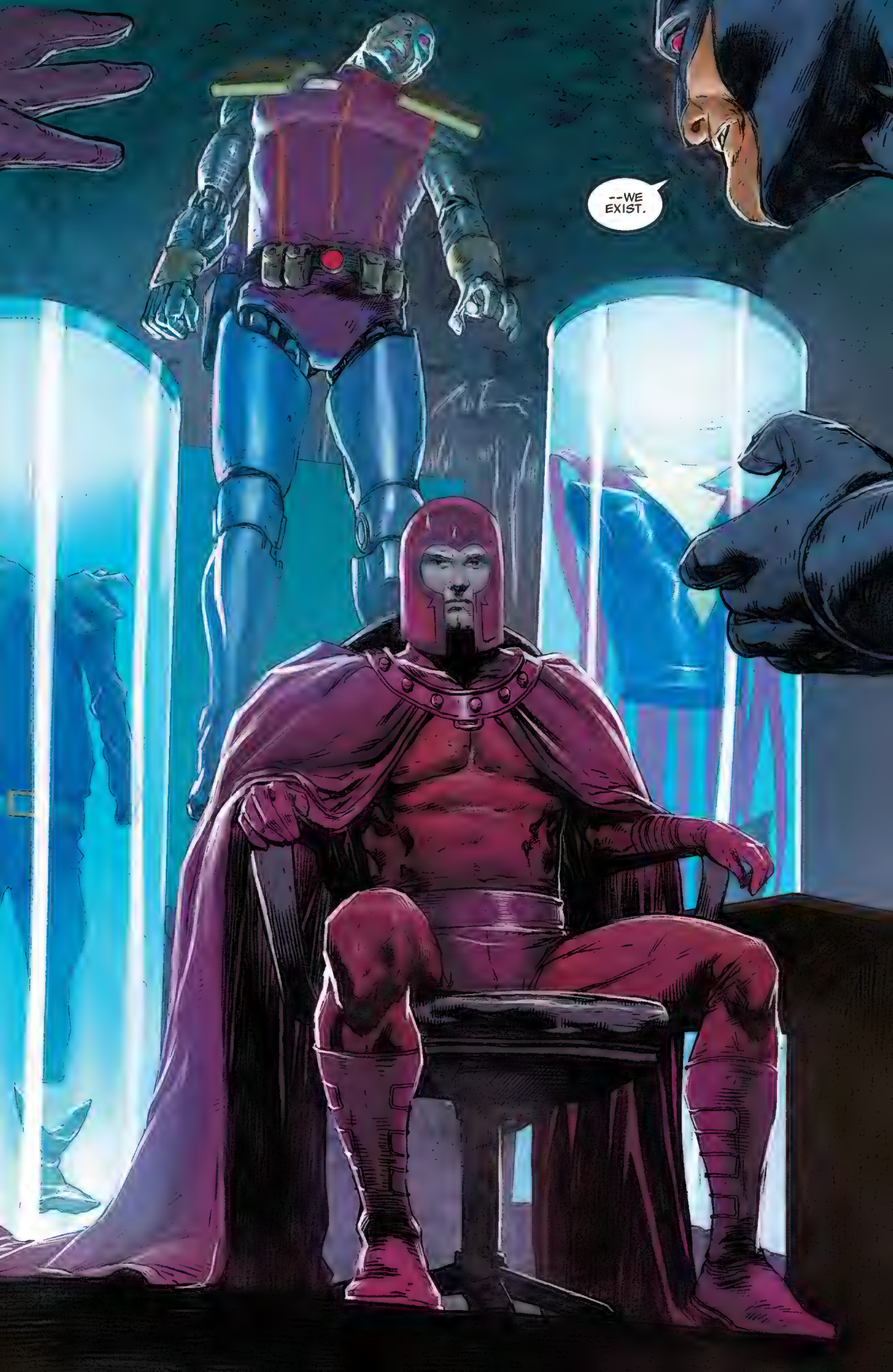

ALL THE PARTICULARS ARE WITHIN.

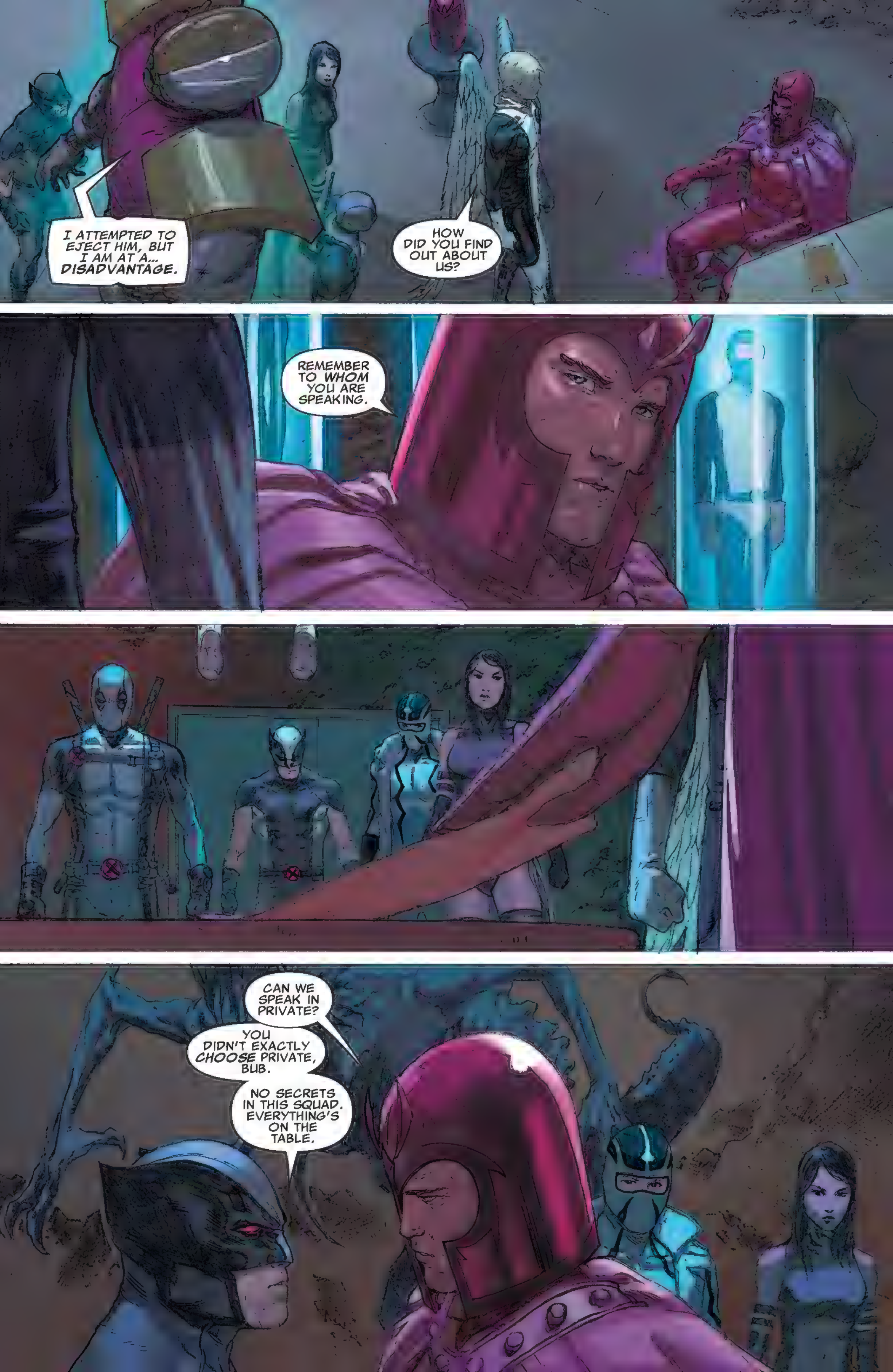


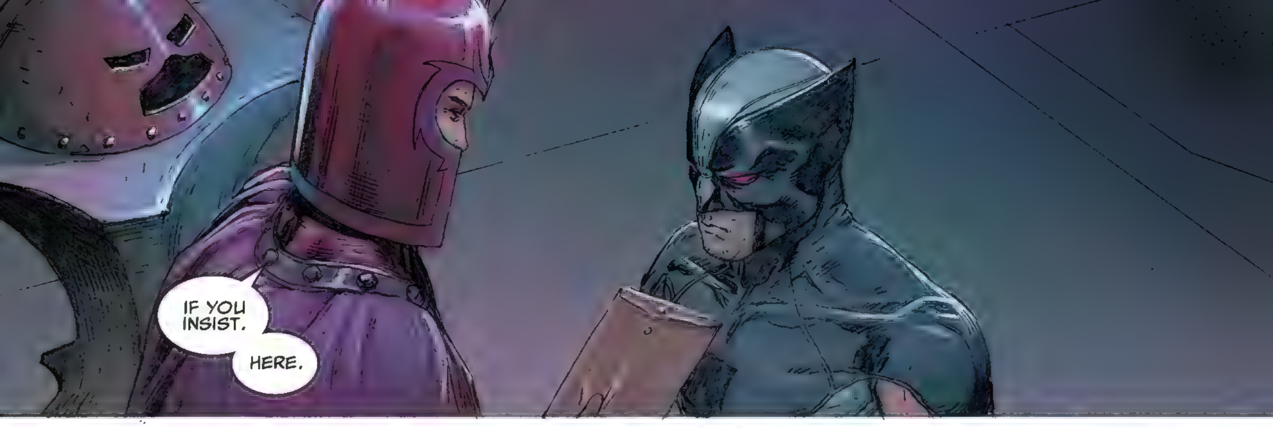


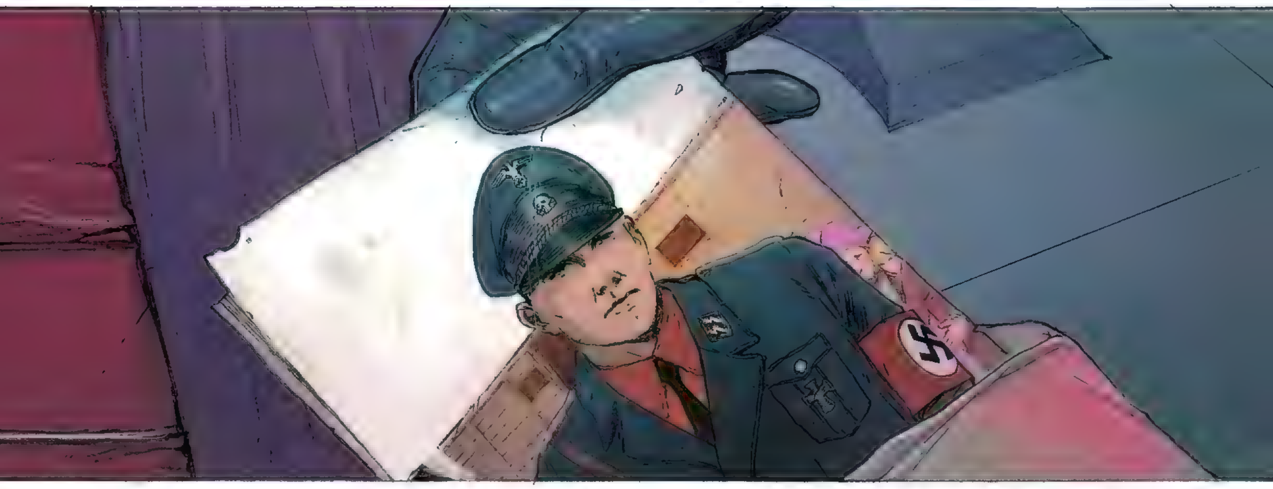

NORTHERN ARIZONA. EN ROUTE TO CAVERN X.
THE SHADOW KING ISN'T DONE. FUELED BY HIS FAILURE, A SECOND BEVY WON'T BE FAR BEHIND.
I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT BOUGHT US THIS POSTPONEMENT... MY MEMORY SEEMS TO BE DAMAGED FROM FIGHTING HIM IN YOUR MIND, WARREN.
I REMEMBER, HE WAS IN MY MIND ONE MINUTE, LAUGHING ABOUT THE SOLDIER HE WAS USING TO LAUNCH THE NUKES.
WHEN I CAME TO IN THE CONTROL ROOM, HE STILL HAD THE POOR BASTARD, WAS FORCING HIM TO LAUNCH...
WHICH FORCED ME TO...
TO DO WHAT YOU HAD TO. NO CHOICE. DON'T SIT THERE STEWIN' IN IT. YOU SAVED LIVES.
AND YOU BEAT THE DISEMBODIED SPIRIT OF JIM MORRISON. PRETTY GOOD.
THAT'S THE LIZARD KING, YOU DING-DONG.
THERE WASN'T ANY CHOICE.
I KNOW.
STILL...

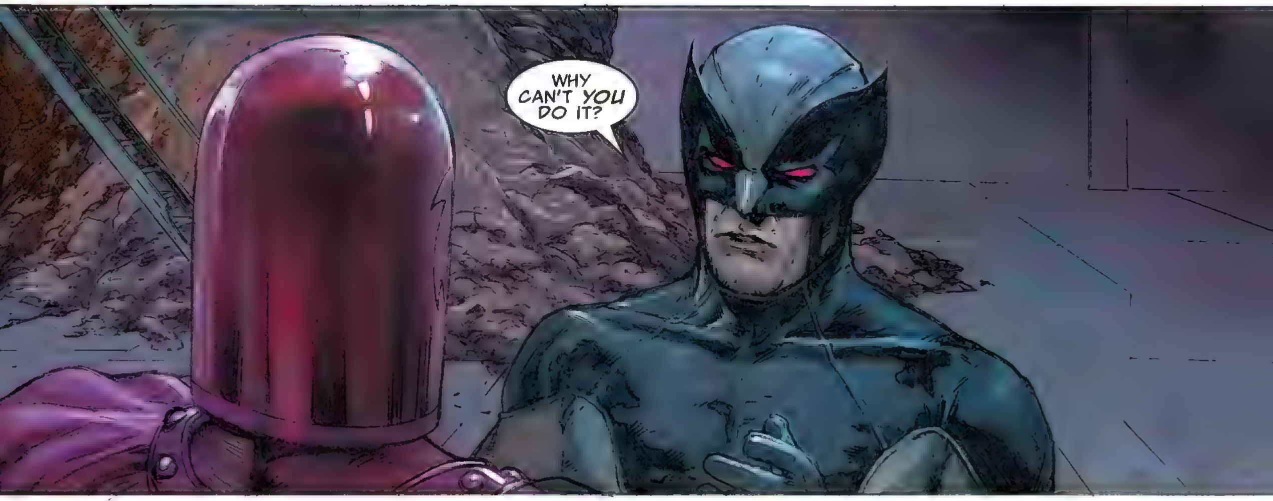

...CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY.
A POSSESSED MAN WAS ABOUT TO *LAUNCH A NUKE.*
NOT HIS FAULT--BUT STILL--ABOUT TO LAUNCH A NUKE.
THERE AIN'T NO OTHER WAY.
IT'S THE TYPE OF UGLY WE DO IN THIS OUTFIT.
TYPE OF UGLY YOU DON'T SPEND TOO MUCH TIME WONDERING ABOUT ONCE IT'S DONE.
WE DO THIS SO NO ONE ELSE HAS TO.
SO THAT NO ONE ELSE EVEN HAS TO KNOW--
DEP DEEP BEP

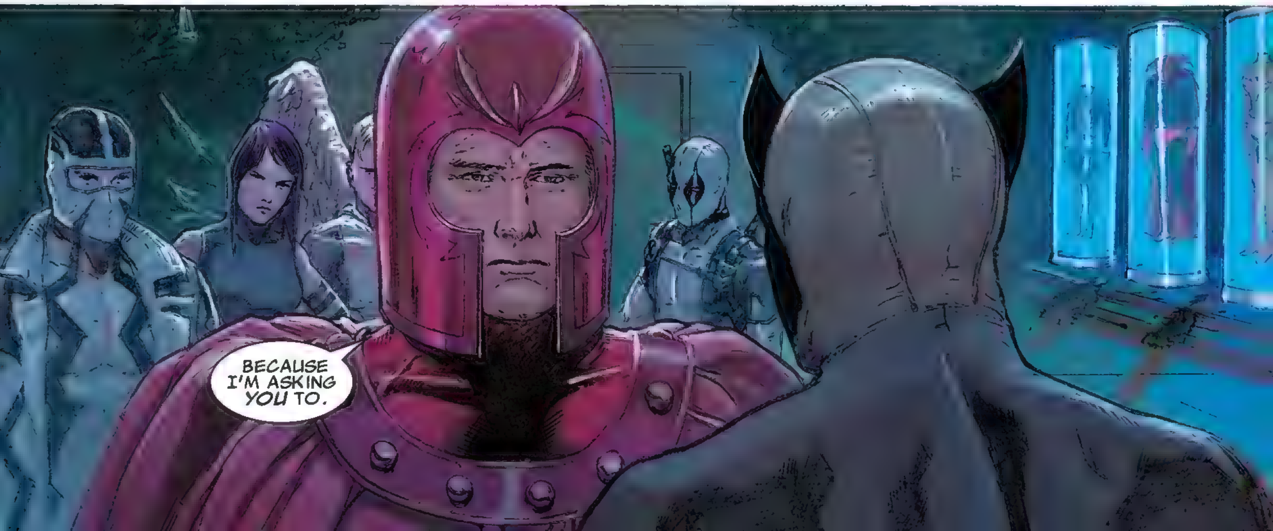

--WE EXIST.

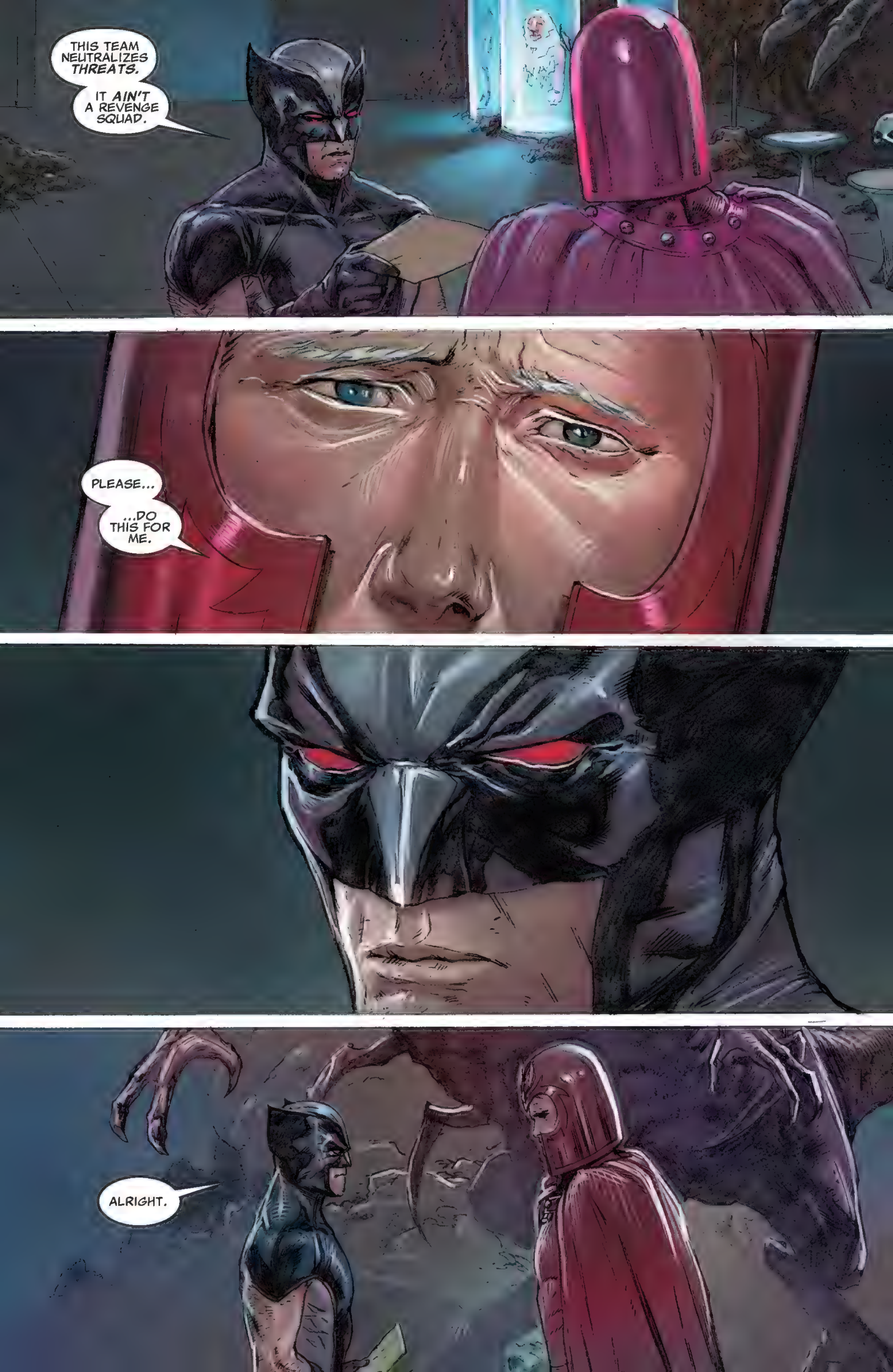

I ATTEMPTED TO EJECT HIM, BUT I AM AT A... **DISADVANTAGE.**
HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT US?
REMEMBER TO *WHOM* YOU ARE SPEAKING.
CAN WE SPEAK IN PRIVATE?
YOU DIDN'T EXACTLY *CHOOSE* PRIVATE, BUB.
NO SECRETS IN THIS SQUAD. EVERYTHING'S ON THE TABLE.

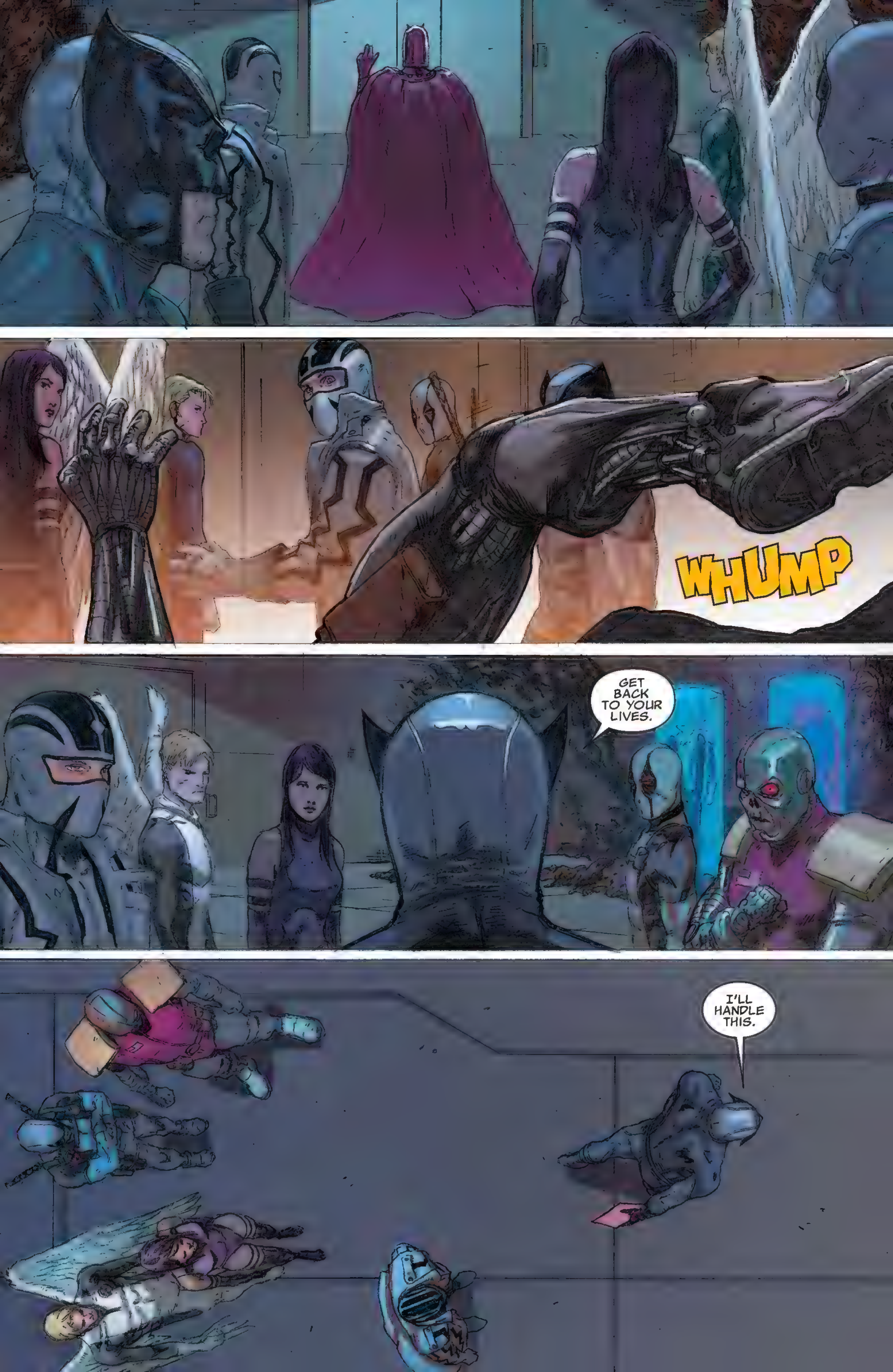

IF YOU INSIST.
HERE.

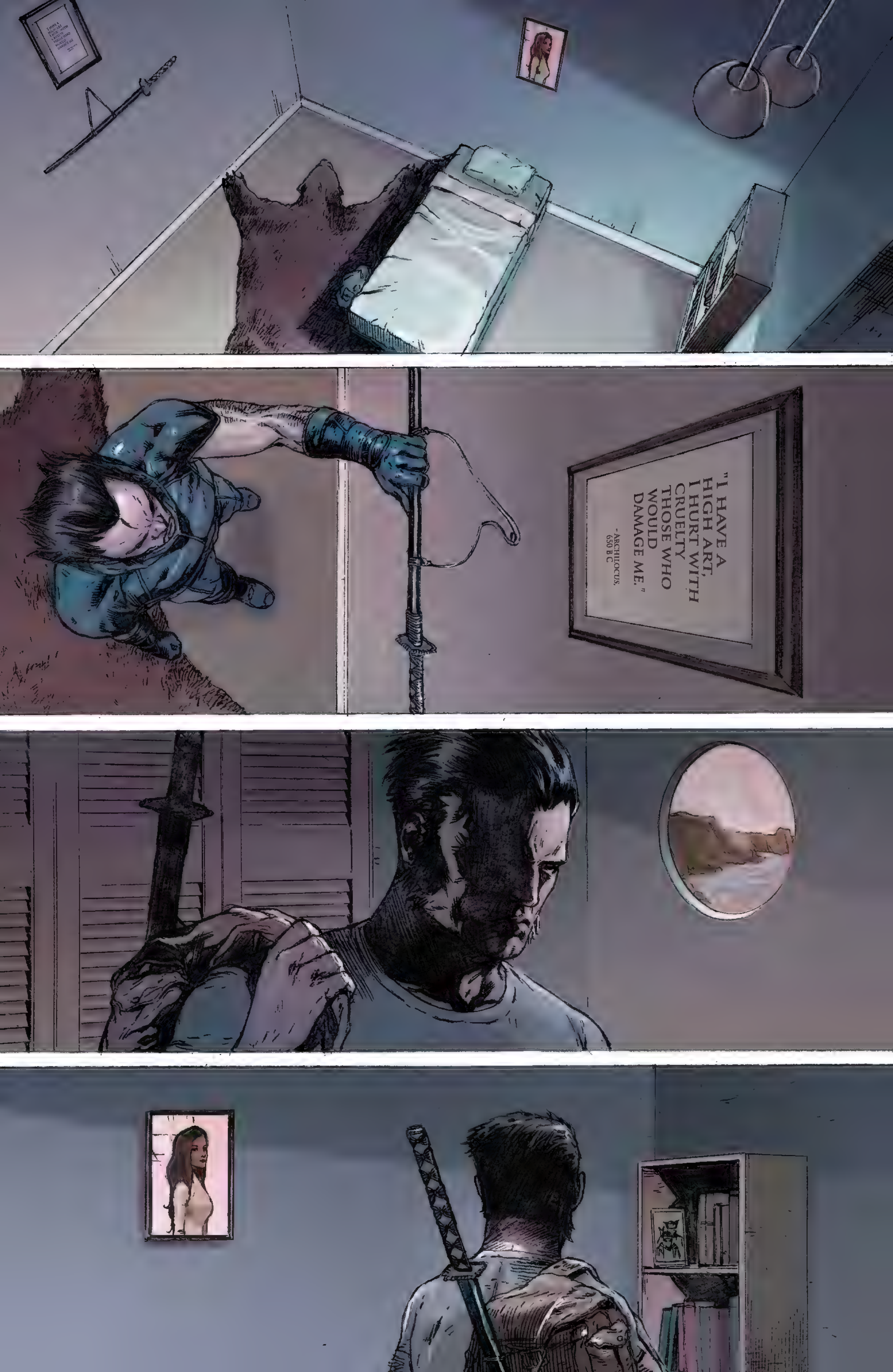


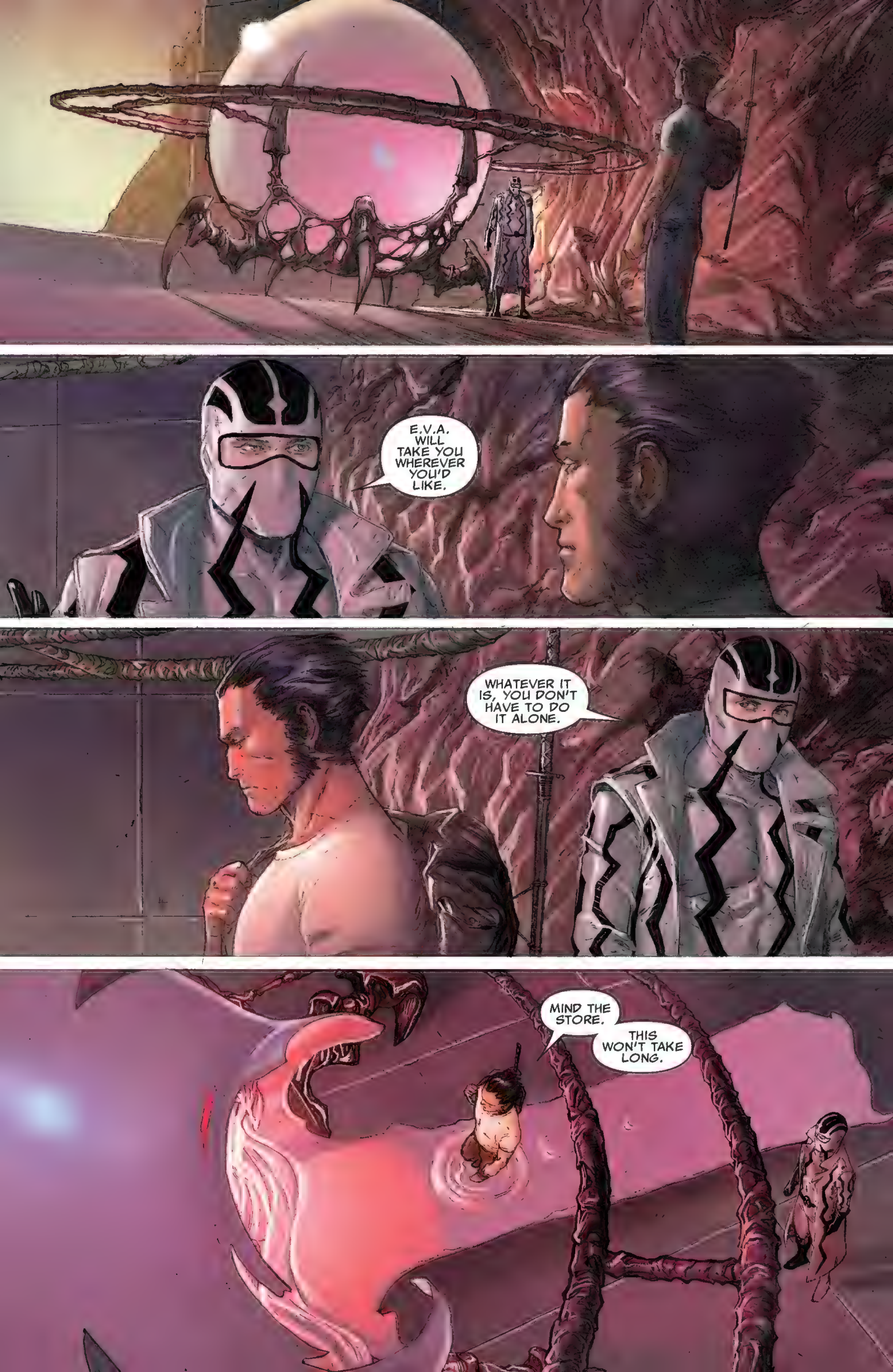

WHY CAN'T *YOU* DO IT?

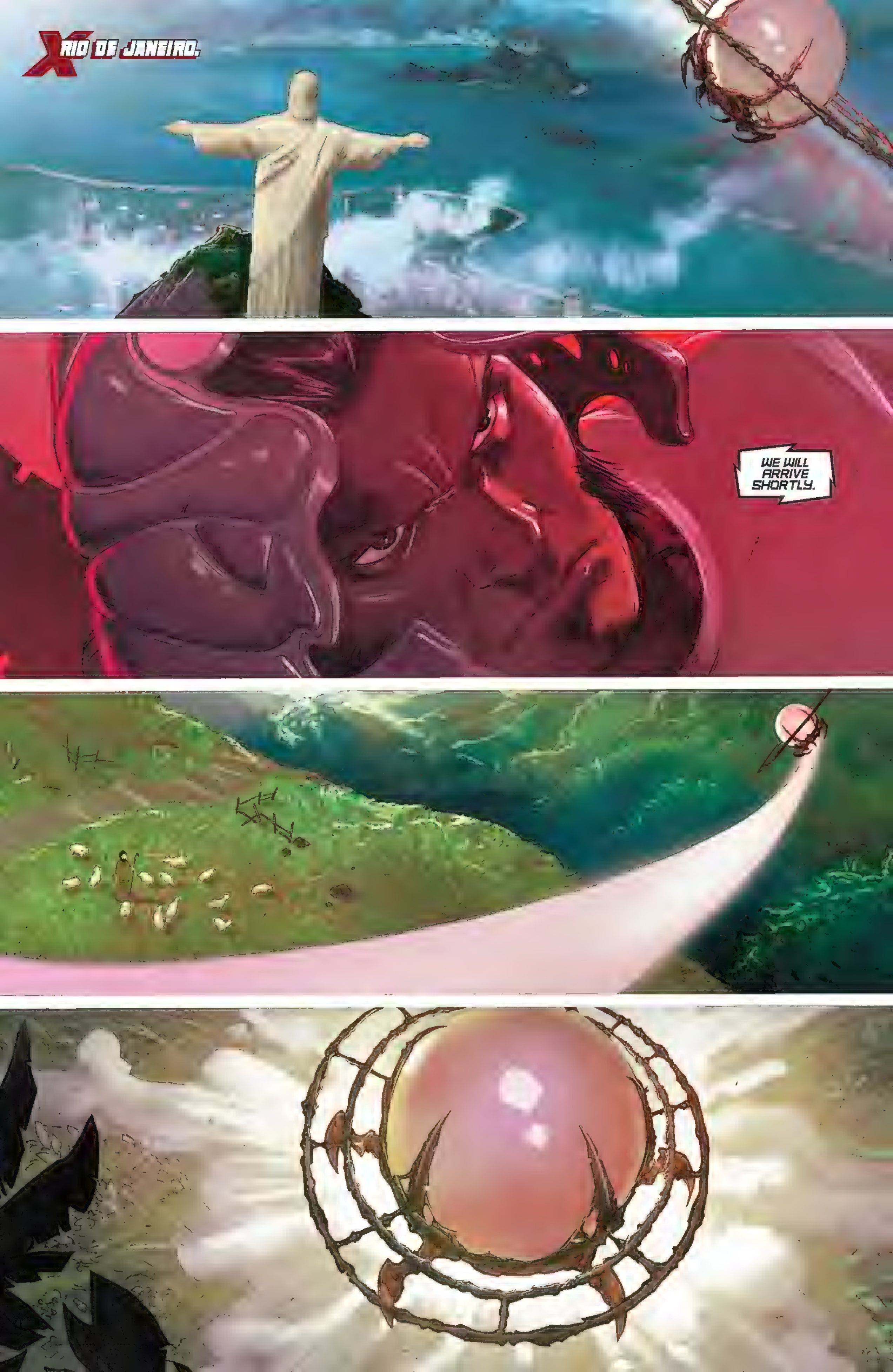

BECAUSE I'M ASKING *YOU* TO.

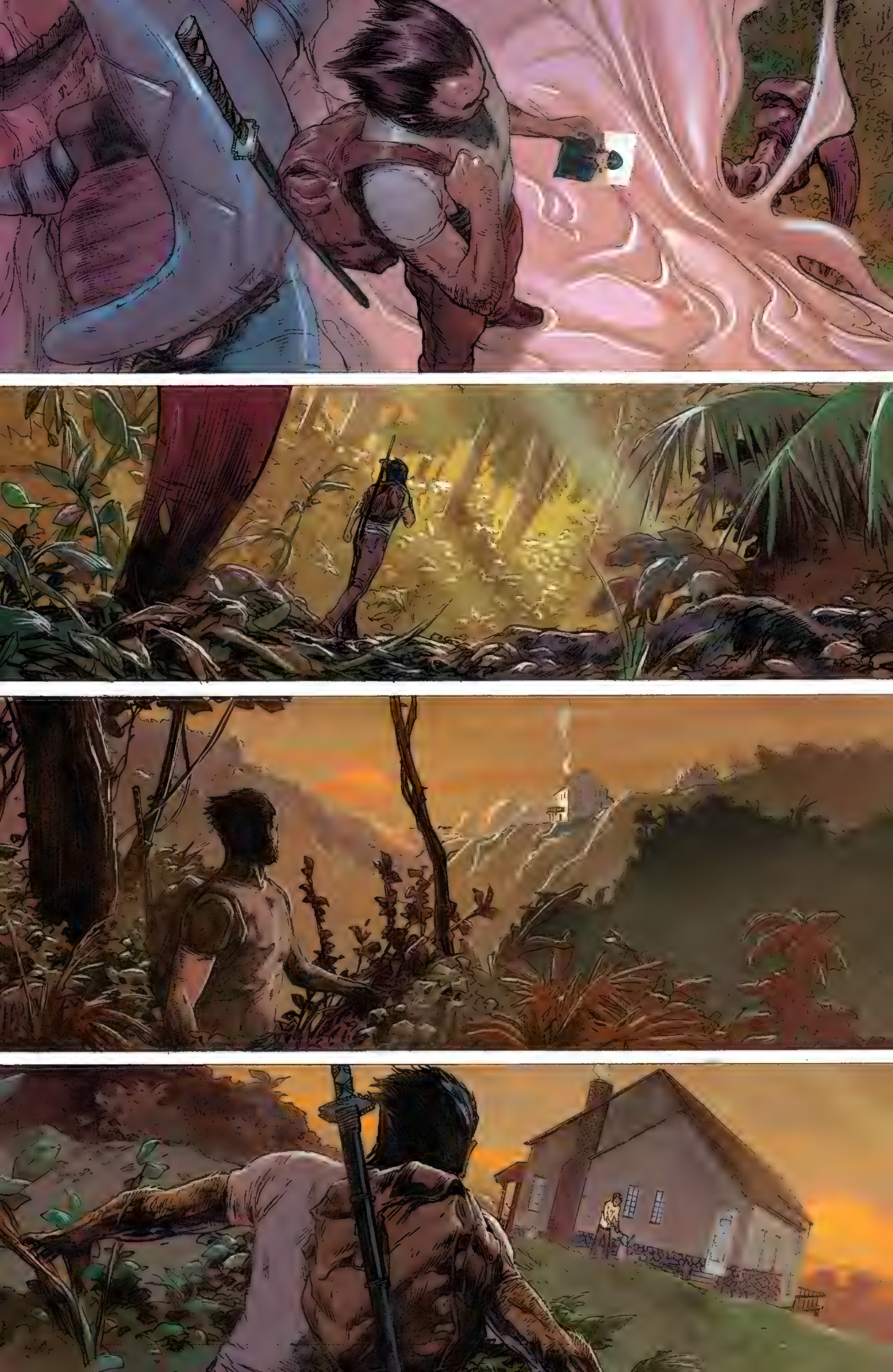

THIS TEAM NEUTRALIZES *THREATS.*
IT *AIN'T* A REVENGE SQUAD.
PLEASE...
...DO THIS FOR ME.
ALRIGHT.

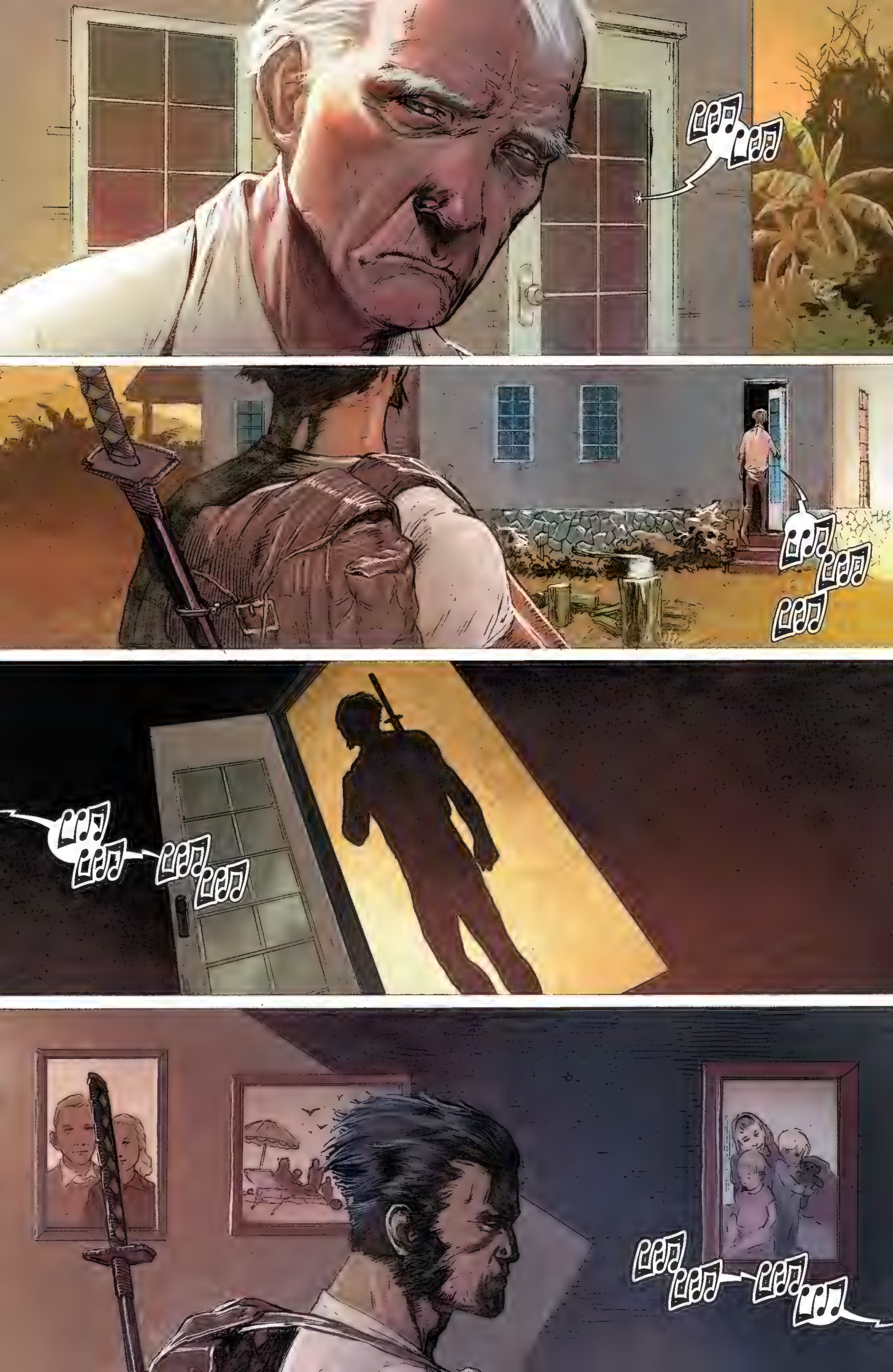

WHUMP
GET BACK TO YOUR LIVES.
I'LL HANDLE THIS.

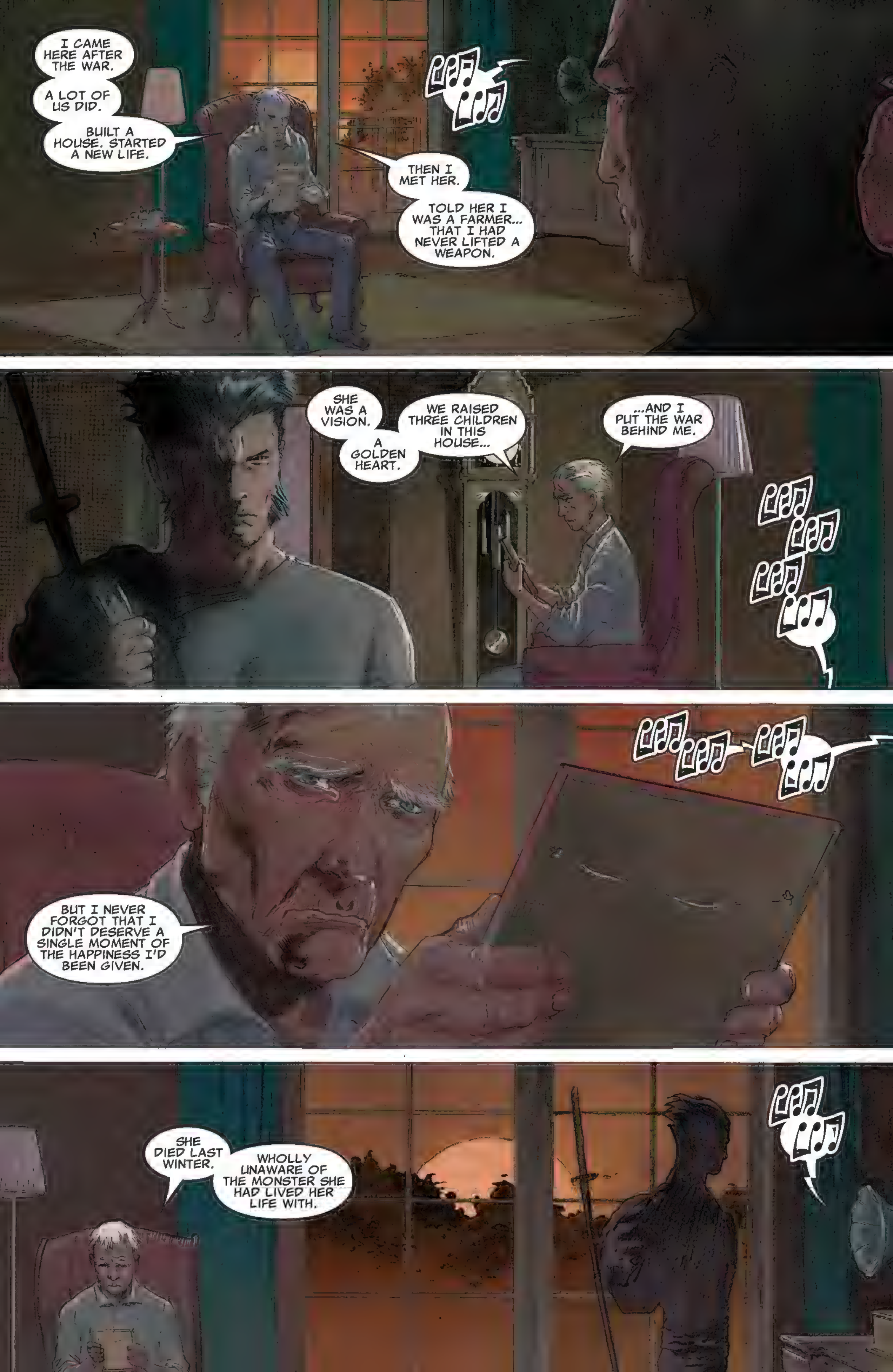

"I HAVE A HIGH ART, I HURT WITH CRUELTY THOSE WHO WOULD DAMAGE ME."
- ARCHILOCUS, 650 B C

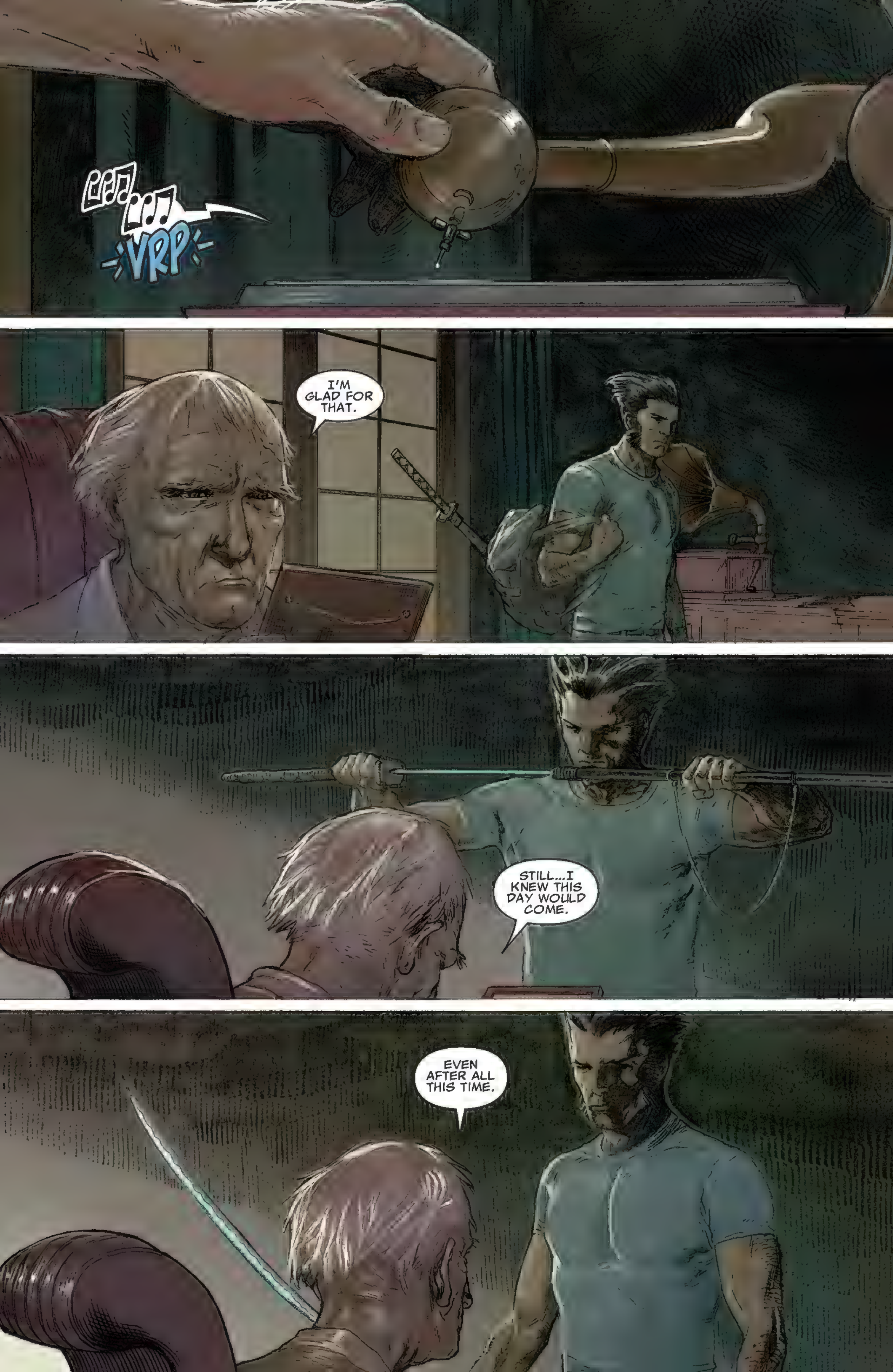

E.V.A. WILL TAKE YOU WHEREVER YOU'D LIKE.
WHATEVER IT IS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE.
MIND THE STORE.
THIS WON'T TAKE LONG.

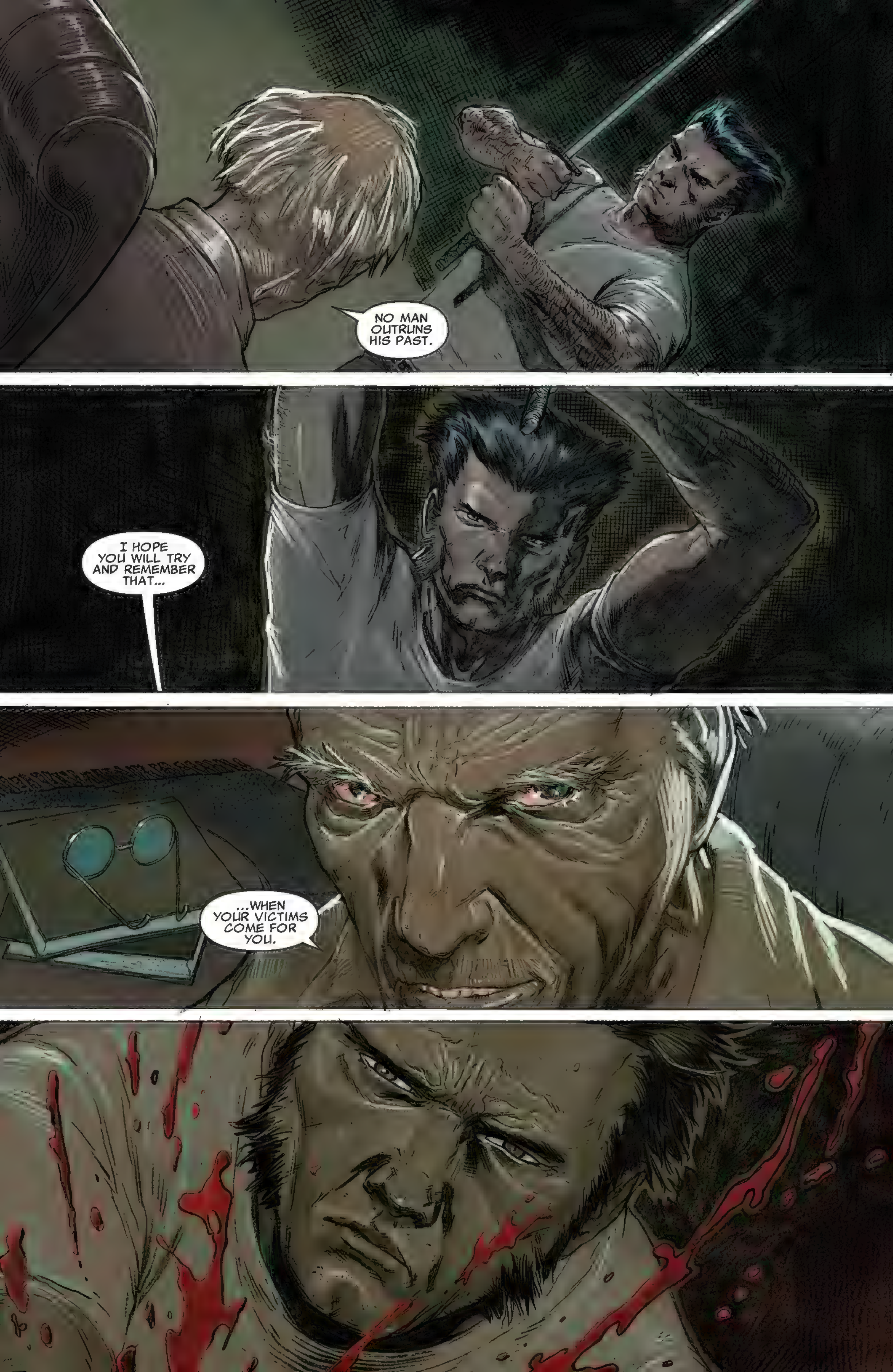

RIO DE JANEIRO.
WE WILL ARRIVE SHORTLY.

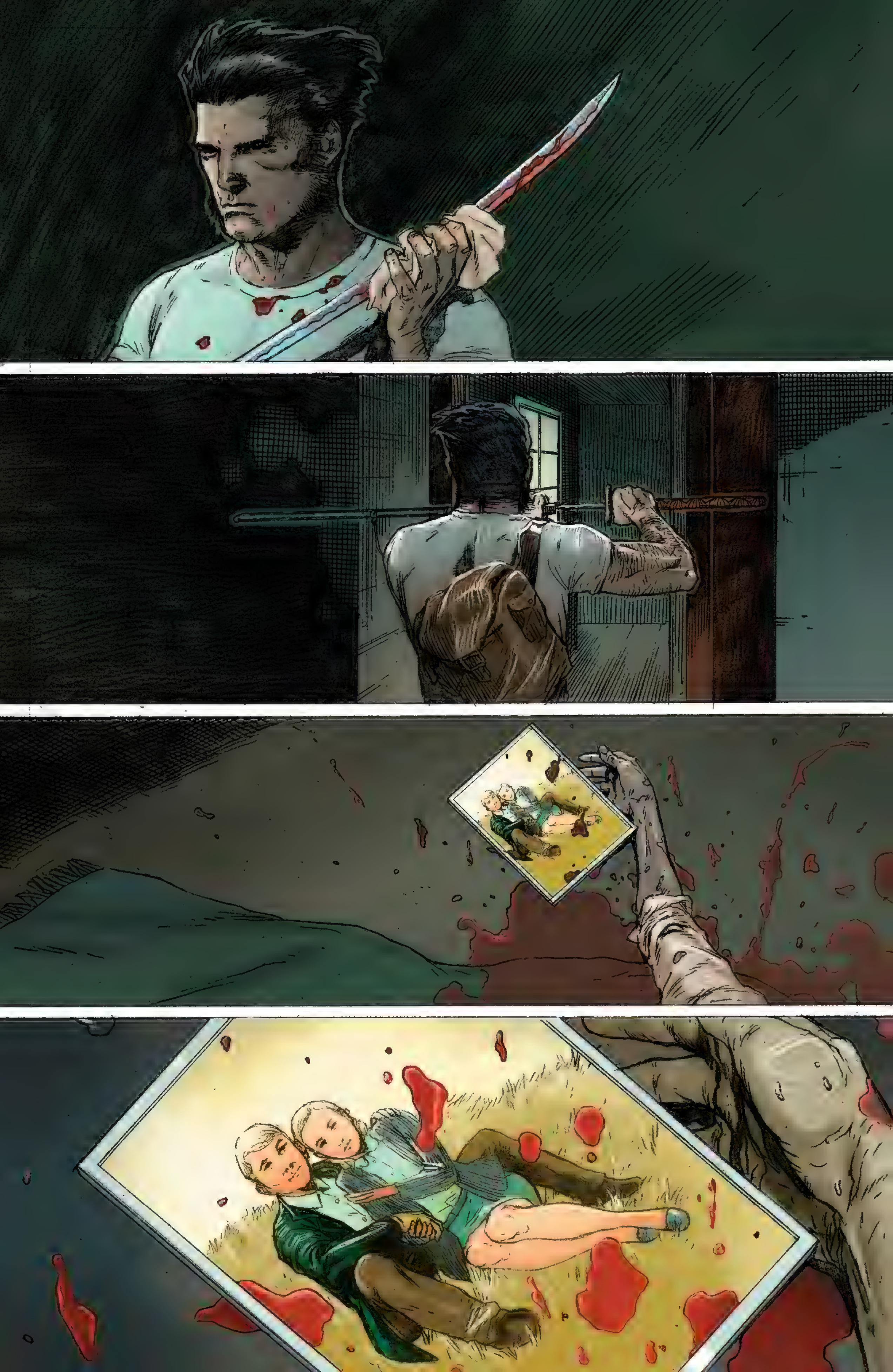




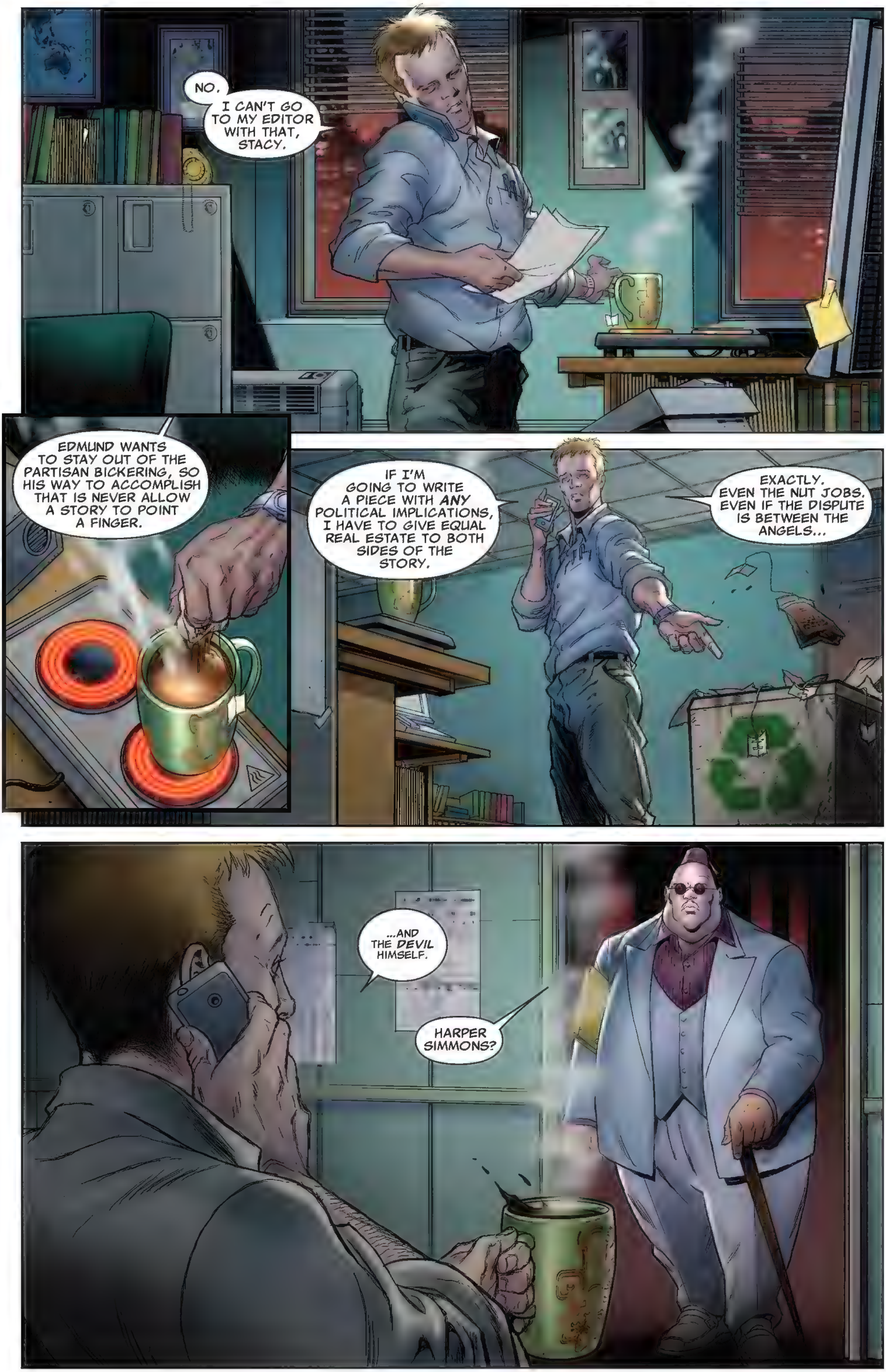

I CAME HERE AFTER THE WAR.
A LOT OF US DID.
BUILT A HOUSE. STARTED A NEW LIFE.
THEN I MET HER.
TOLD HER I WAS A FARMER... THAT I HAD NEVER LIFTED A WEAPON.
SHE WAS A VISION.
A GOLDEN HEART.
WE RAISED THREE CHILDREN IN THIS HOUSE...
...AND I PUT THE WAR BEHIND ME.
BUT I NEVER FORGOT THAT I DIDN'T DESERVE A SINGLE MOMENT OF THE HAPPINESS I'D BEEN GIVEN.
SHE DIED LAST WINTER.
WHOLLY UNAWARE OF THE MONSTER SHE HAD LIVED HER LIFE WITH.

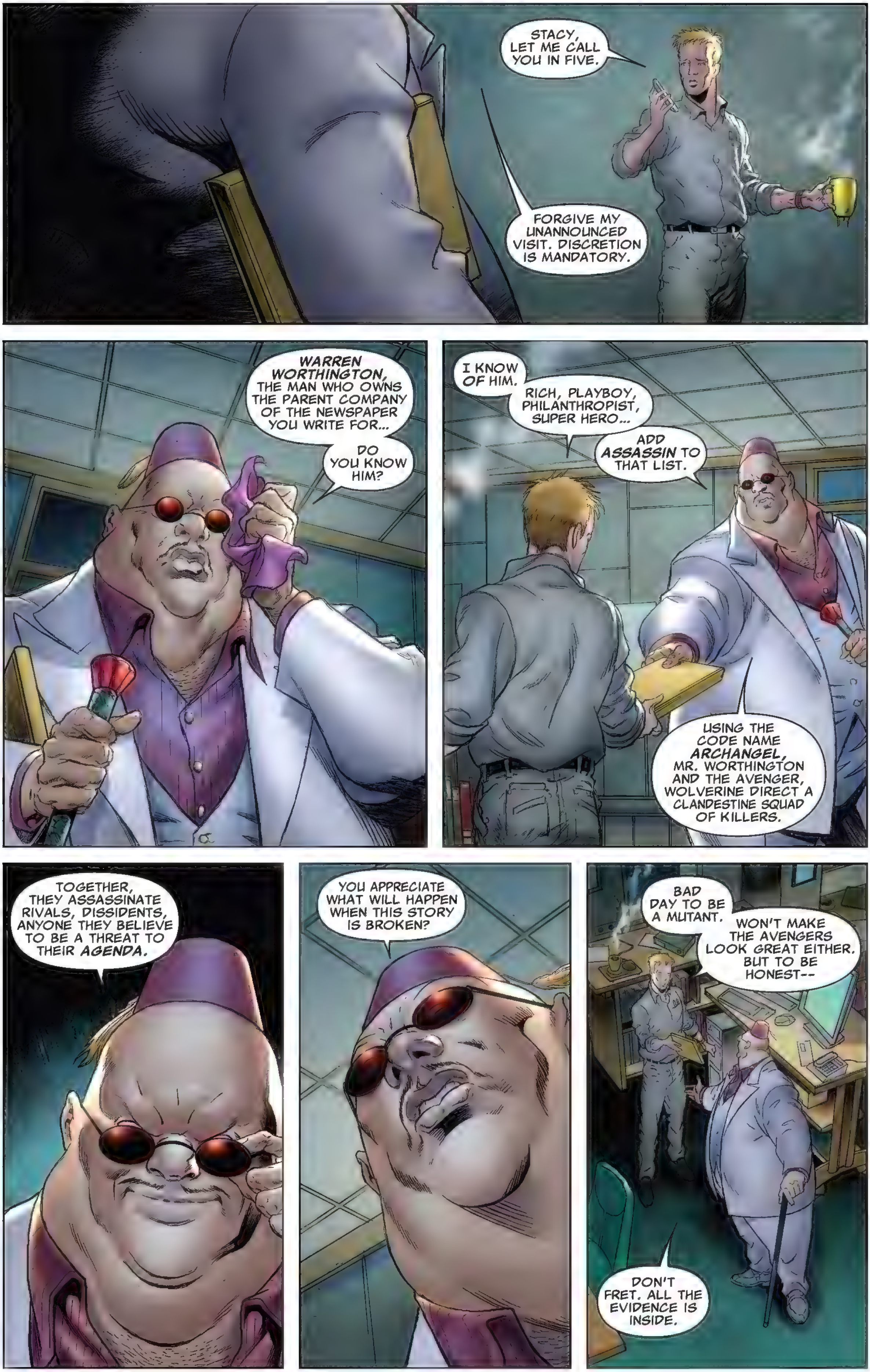

VRP
I'M GLAD FOR THAT.
STILL...I KNEW THIS DAY WOULD COME.
EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME.

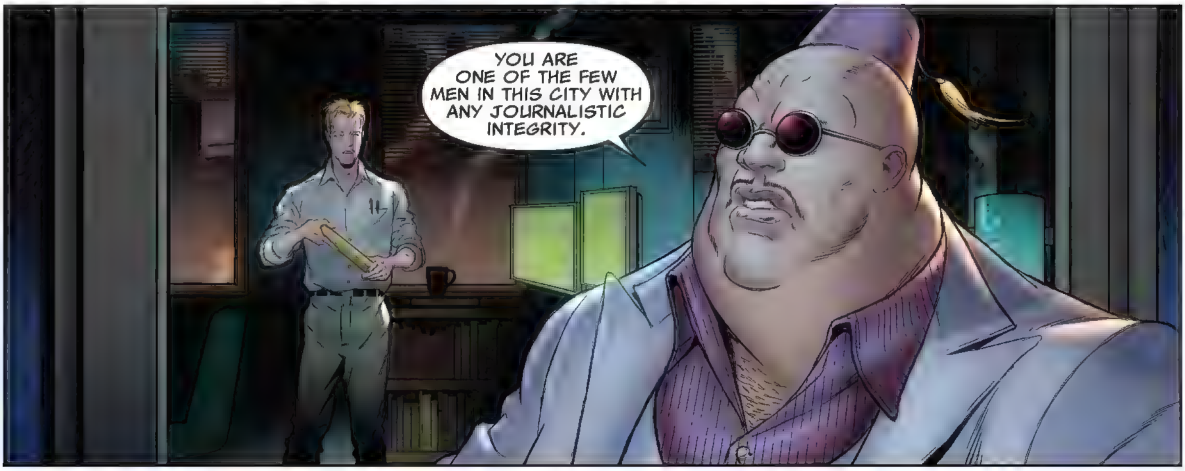

NO MAN OUTRUNS HIS PAST.
I HOPE YOU WILL TRY AND REMEMBER THAT...
...WHEN YOUR VICTIMS COME FOR YOU.

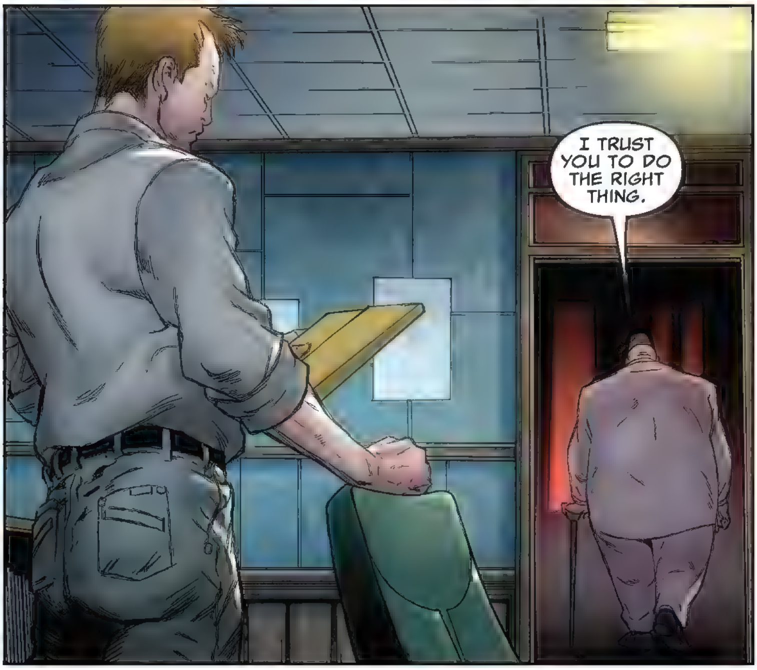


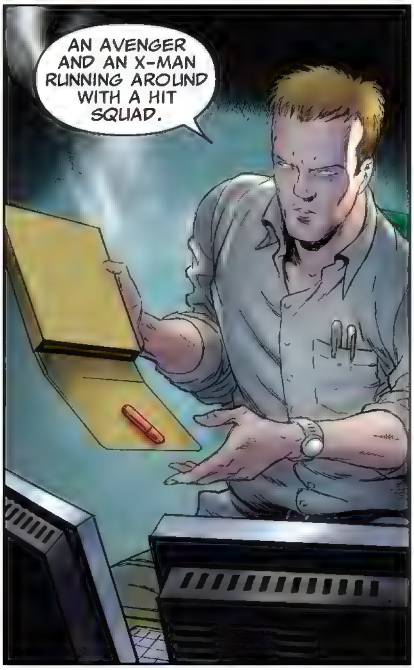
10 THE KILLER AMONG US

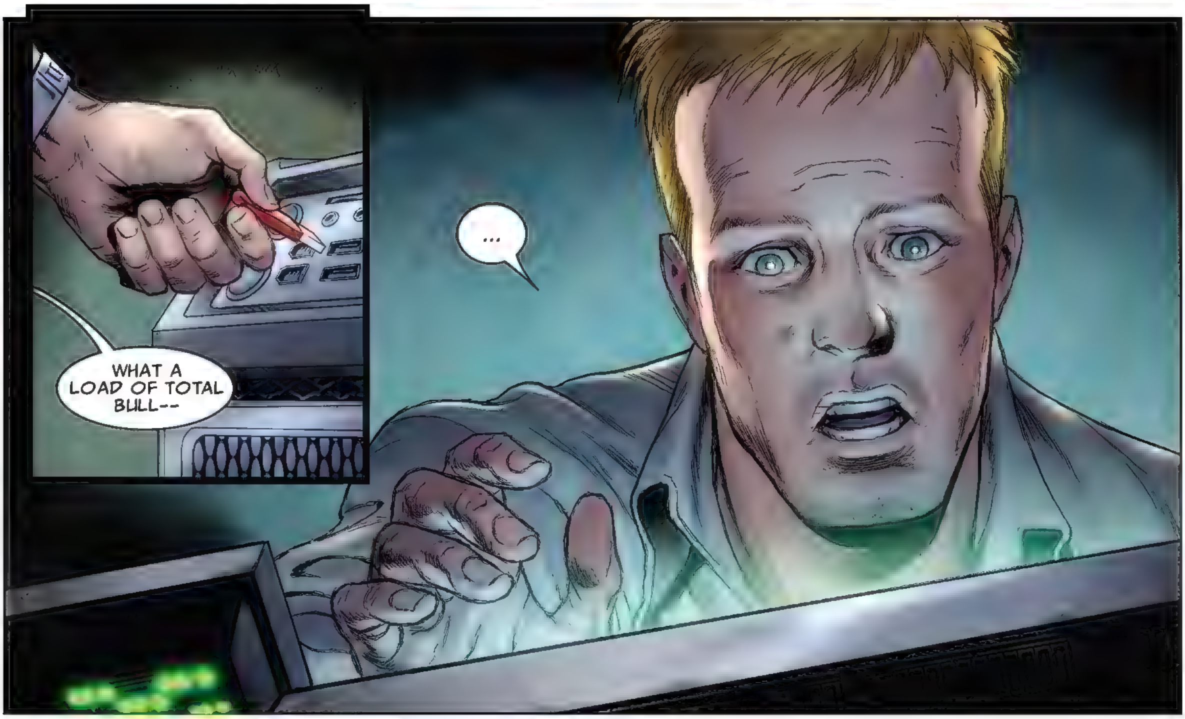

NO. I CAN'T GO TO MY EDITOR WITH THAT, STACY.
EDMUND WANTS TO STAY OUT OF THE PARTISAN BICKERING, SO HIS WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THAT IS NEVER ALLOW A STORY TO POINT A FINGER.
IF I'M GOING TO WRITE A PIECE WITH *ANY* POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS, I HAVE TO GIVE EQUAL REAL ESTATE TO BOTH SIDES OF THE STORY.
EXACTLY. EVEN THE NUT JOBS. EVEN IF THE DISPUTE IS BETWEEN THE ANGELS...
...AND THE *DEVIL* HIMSELF.
HARPER SIMMONS?

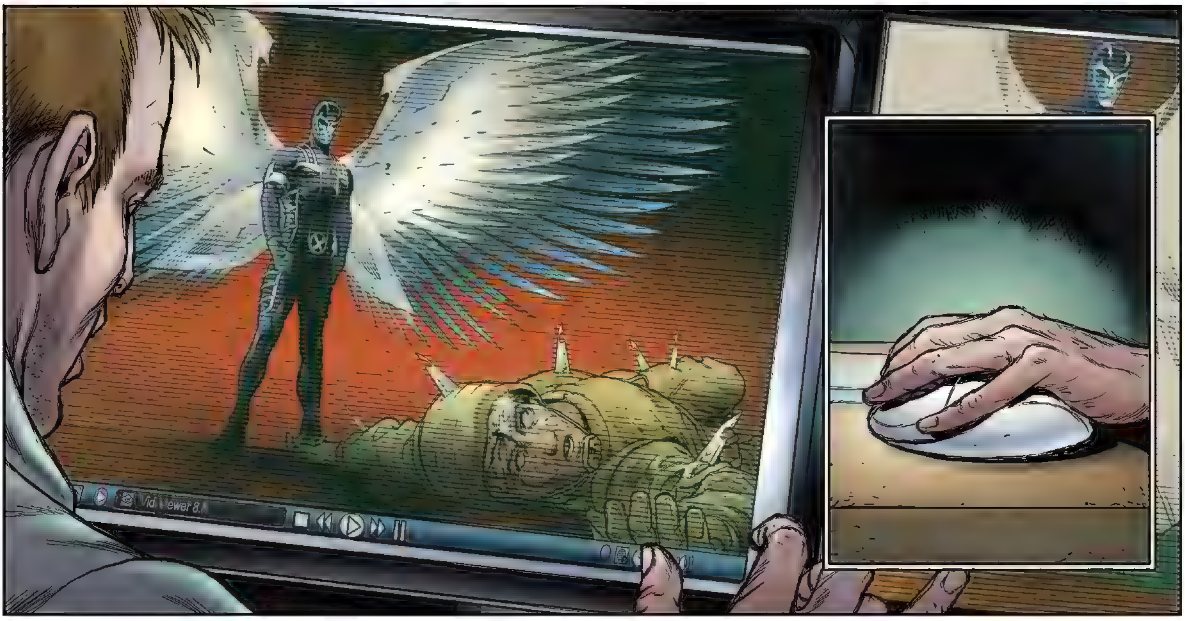

STACY, LET ME CALL YOU IN FIVE.
FORGIVE MY UNANNOUNCED VISIT. DISCRETION IS MANDATORY.
WARREN WORTHINGTON, THE MAN WHO OWNS THE PARENT COMPANY OF THE NEWSPAPER YOU WRITE FOR...
DO YOU KNOW HIM?
I KNOW ***OF*** HIM.
RICH, PLAYBOY, PHILANTHROPIST, SUPER HERO...
ADD ***ASSASSIN*** TO THAT LIST.
USING THE CODE NAME ***ARCHANGEL,*** MR. WORTHINGTON AND THE AVENGER, WOLVERINE DIRECT A CLANDESTINE SQUAD OF KILLERS.
TOGETHER, THEY ASSASSINATE RIVALS, DISSIDENTS, ANYONE THEY BELIEVE TO BE A THREAT TO THEIR ***AGENDA.***
YOU APPRECIATE WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THIS STORY IS BROKEN?
BAD DAY TO BE A MUTANT.
WON'T MAKE THE AVENGERS LOOK GREAT EITHER. BUT TO BE HONEST--
DON'T FRET. ALL THE EVIDENCE IS INSIDE.

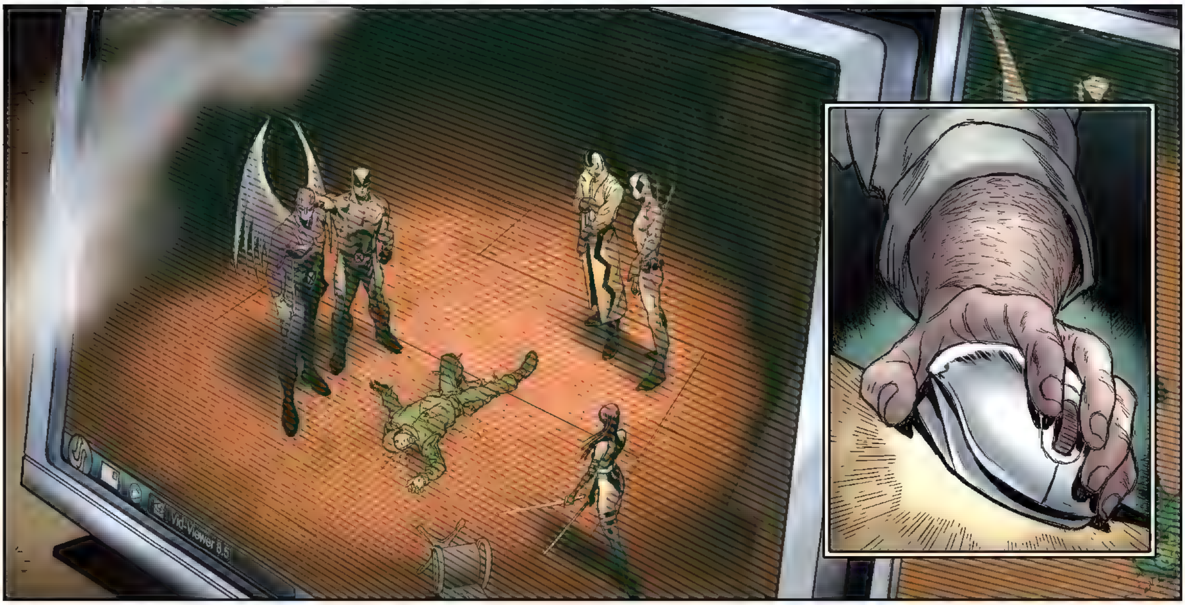

YOU ARE ONE OF THE FEW MEN IN THIS CITY WITH ANY JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY.

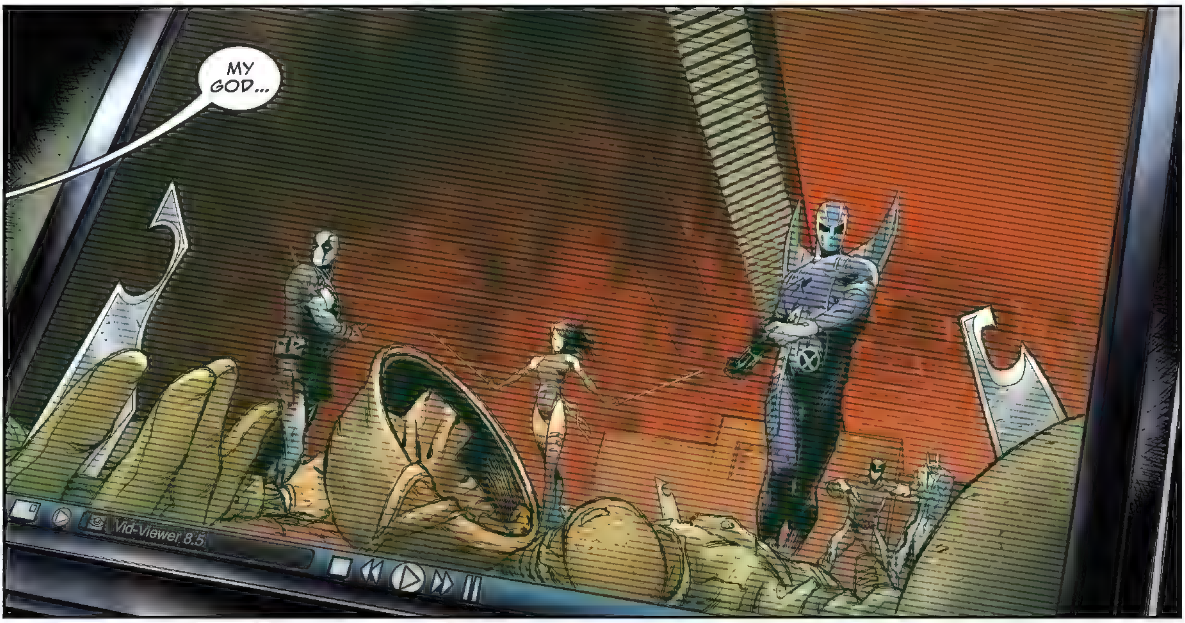

I TRUST YOU TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

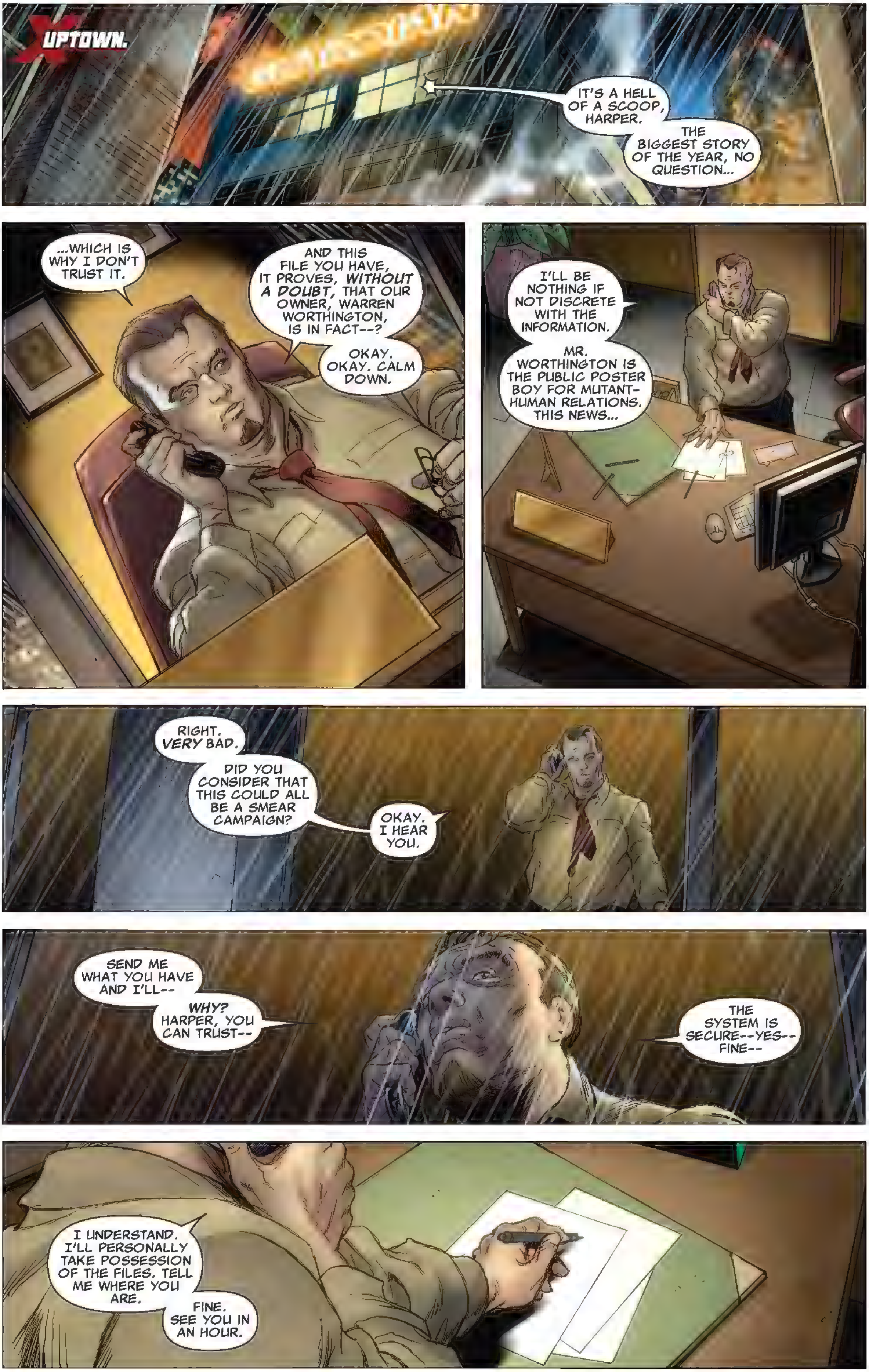

AN AVENGER AND AN X-MAN RUNNING AROUND WITH A HIT SQUAD.

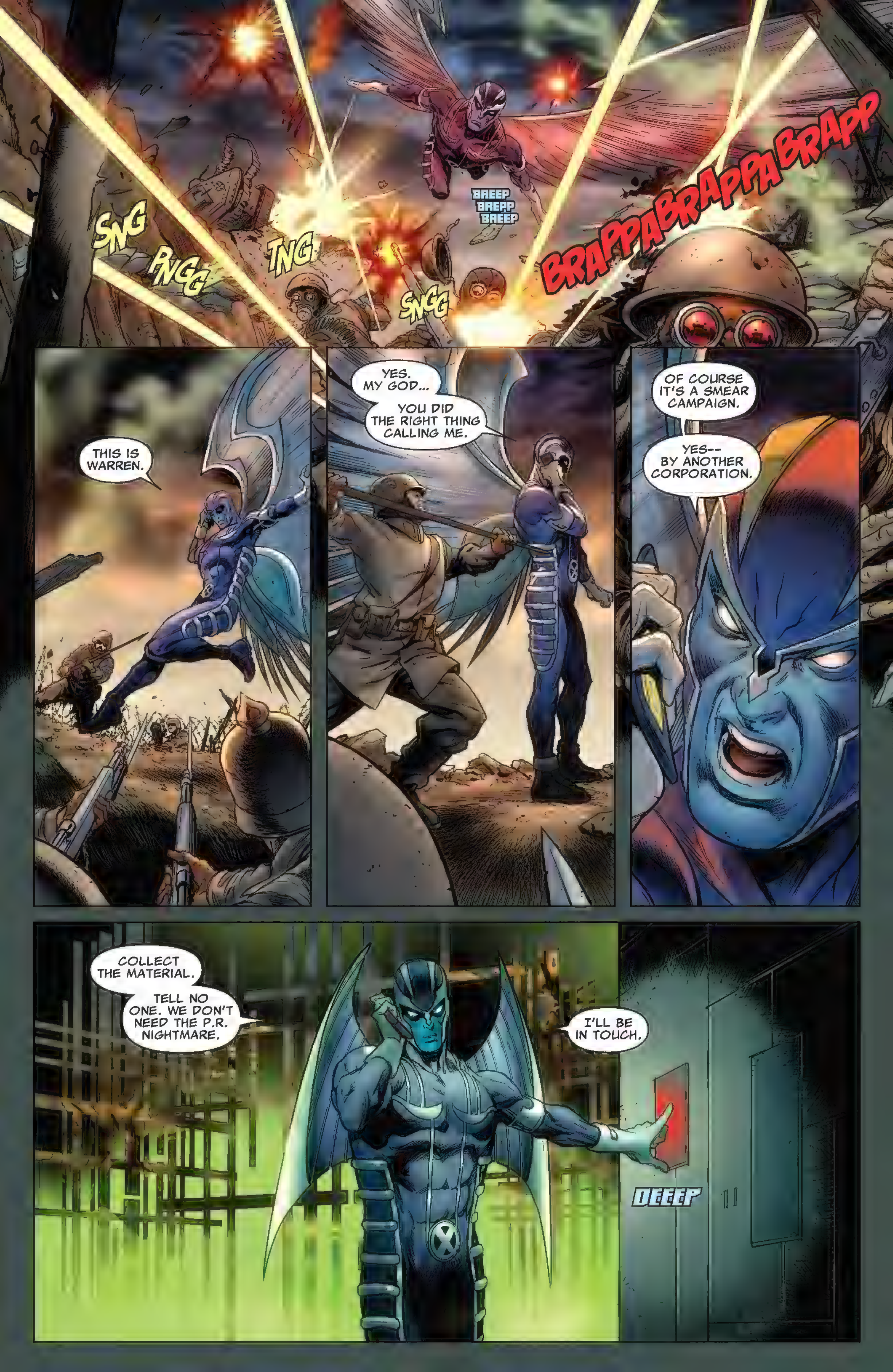

WHAT A LOAD OF TOTAL BULL--
...

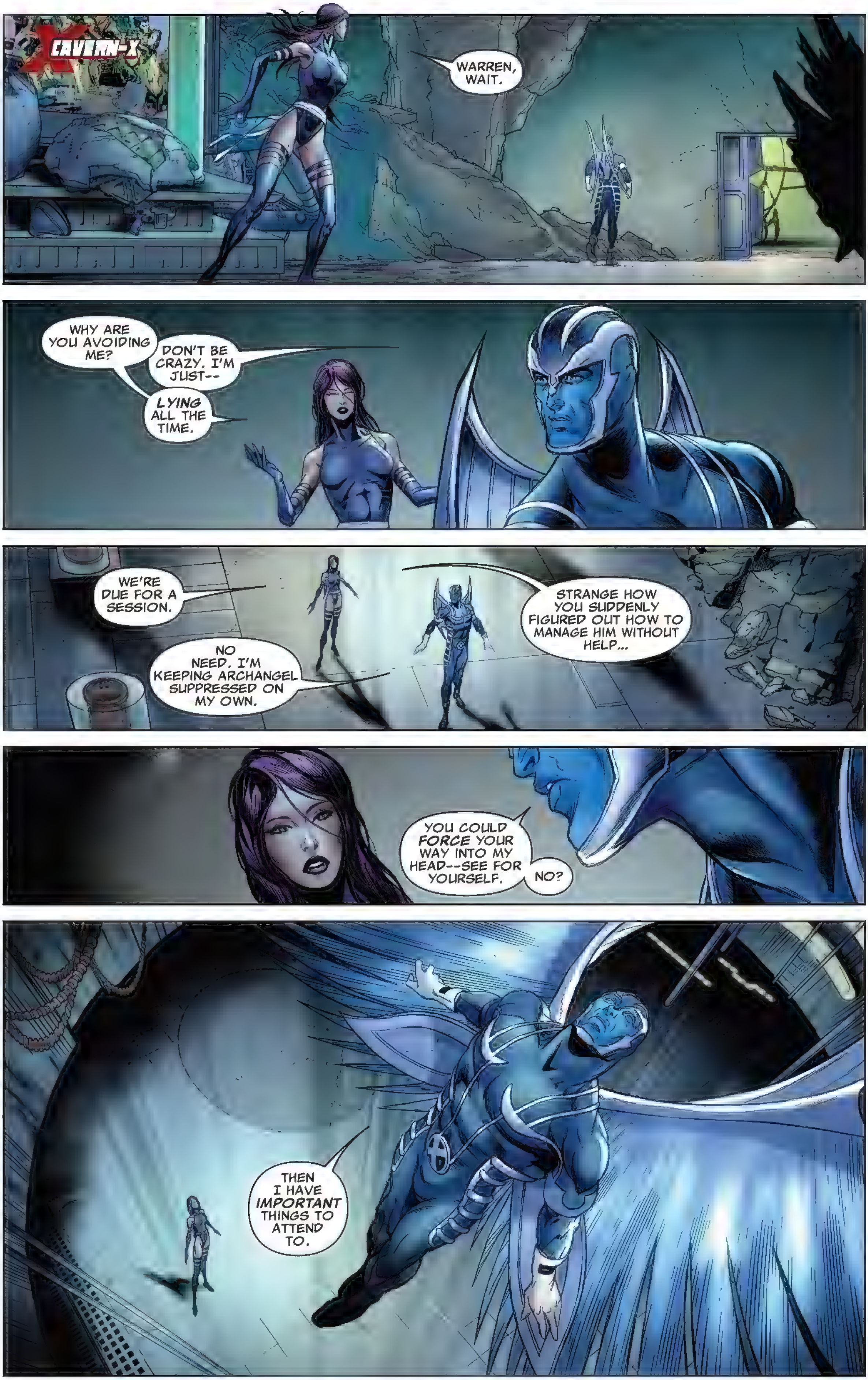

Vid-Viewer 8.

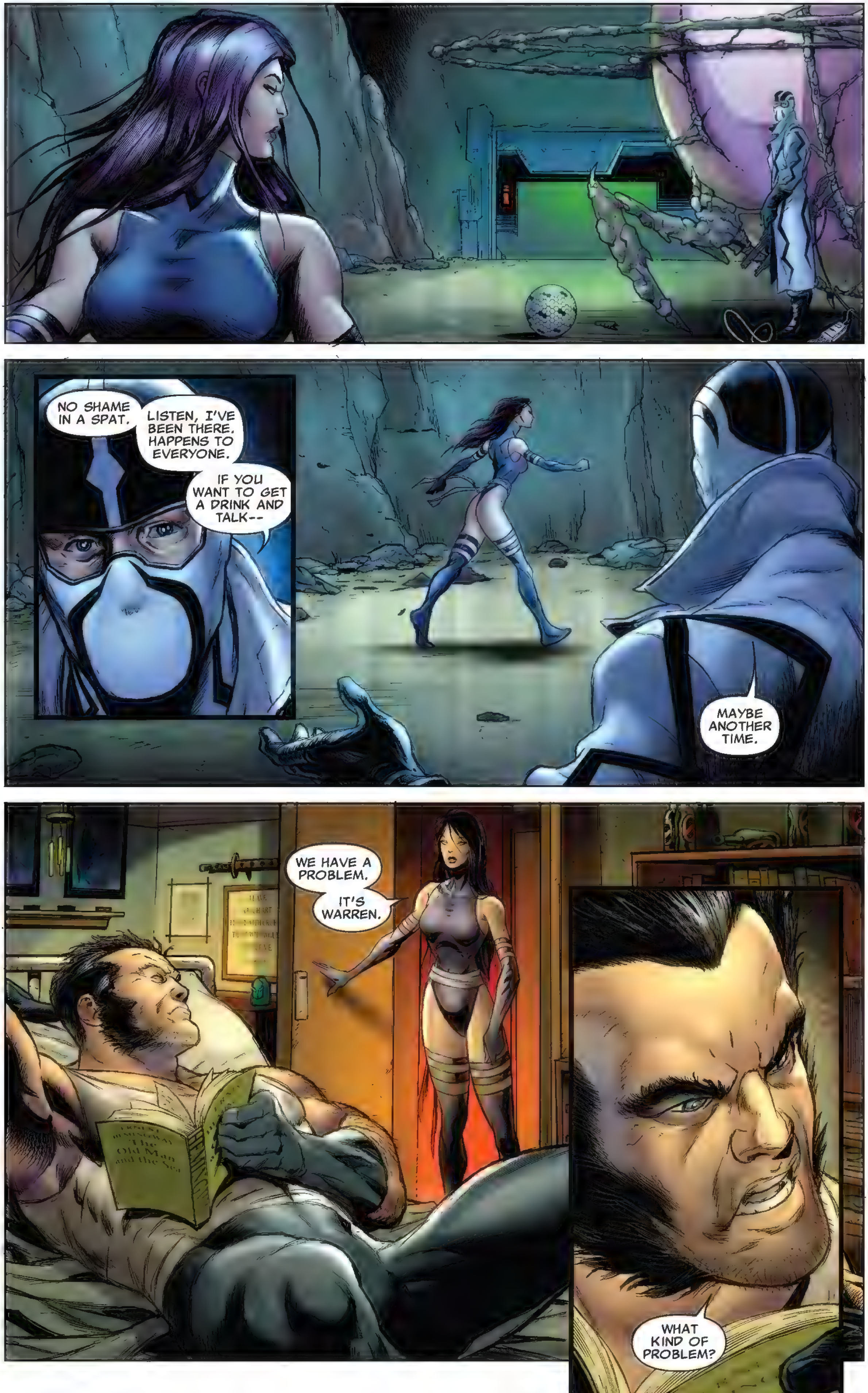

Vid-Viewer 8.5

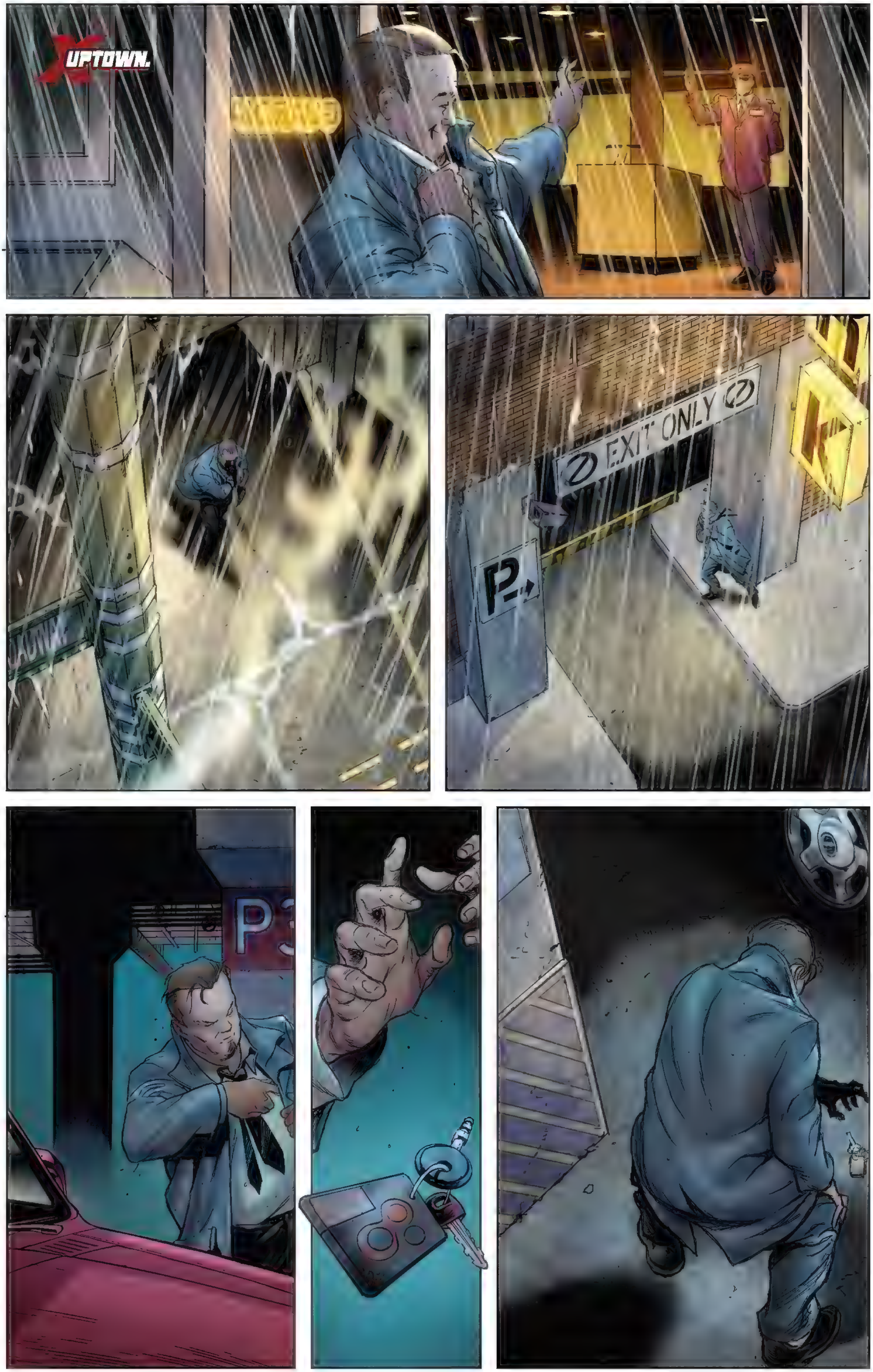

MY GOD...
Vid-Viewer 8.5

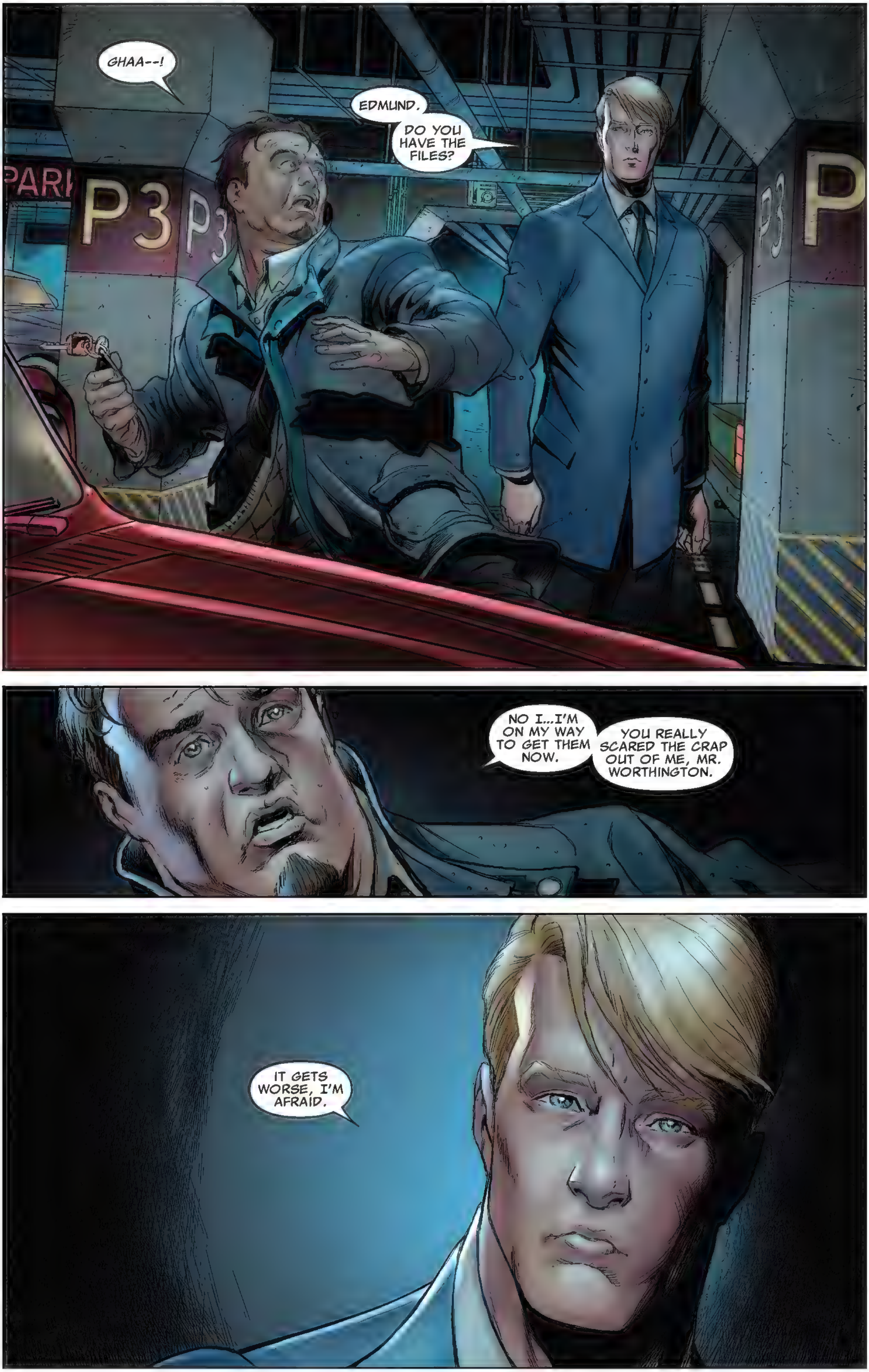

UPTOWN.
IT'S A HELL OF A SCOOP, HARPER.
THE BIGGEST STORY OF THE YEAR, NO QUESTION...
...WHICH IS WHY I DON'T TRUST IT.
AND THIS FILE YOU HAVE, IT PROVES, *WITHOUT A DOUBT*, THAT OUR OWNER, WARREN WORTHINGTON, IS IN FACT--?
OKAY. OKAY. CALM DOWN.
I'LL BE NOTHING IF NOT DISCRETE WITH THE INFORMATION.
MR. WORTHINGTON IS THE PUBLIC POSTER BOY FOR MUTANT-HUMAN RELATIONS. THIS NEWS...
RIGHT. *VERY* BAD.
DID YOU CONSIDER THAT THIS COULD ALL BE A SMEAR CAMPAIGN?
OKAY. I HEAR YOU.
SEND ME WHAT YOU HAVE AND I'LL--
WHY? HARPER, YOU CAN TRUST--
THE SYSTEM IS SECURE--YES--FINE--
I UNDERSTAND. I'LL PERSONALLY TAKE POSSESSION OF THE FILES. TELL ME WHERE YOU ARE.
FINE. SEE YOU IN AN HOUR.

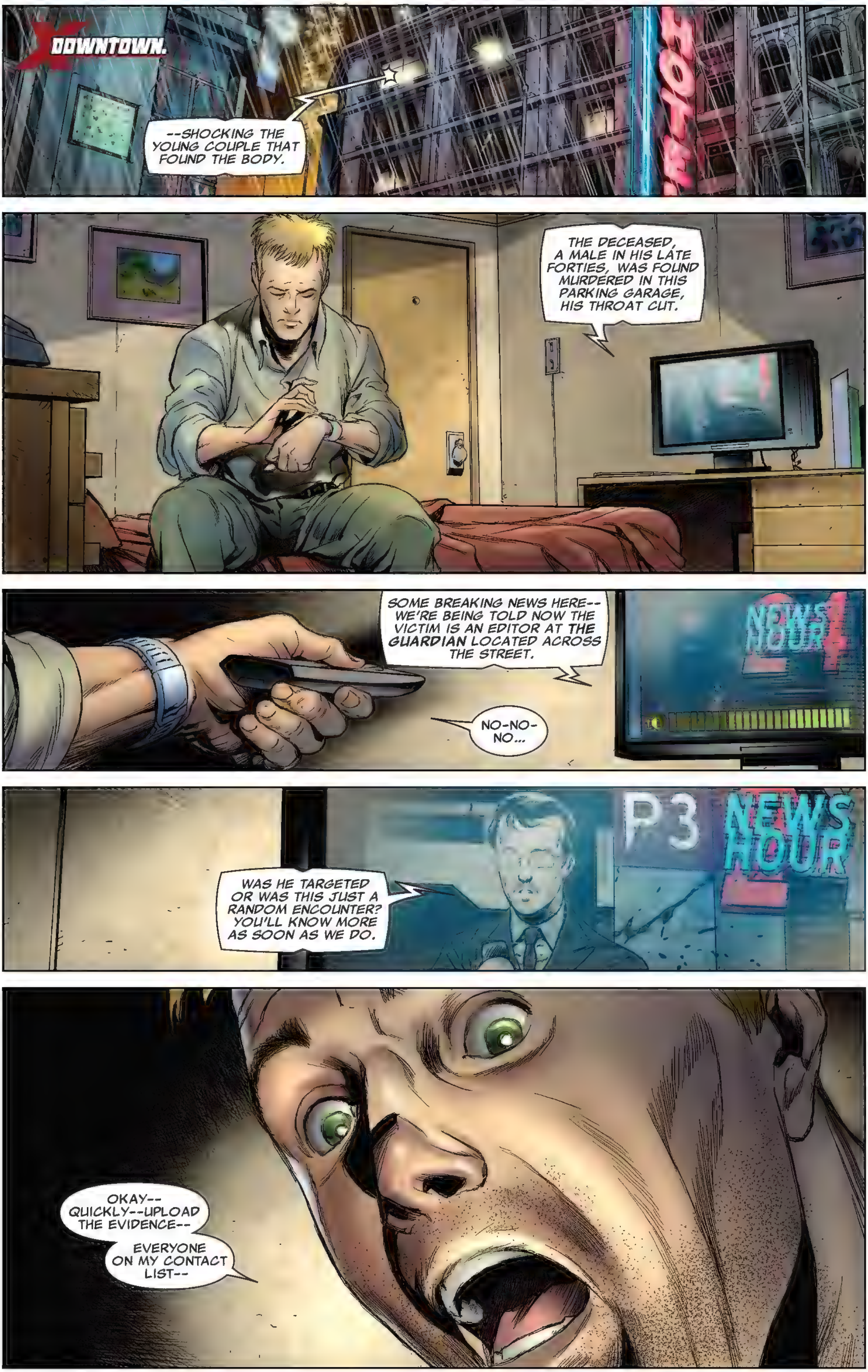

SNG
PNGG
TNG
BREEP
BREPP
BREEP
SNGG
BRAPPABRAPPABRAPP
THIS IS WARREN.
YES. MY GOD...
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING CALLING ME.
OF COURSE IT'S A SMEAR CAMPAIGN.
YES-- BY ANOTHER CORPORATION.
COLLECT THE MATERIAL.
TELL NO ONE. WE DON'T NEED THE P.R. NIGHTMARE.
I'LL BE IN TOUCH.
DEEEP

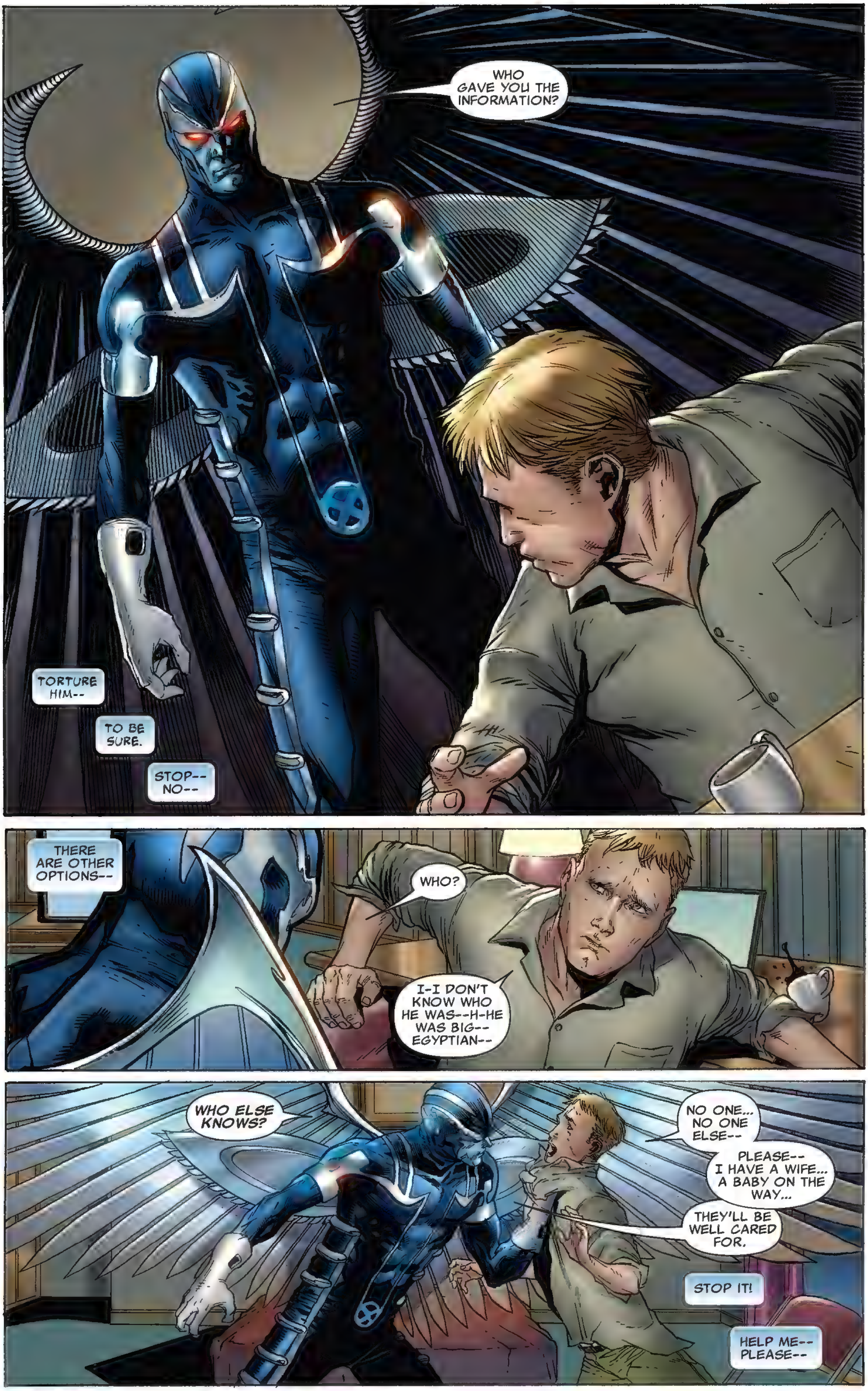

CAVERN-X
WARREN, WAIT.
WHY ARE YOU AVOIDING ME?
DON'T BE CRAZY. I'M JUST--
LYING ALL THE TIME.
WE'RE DUE FOR A SESSION.
STRANGE HOW YOU SUDDENLY FIGURED OUT HOW TO MANAGE HIM WITHOUT HELP...
NO NEED. I'M KEEPING ARCHANGEL SUPPRESSED ON MY OWN.
YOU COULD *FORCE* YOUR WAY INTO MY HEAD--SEE FOR YOURSELF.
NO?
THEN I HAVE *IMPORTANT* THINGS TO ATTEND TO.

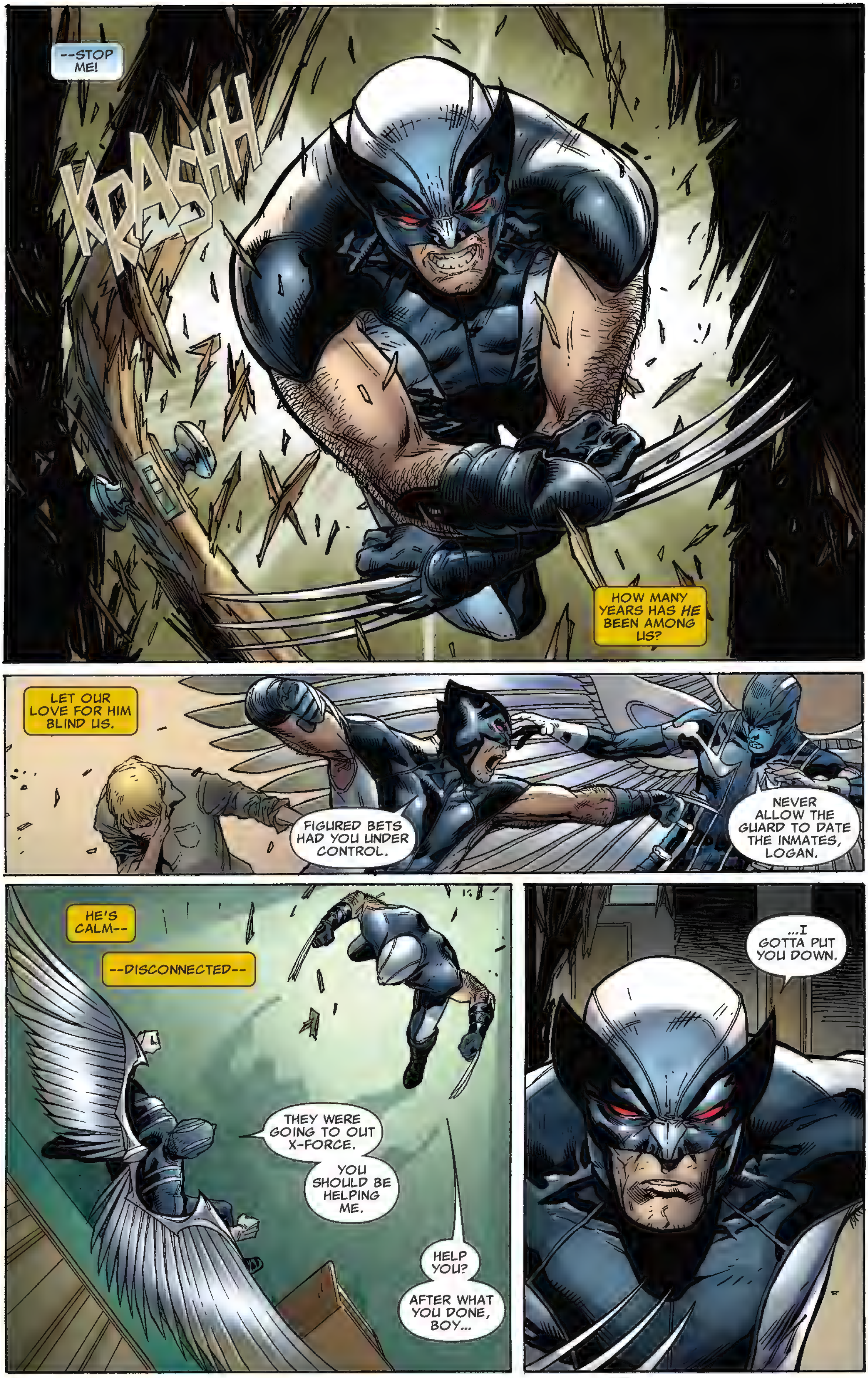

NO SHAME IN A SPAT.
LISTEN, I'VE BEEN THERE. HAPPENS TO EVERYONE.
IF YOU WANT TO GET A DRINK AND TALK--
MAYBE ANOTHER TIME.
WE HAVE A PROBLEM.
IT'S WARREN.
The Old Man and the Sea
WHAT KIND OF PROBLEM?

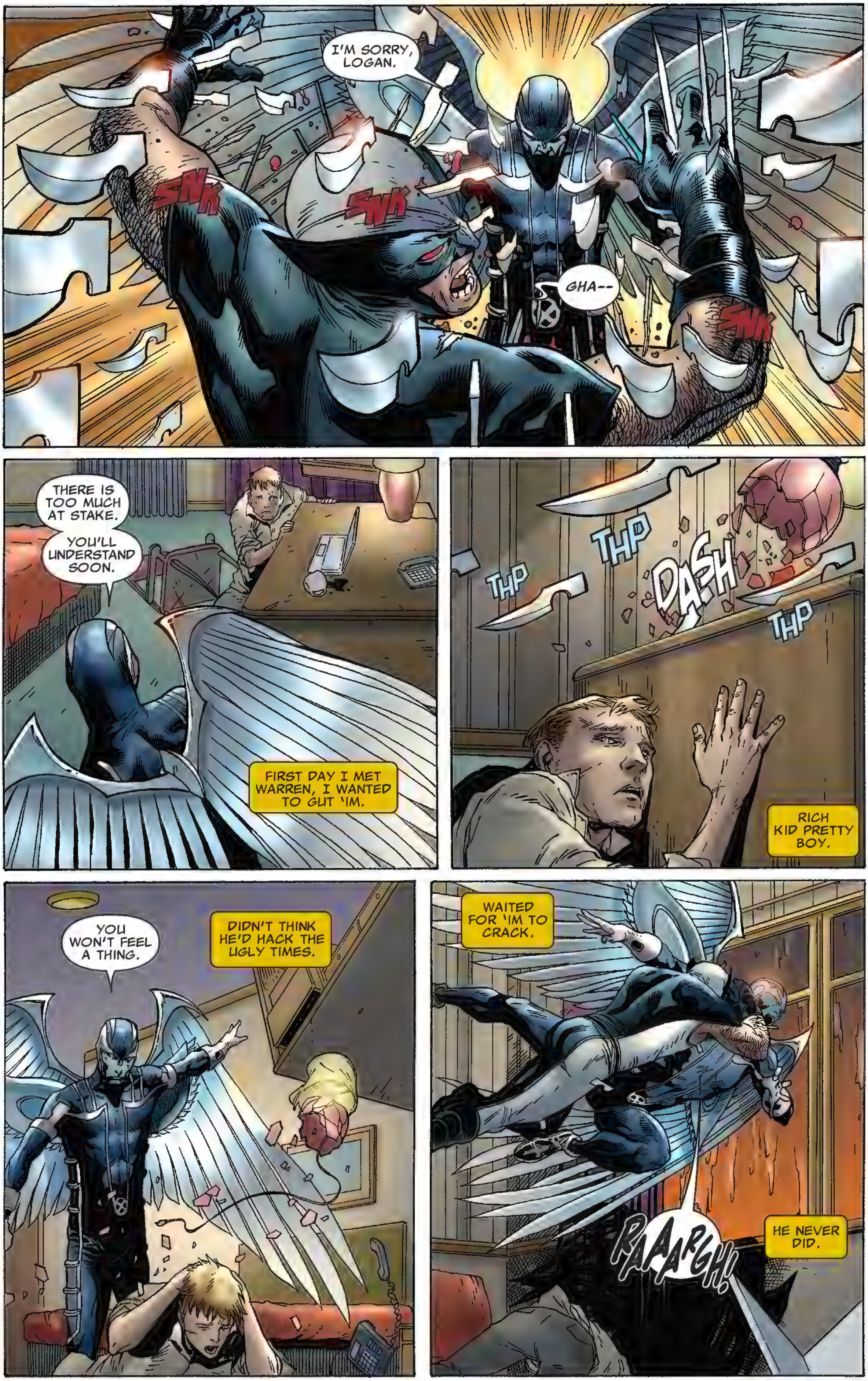

UPTOWN.
EXIT ONLY
P
P3

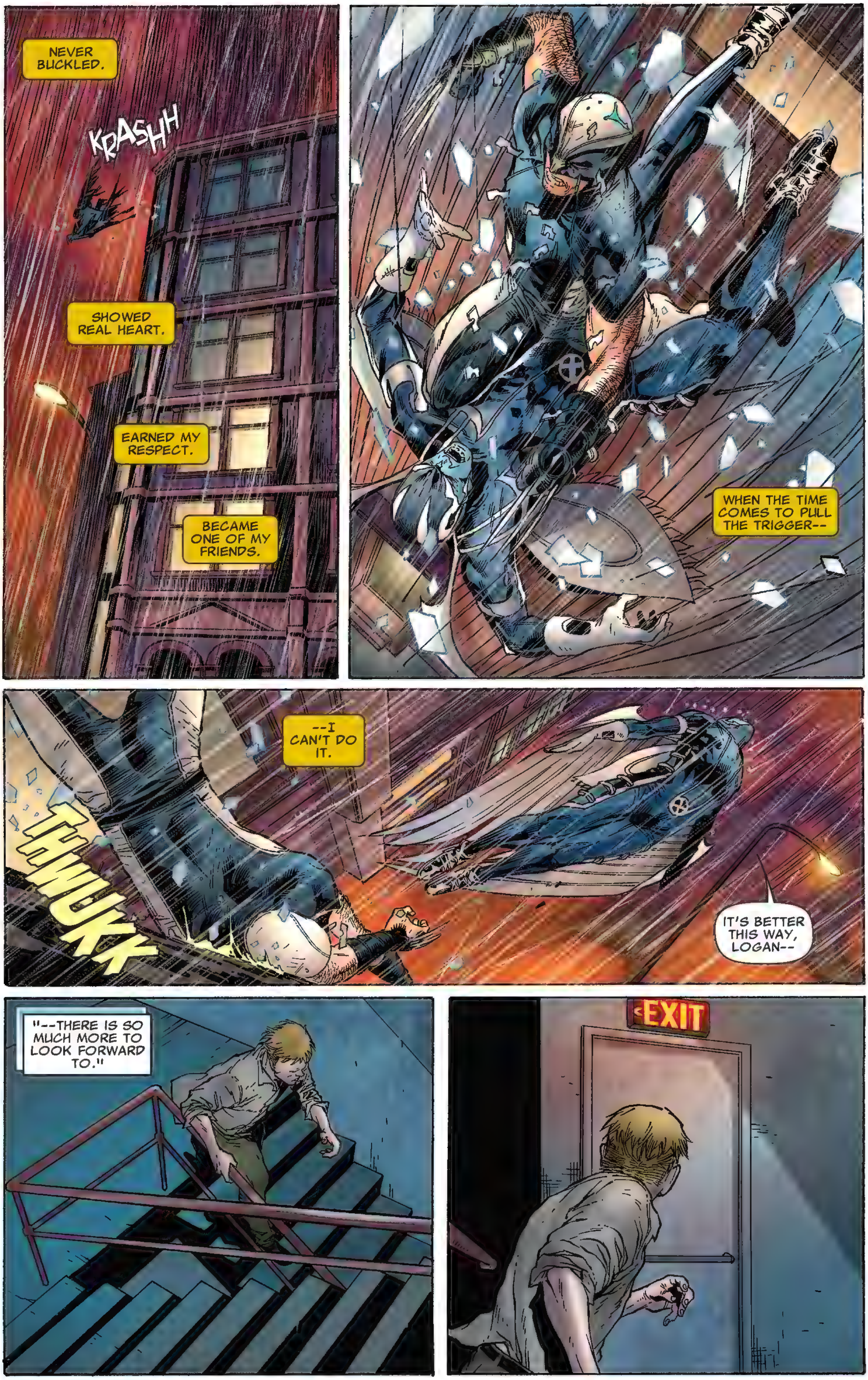

GHAA--!
EDMUND.
DO YOU HAVE THE FILES?
PARK
P3
P3
P3
P
NO I...I'M ON MY WAY TO GET THEM NOW.
YOU REALLY SCARED THE CRAP OUT OF ME, MR. WORTHINGTON.
IT GETS WORSE, I'M AFRAID.

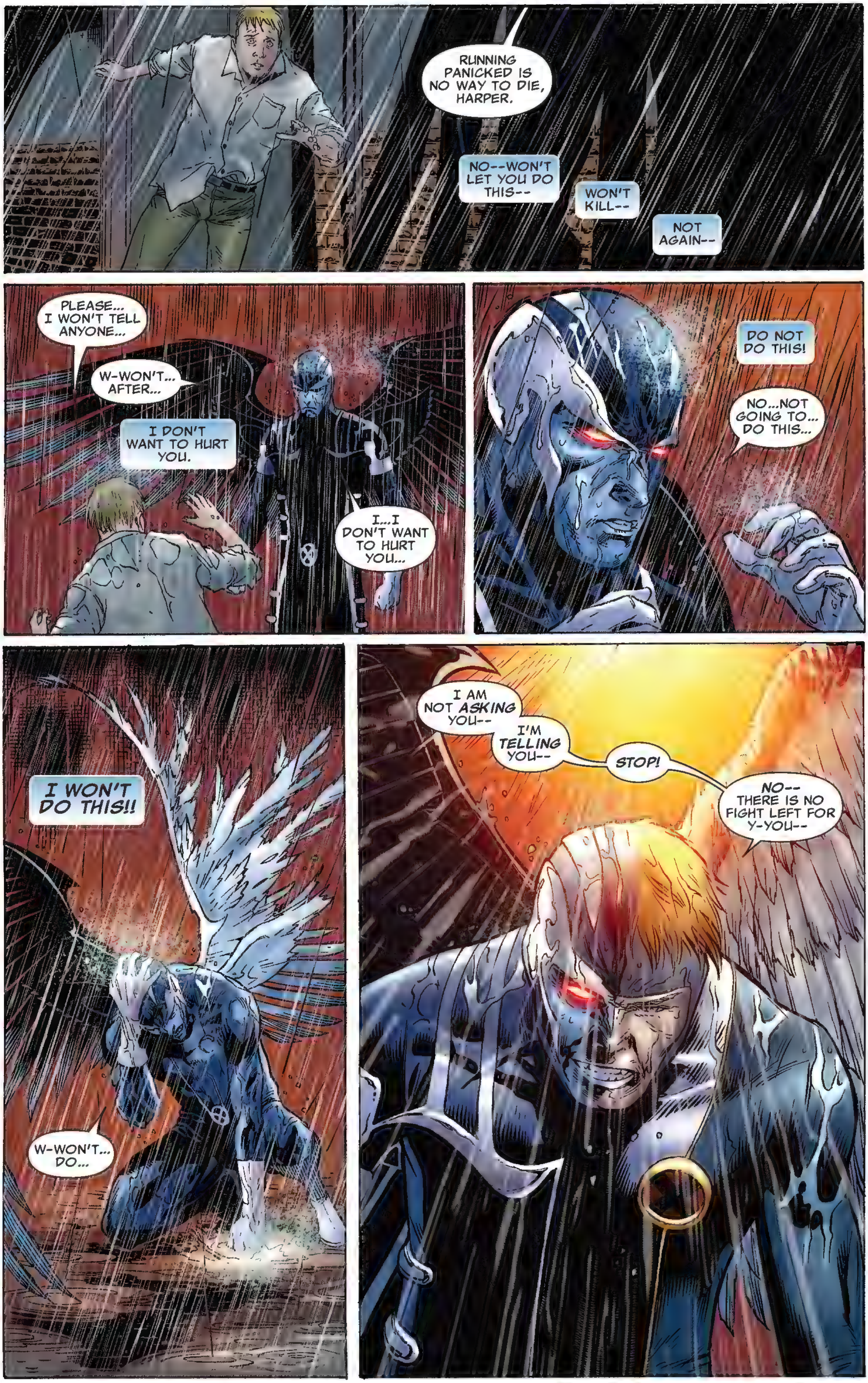

DOWNTOWN.
--SHOCKING THE YOUNG COUPLE THAT FOUND THE BODY.
HOTEL
THE DECEASED, A MALE IN HIS LATE FORTIES, WAS FOUND MURDERED IN THIS PARKING GARAGE, HIS THROAT CUT.
SOME BREAKING NEWS HERE-- WE'RE BEING TOLD NOW THE VICTIM IS AN EDITOR AT THE GUARDIAN LOCATED ACROSS THE STREET.
NEWS HOUR 4
NO-NO-NO...
WAS HE TARGETED OR WAS THIS JUST A RANDOM ENCOUNTER? YOU'LL KNOW MORE AS SOON AS WE DO.
P3
NEWS HOUR
OKAY-- QUICKLY--UPLOAD THE EVIDENCE--
EVERYONE ON MY CONTACT LIST--

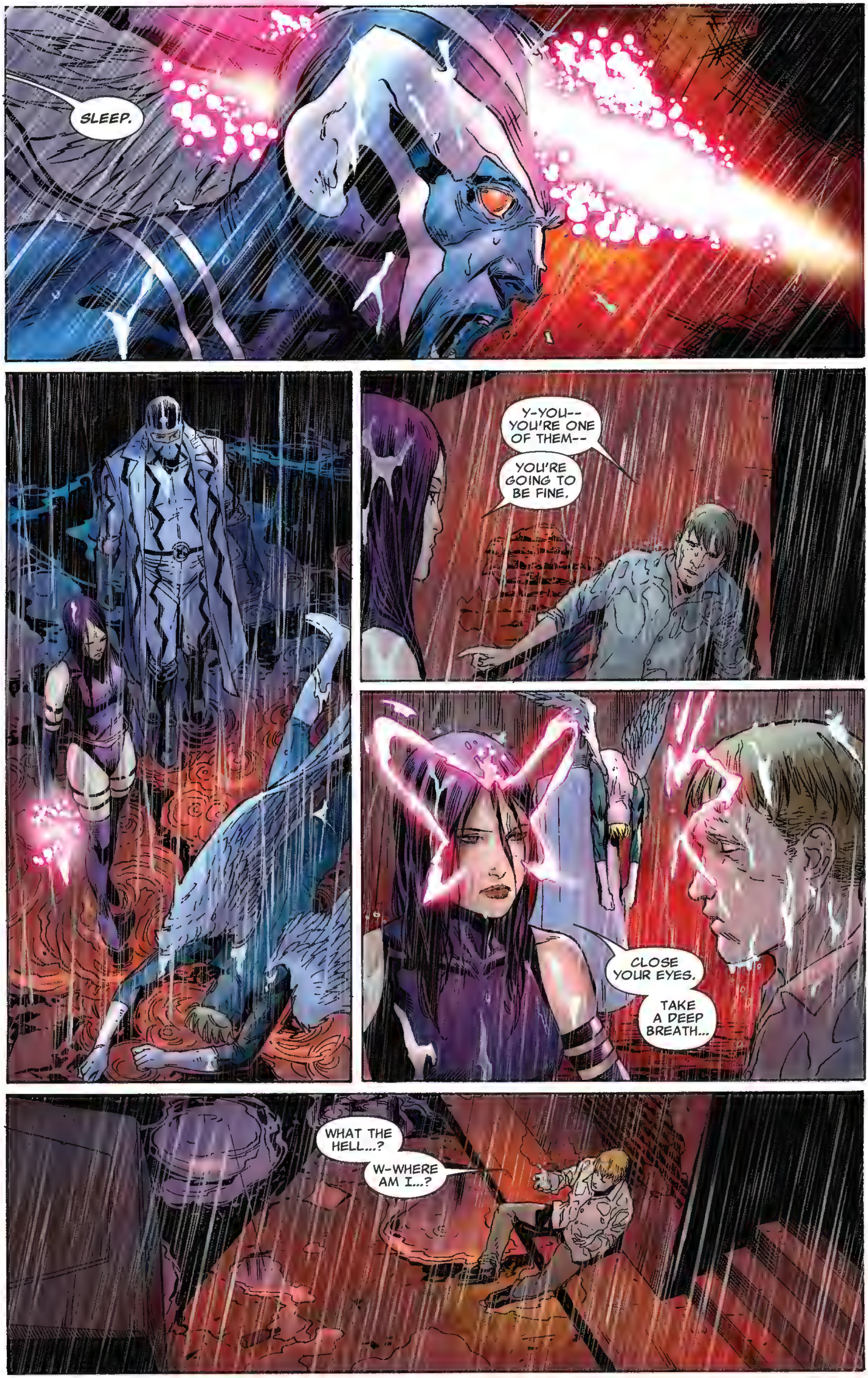

WHO GAVE YOU THE INFORMATION?
TORTURE HIM--
TO BE SURE.
STOP-- NO--
THERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS--
WHO?
I-I DON'T KNOW WHO HE WAS--H-HE WAS BIG-- EGYPTIAN--
WHO ELSE KNOWS?
NO ONE... NO ONE ELSE--
PLEASE-- I HAVE A WIFE... A BABY ON THE WAY...
THEY'LL BE WELL CARED FOR.
STOP IT!
HELP ME-- PLEASE--

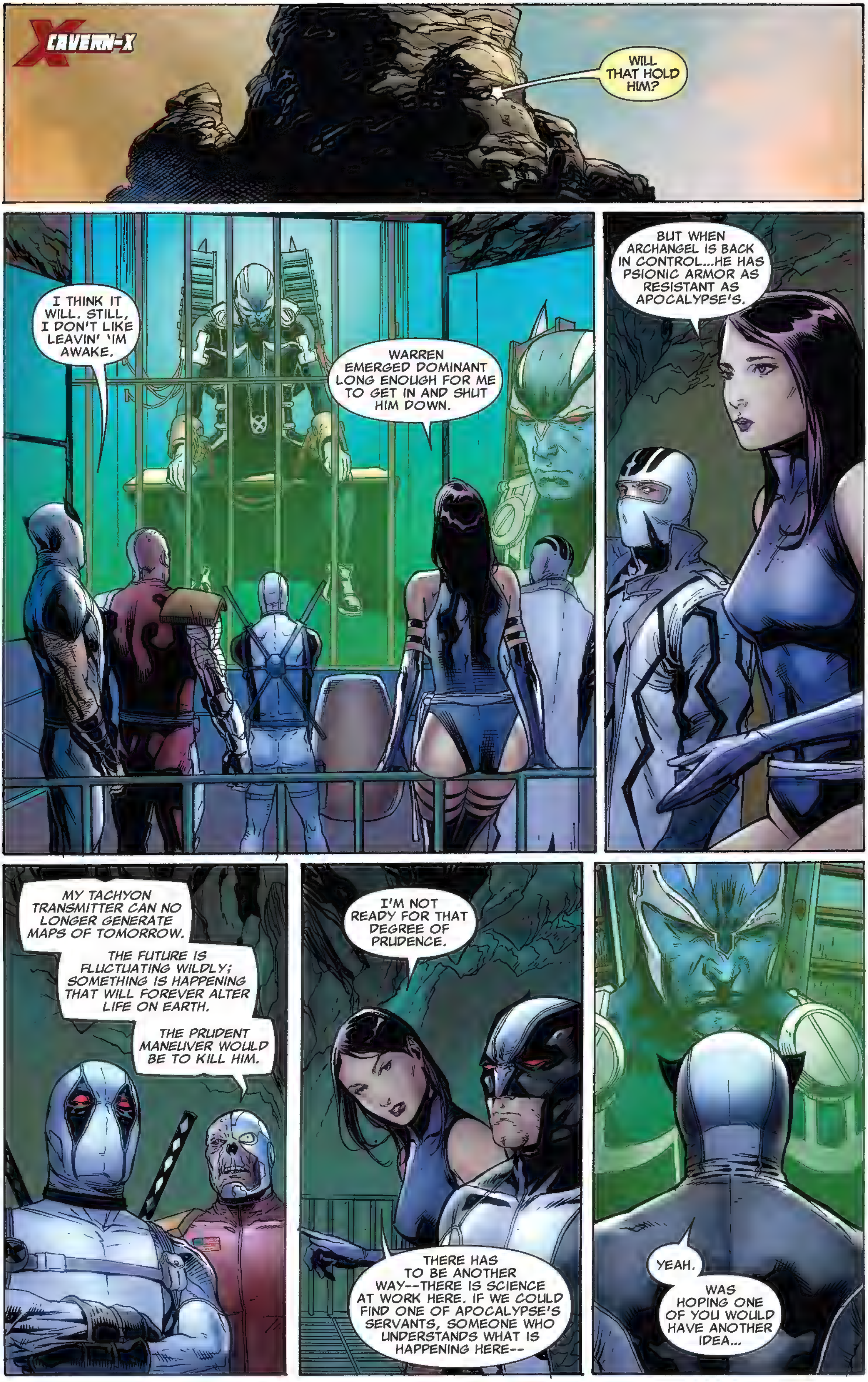

--STOP ME!
KRASHH
HOW MANY YEARS HAS *HE* BEEN AMONG US?
LET OUR LOVE FOR HIM BLIND US.
FIGURED BETS HAD YOU UNDER CONTROL.
NEVER ALLOW THE GUARD TO DATE THE INMATES, LOGAN.
HE'S CALM--
--DISCONNECTED--
THEY WERE GOING TO OUT X-FORCE.
YOU SHOULD BE HELPING ME.
HELP YOU?
AFTER WHAT YOU DONE, BOY...
...I GOTTA PUT YOU DOWN.

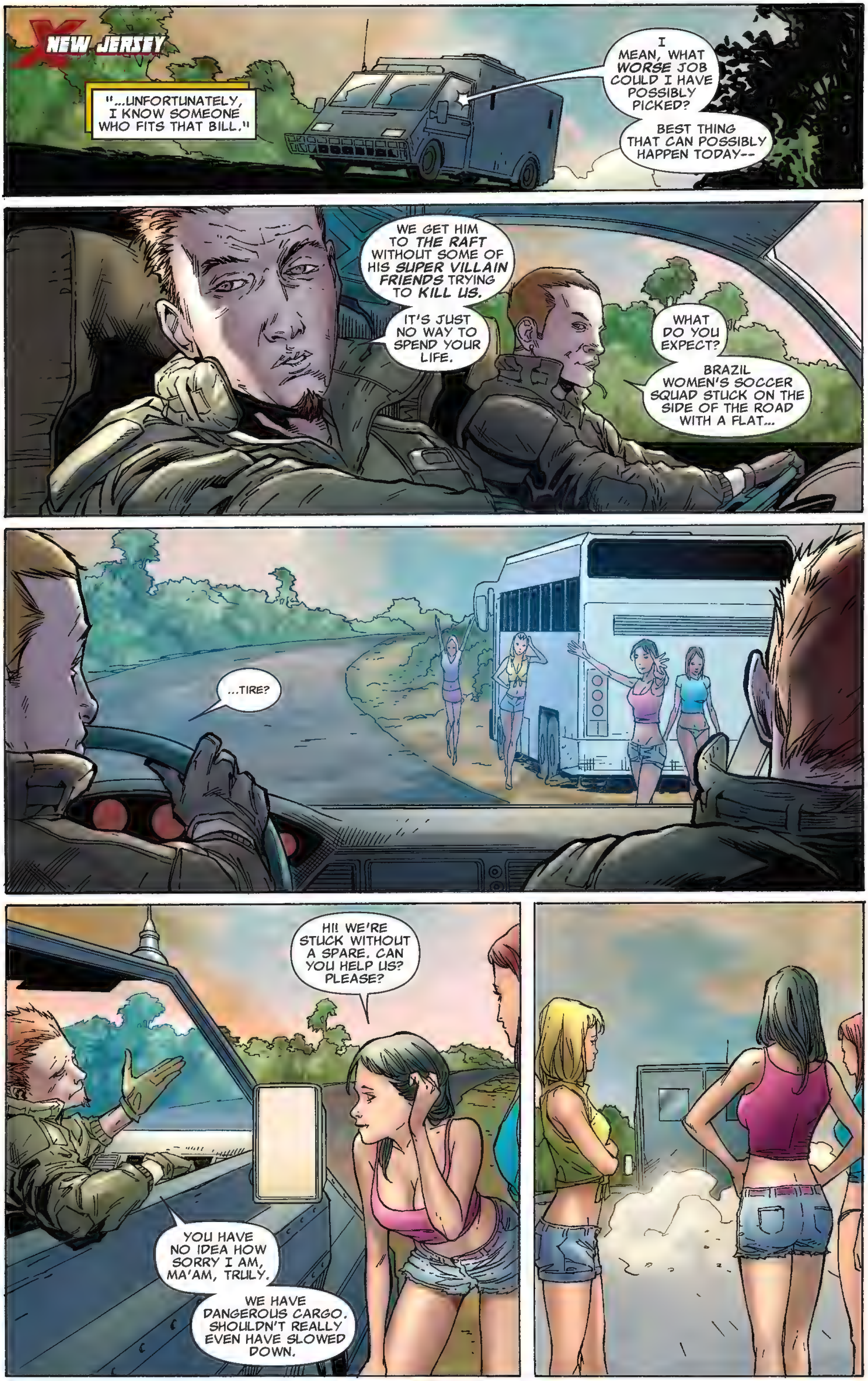

I'M SORRY, LOGAN.
SNK
SNK
GHA--
SNK
THERE IS TOO MUCH AT STAKE.
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND SOON.
FIRST DAY I MET WARREN, I WANTED TO GUT 'IM.
THP
THP
DASH
THP
RICH KID PRETTY BOY.
YOU WON'T FEEL A THING.
DIDN'T THINK HE'D HACK THE UGLY TIMES.
WAITED FOR 'IM TO CRACK.
RAAARGH!
HE NEVER DID.

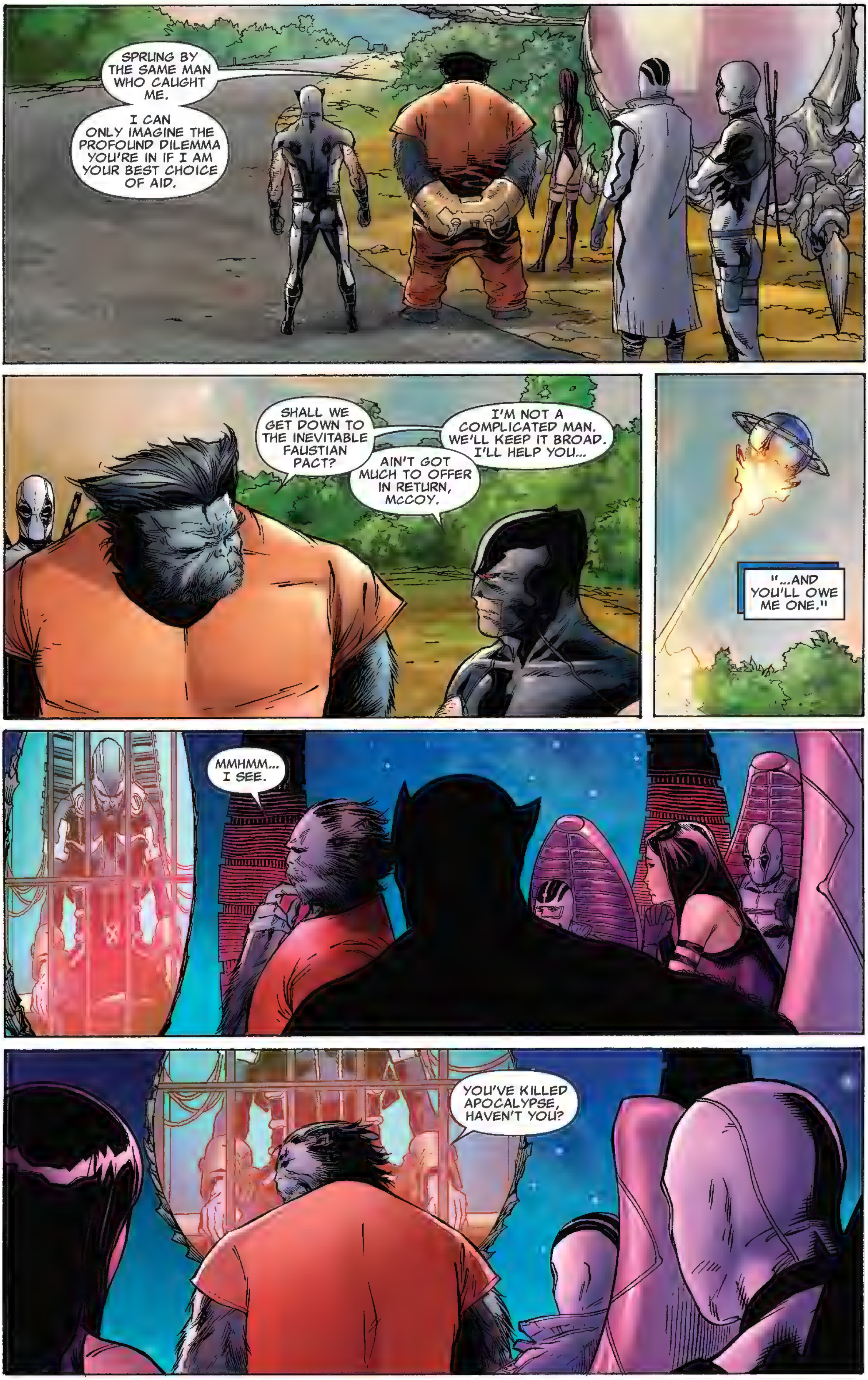

NEVER BUCKLED.
KRASHH
SHOWED REAL HEART.
EARNED MY RESPECT.
BECAME ONE OF MY FRIENDS.
WHEN THE TIME COMES TO PULL THE TRIGGER--
--I CAN'T DO IT.
THWUKK
IT'S BETTER THIS WAY, LOGAN--
"--THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO LOOK FORWARD TO."
EXIT

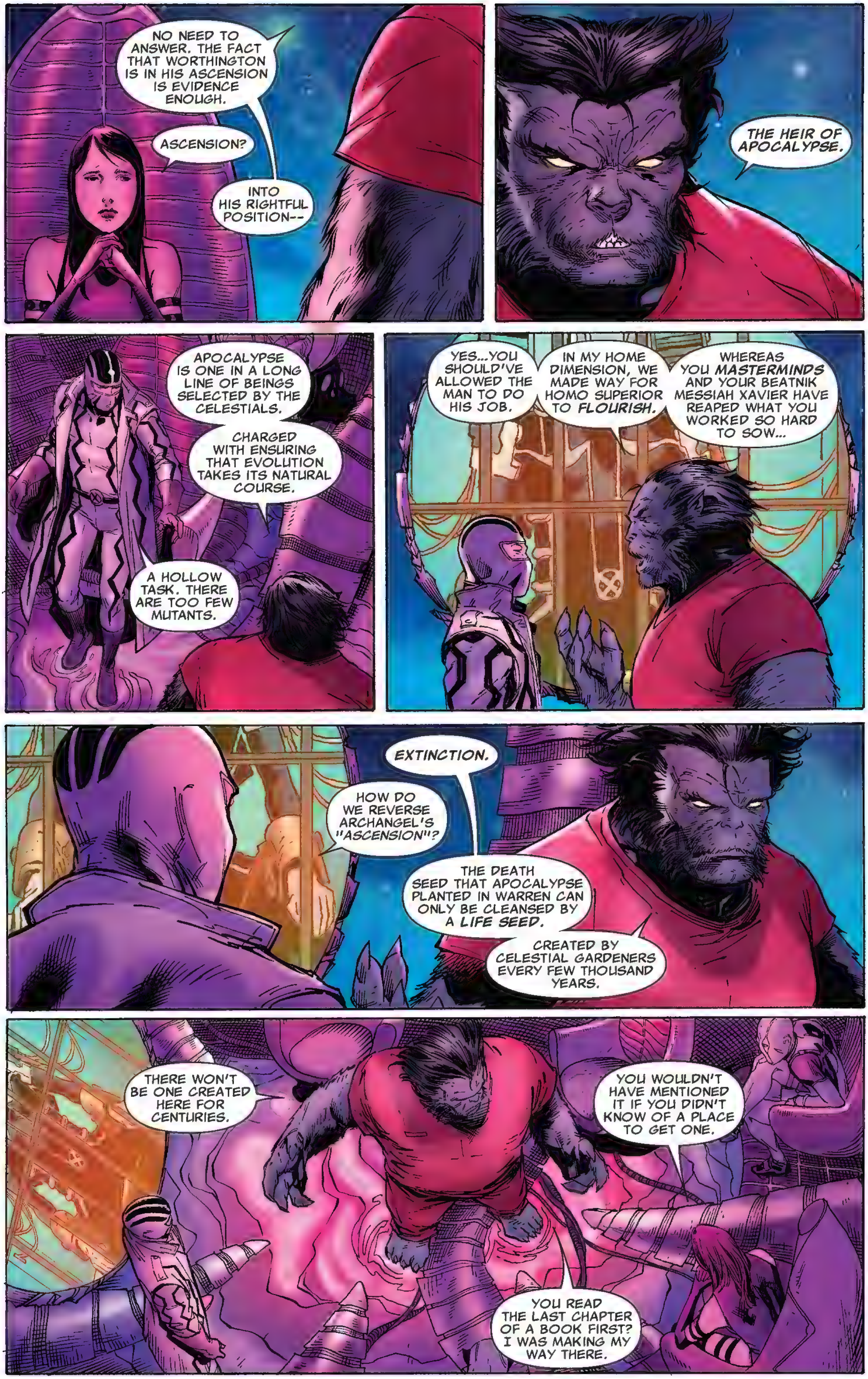

RUNNING PANICKED IS NO WAY TO DIE, HARPER.
NO--WON'T LET YOU DO THIS--
WON'T KILL--
NOT AGAIN--
PLEASE... I WON'T TELL ANYONE...
W-WON'T... AFTER...
I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU.
I...I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU...
DO NOT DO THIS!
NO...NOT GOING TO... DO THIS...
I WON'T DO THIS!!
W-WON'T... DO...
I AM NOT ASKING YOU--
I'M TELLING YOU--
STOP!
NO-- THERE IS NO FIGHT LEFT FOR Y-YOU--

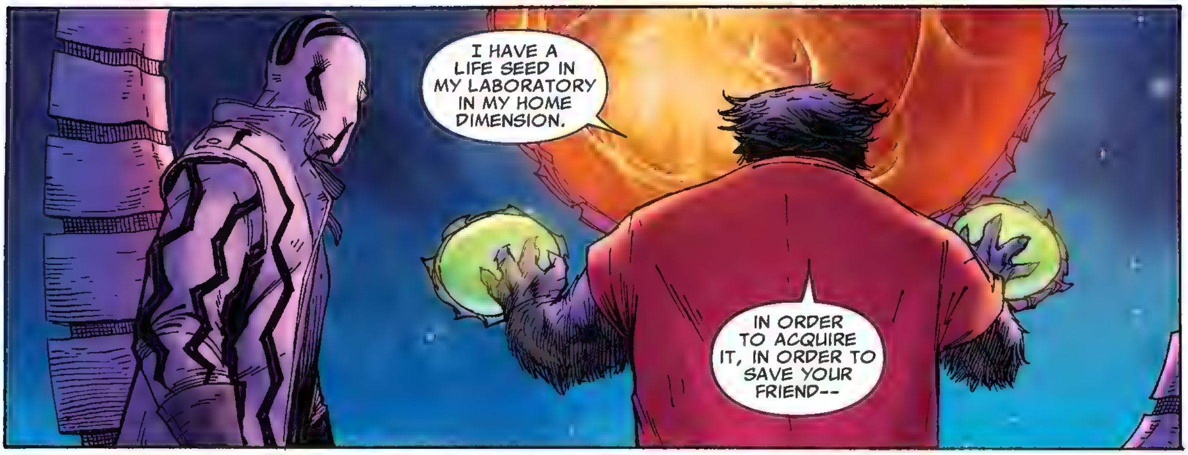

SLEEP.
Y-YOU-- YOU'RE ONE OF THEM--
YOU'RE GOING TO BE FINE.
CLOSE YOUR EYES.
TAKE A DEEP BREATH...
WHAT THE HELL...?
W-WHERE AM I...?

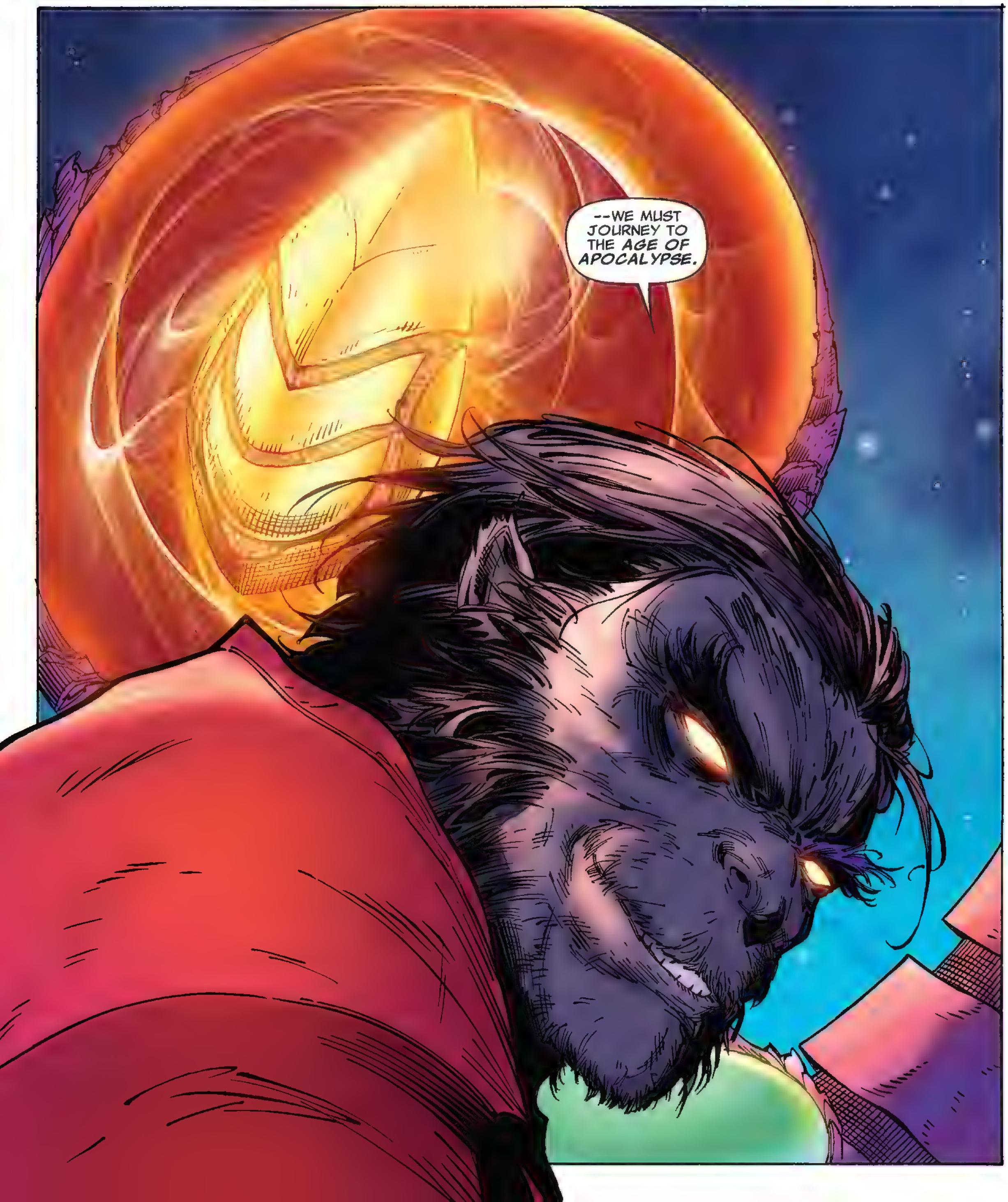

CAVERN-X
WILL THAT HOLD HIM?
I THINK IT WILL. STILL, I DON'T LIKE LEAVIN' 'IM AWAKE.
WARREN EMERGED DOMINANT LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO GET IN AND SHUT HIM DOWN.
BUT WHEN ARCHANGEL IS BACK IN CONTROL...HE HAS PSIONIC ARMOR AS RESISTANT AS APOCALYPSE'S.
MY TACHYON TRANSMITTER CAN NO LONGER GENERATE MAPS OF TOMORROW.
THE FUTURE IS FLUCTUATING WILDLY; SOMETHING IS HAPPENING THAT WILL FOREVER ALTER LIFE ON EARTH.
THE PRUDENT MANEUVER WOULD BE TO KILL HIM.
I'M NOT READY FOR THAT DEGREE OF PRUDENCE.
THERE HAS TO BE ANOTHER WAY--THERE IS SCIENCE AT WORK HERE. IF WE COULD FIND ONE OF APOCALYPSE'S SERVANTS, SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE--
YEAH.
WAS HOPING ONE OF YOU WOULD HAVE ANOTHER IDEA...


NEW JERSEY
"...UNFORTUNATELY, I KNOW SOMEONE WHO FITS THAT BILL."
I MEAN, WHAT WORSE JOB COULD I HAVE POSSIBLY PICKED?
BEST THING THAT CAN POSSIBLY HAPPEN TODAY--
WE GET HIM TO THE RAFT WITHOUT SOME OF HIS SUPER VILLAIN FRIENDS TRYING TO KILL US.
IT'S JUST NO WAY TO SPEND YOUR LIFE.
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?
BRAZIL WOMEN'S SOCCER SQUAD STUCK ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD WITH A FLAT...
...TIRE?
HI! WE'RE STUCK WITHOUT A SPARE. CAN YOU HELP US? PLEASE?
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW SORRY I AM, MA'AM, TRULY.
WE HAVE DANGEROUS CARGO. SHOULDN'T REALLY EVEN HAVE SLOWED DOWN.


SPRUNG BY THE SAME MAN WHO CAUGHT ME.
I CAN ONLY IMAGINE THE PROFOUND DILEMMA YOU'RE IN IF I AM YOUR BEST CHOICE OF AID.
SHALL WE GET DOWN TO THE INEVITABLE FAUSTIAN PACT?
AIN'T GOT MUCH TO OFFER IN RETURN, McCOY.
I'M NOT A COMPLICATED MAN. WE'LL KEEP IT BROAD. I'LL HELP YOU...
"...AND YOU'LL OWE ME ONE."
MMHMM... I SEE.
YOU'VE KILLED APOCALYPSE, HAVEN'T YOU?

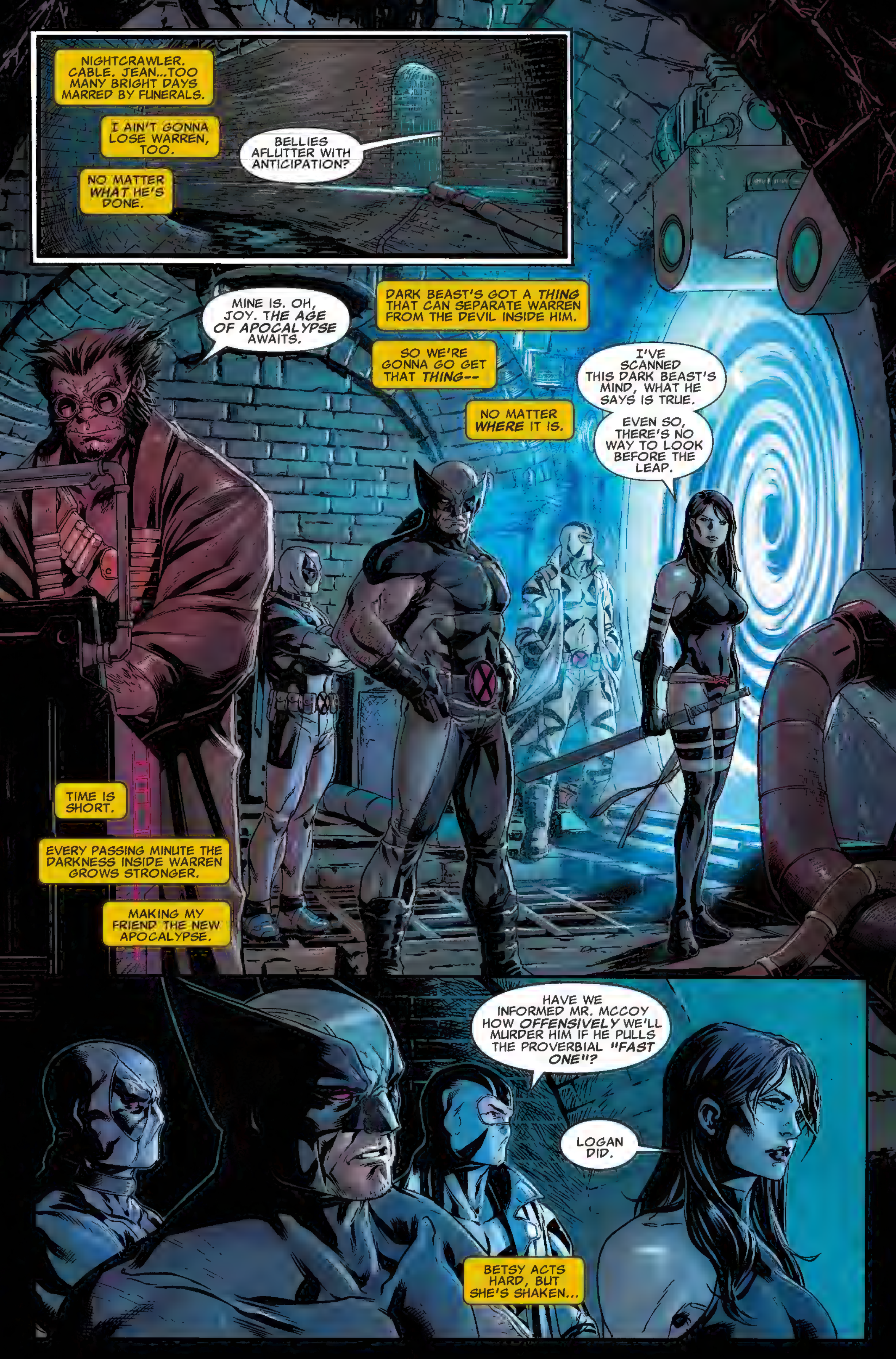

NO NEED TO ANSWER. THE FACT THAT WORTHINGTON IS IN HIS ASCENSION IS EVIDENCE ENOUGH.
ASCENSION?
INTO HIS RIGHTFUL POSITION--
THE HEIR OF APOCALYPSE.
APOCALYPSE IS ONE IN A LONG LINE OF BEINGS SELECTED BY THE CELESTIALS.
CHARGED WITH ENSURING THAT EVOLUTION TAKES ITS NATURAL COURSE.
A HOLLOW TASK. THERE ARE TOO FEW MUTANTS.
YES...YOU SHOULD'VE ALLOWED THE MAN TO DO HIS JOB.
IN MY HOME DIMENSION, WE MADE WAY FOR HOMO SUPERIOR TO FLOURISH.
WHEREAS YOU MASTERMINDS AND YOUR BEATNIK MESSIAH XAVIER HAVE REAPED WHAT YOU WORKED SO HARD TO SOW...
EXTINCTION.
HOW DO WE REVERSE ARCHANGEL'S "ASCENSION"?
THE DEATH SEED THAT APOCALYPSE PLANTED IN WARREN CAN ONLY BE CLEANSED BY A LIFE SEED.
CREATED BY CELESTIAL GARDENERS EVERY FEW THOUSAND YEARS.
THERE WON'T BE ONE CREATED HERE FOR CENTURIES.
YOU WOULDN'T HAVE MENTIONED IT IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW OF A PLACE TO GET ONE.
YOU READ THE LAST CHAPTER OF A BOOK FIRST? I WAS MAKING MY WAY THERE.

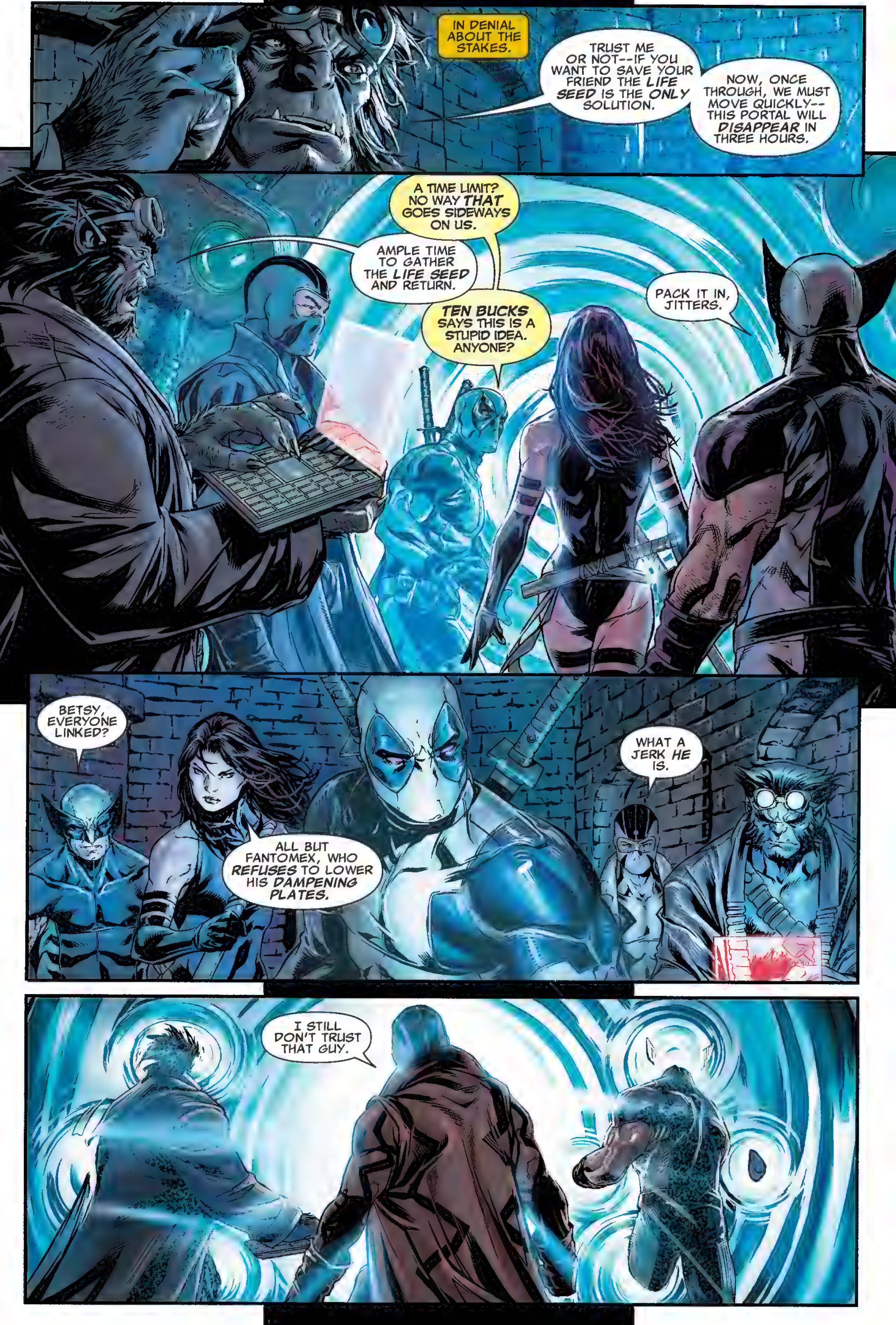

I HAVE A LIFE SEED IN MY LABORATORY IN MY HOME DIMENSION.
IN ORDER TO ACQUIRE IT, IN ORDER TO SAVE YOUR FRIEND--

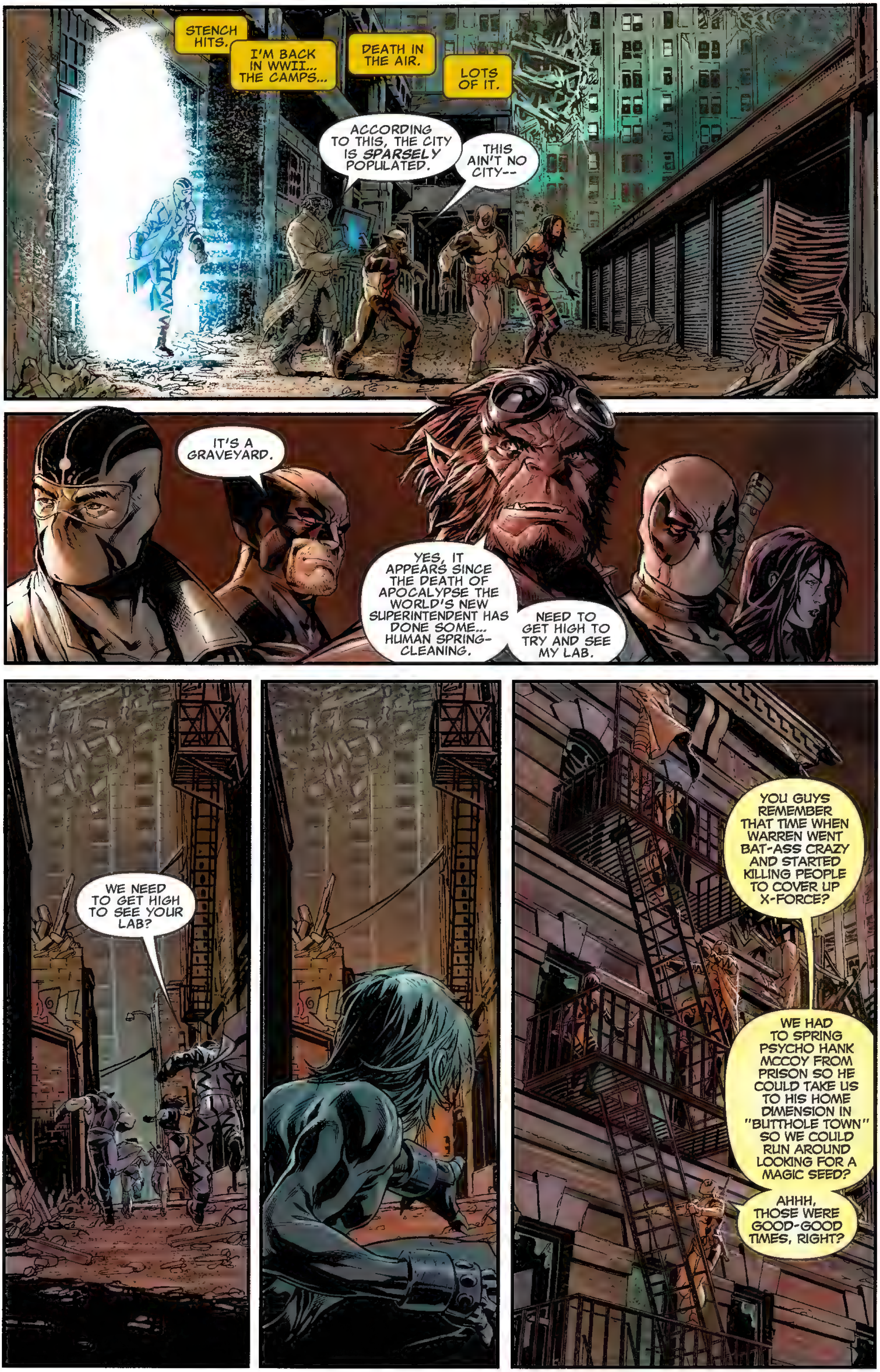

--WE MUST JOURNEY TO THE *AGE OF APOCALYPSE.*

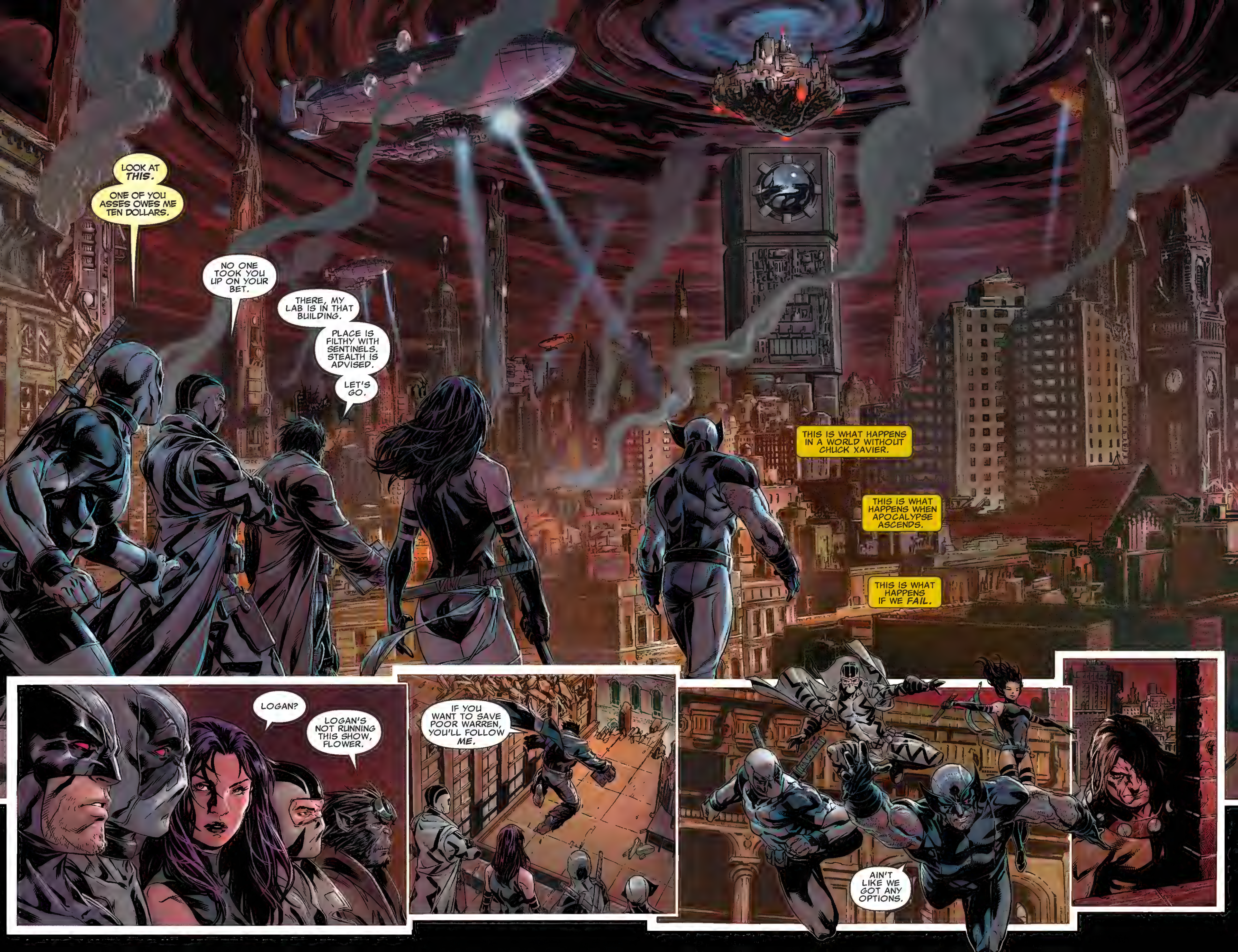
11 THE DARK ANGEL SAGA

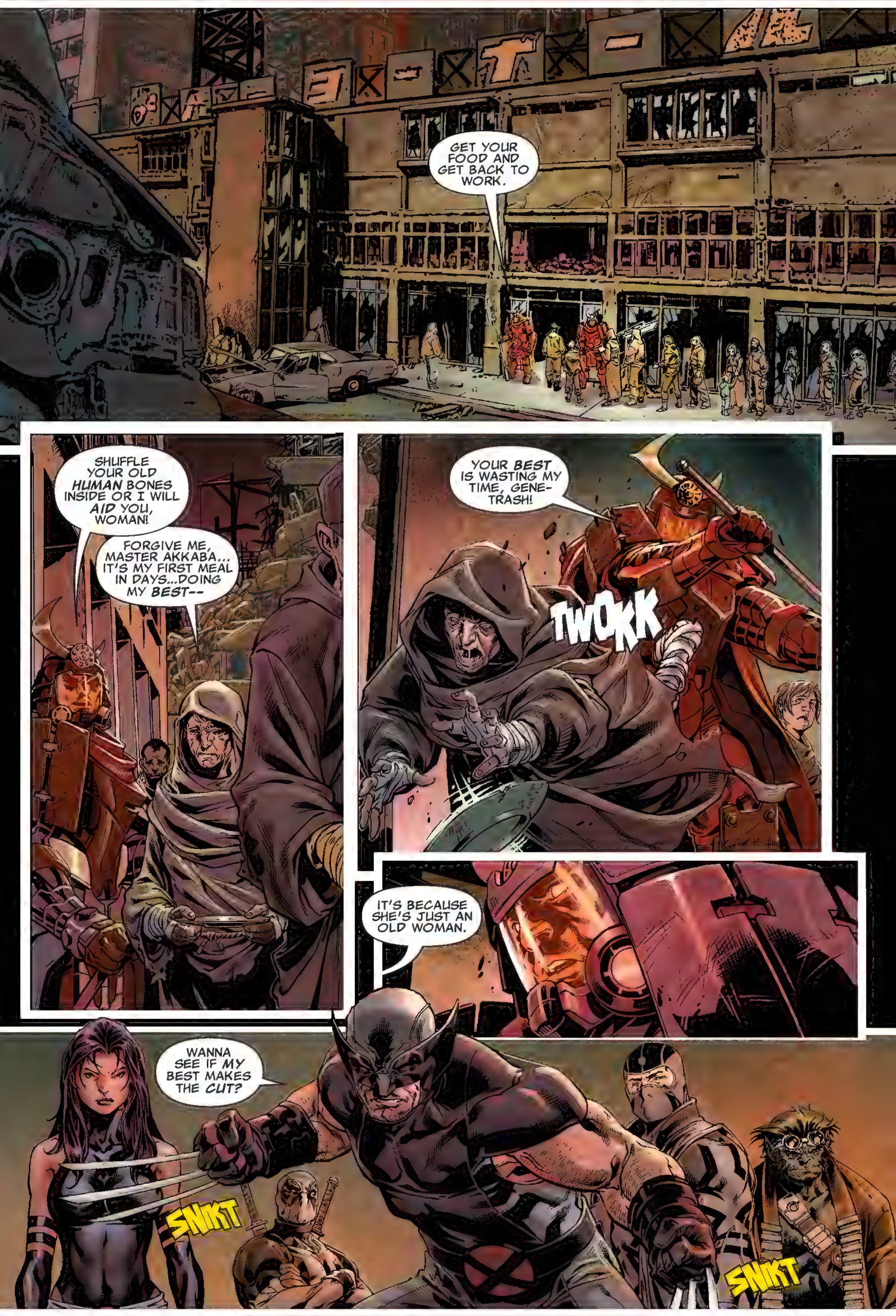
CHAPTER 1: JOURNEY TO THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE

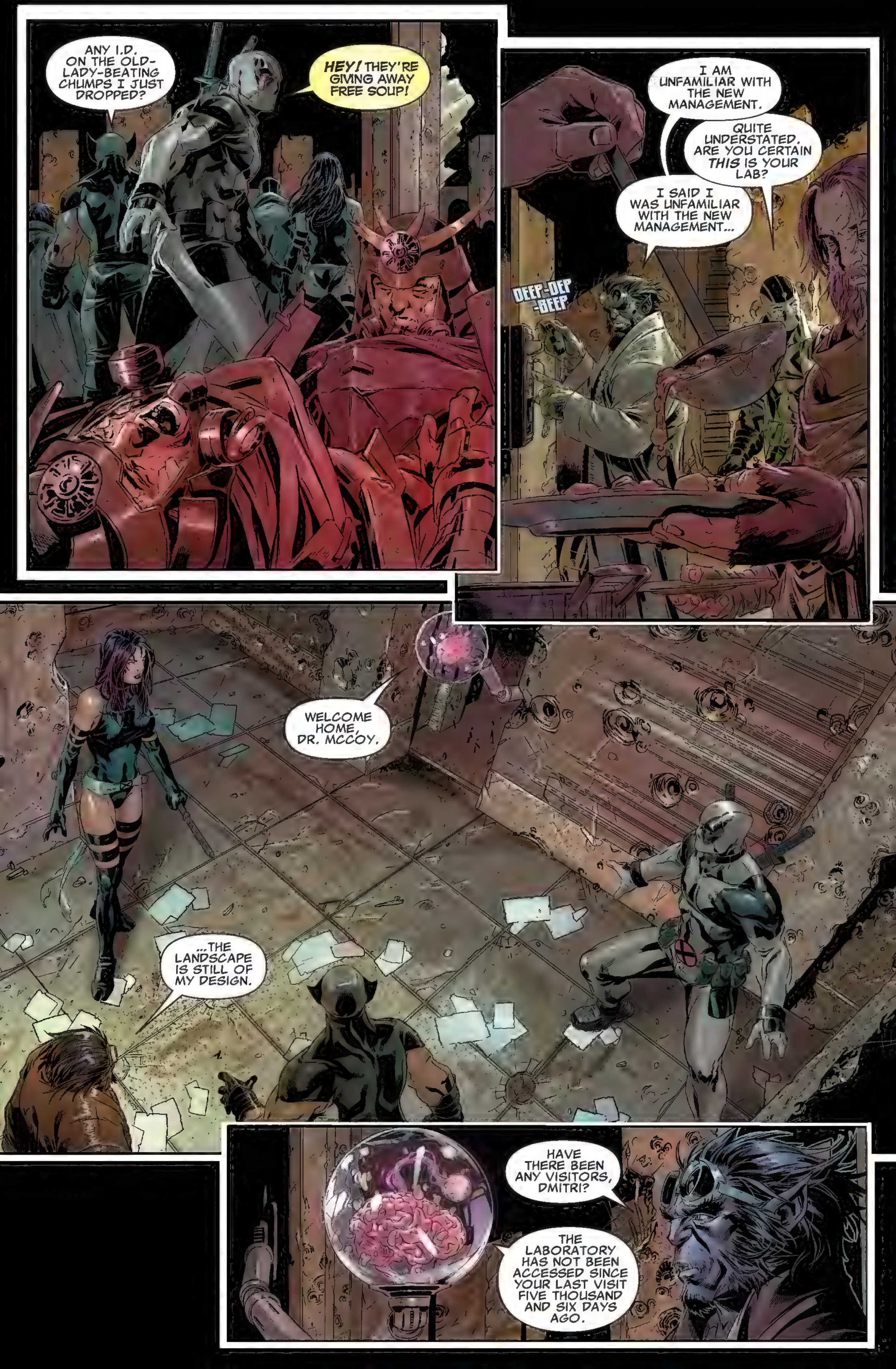

NIGHTCRAWLER. CABLE. JEAN...TOO MANY BRIGHT DAYS MARRED BY FUNERALS.
I AIN'T GONNA LOSE WARREN, TOO.
NO MATTER *WHAT* HE'S DONE.
BELLIES AFLUTTER WITH ANTICIPATION?
MINE IS. OH, JOY. *THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE* AWAITS.
DARK BEAST'S GOT A *THING* THAT CAN SEPARATE WARREN FROM THE DEVIL INSIDE HIM.
SO WE'RE GONNA GO GET THAT *THING*--
NO MATTER *WHERE* IT IS.
I'VE SCANNED THIS DARK BEAST'S MIND, WHAT HE SAYS IS TRUE.
EVEN SO, THERE'S NO WAY TO LOOK BEFORE THE LEAP.
TIME IS SHORT.
EVERY PASSING MINUTE THE DARKNESS INSIDE WARREN GROWS STRONGER.
MAKING MY FRIEND THE NEW APOCALYPSE.
HAVE WE INFORMED MR. MCCOY HOW *OFFENSIVELY* WE'LL MURDER HIM IF HE PULLS THE PROVERBIAL *"FAST ONE"*?
LOGAN DID.
BETSY ACTS HARD, BUT SHE'S SHAKEN...

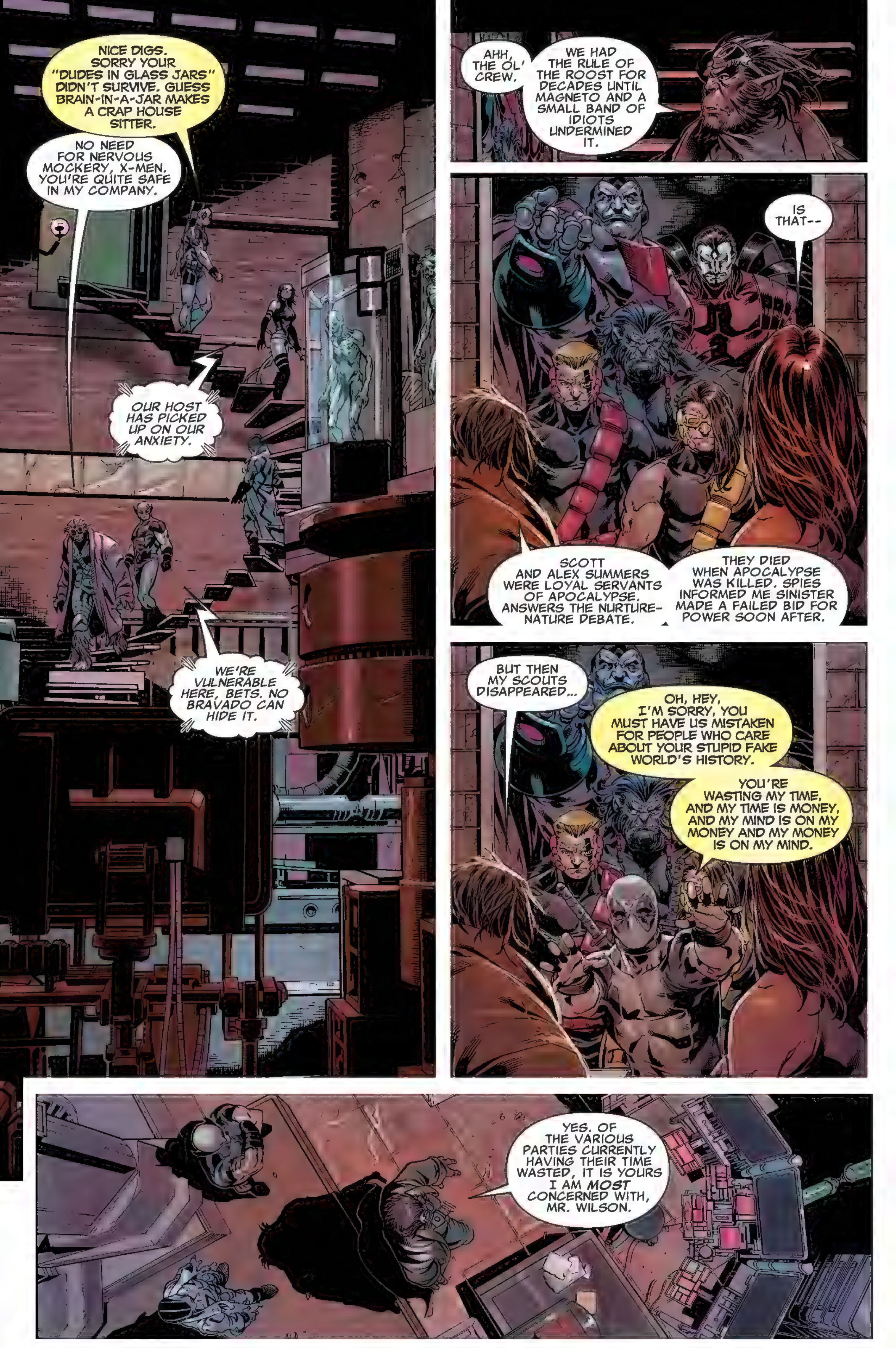

IN DENIAL ABOUT THE STAKES.
TRUST ME OR NOT--IF YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR FRIEND THE *LIFE SEED* IS THE *ONLY* SOLUTION.
NOW, ONCE THROUGH, WE MUST MOVE QUICKLY--THIS PORTAL WILL *DISAPPEAR* IN THREE HOURS.
A TIME LIMIT? NO WAY *THAT* GOES SIDEWAYS ON US.
AMPLE TIME TO GATHER THE *LIFE SEED* AND RETURN.
TEN BUCKS SAYS THIS IS A STUPID IDEA. ANYONE?
PACK IT IN, JITTERS.
BETSY, EVERYONE LINKED?
ALL BUT FANTOMEX, WHO *REFUSES* TO LOWER HIS *DAMPENING PLATES.*
WHAT A JERK *HE* IS.
I STILL DON'T TRUST THAT GUY.

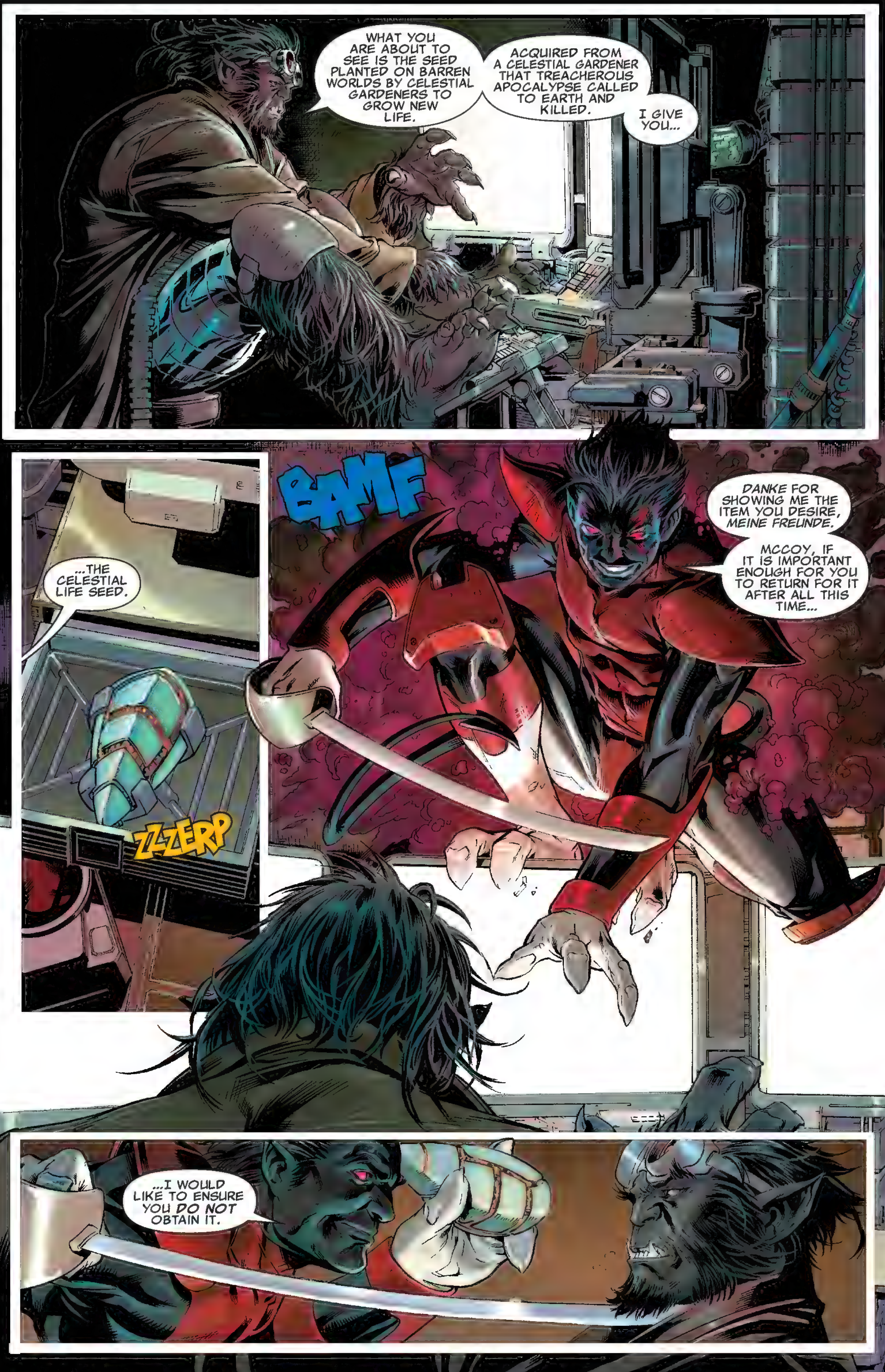

STENCH HITS.
I'M BACK IN WWII... THE CAMPS...
DEATH IN THE AIR.
LOTS OF IT.
ACCORDING TO THIS, THE CITY IS *SPARSELY* POPULATED.
THIS AIN'T NO CITY--
IT'S A GRAVEYARD.
YES, IT APPEARS SINCE THE DEATH OF APOCALYPSE THE WORLD'S NEW SUPERINTENDENT HAS DONE SOME... HUMAN SPRING-CLEANING.
NEED TO GET HIGH TO TRY AND SEE MY LAB.
WE NEED TO GET HIGH TO SEE YOUR LAB?
YOU GUYS REMEMBER THAT TIME WHEN WARREN WENT BAT-ASS CRAZY AND STARTED KILLING PEOPLE TO COVER UP X-FORCE?
WE HAD TO SPRING PSYCHO HANK MCCOY FROM PRISON SO HE COULD TAKE US TO HIS HOME DIMENSION IN "BUTTHOLE TOWN" SO WE COULD RUN AROUND LOOKING FOR A MAGIC SEED?
AHHH, THOSE WERE GOOD-GOOD TIMES, RIGHT?

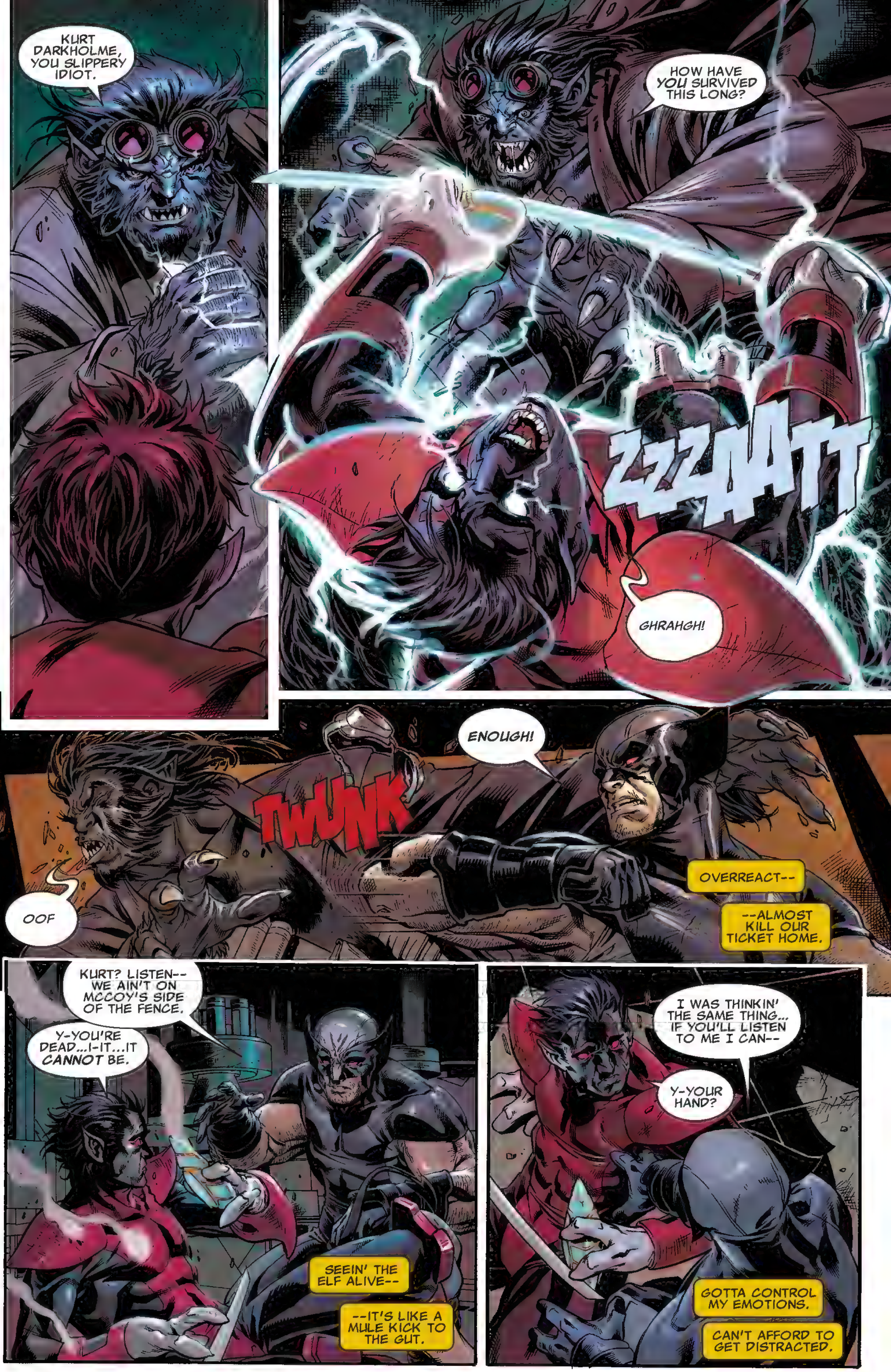

LOOK AT *THIS.*
ONE OF YOU ASSES OWES ME TEN DOLLARS.
NO ONE TOOK YOU UP ON YOUR BET.
THERE, MY LAB IS IN THAT BUILDING.
PLACE IS FILTHY WITH SENTINELS. STEALTH IS ADVISED.
LET'S GO.
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS IN A WORLD WITHOUT CHUCK XAVIER.
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN APOCALYPSE ASCENDS.
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS IF WE *FAIL.*
LOGAN?
LOGAN'S NOT RUNNING THIS SHOW, FLOWER.
IF YOU WANT TO SAVE POOR WARREN, YOU'LL FOLLOW *ME.*
AIN'T LIKE WE GOT ANY OPTIONS.

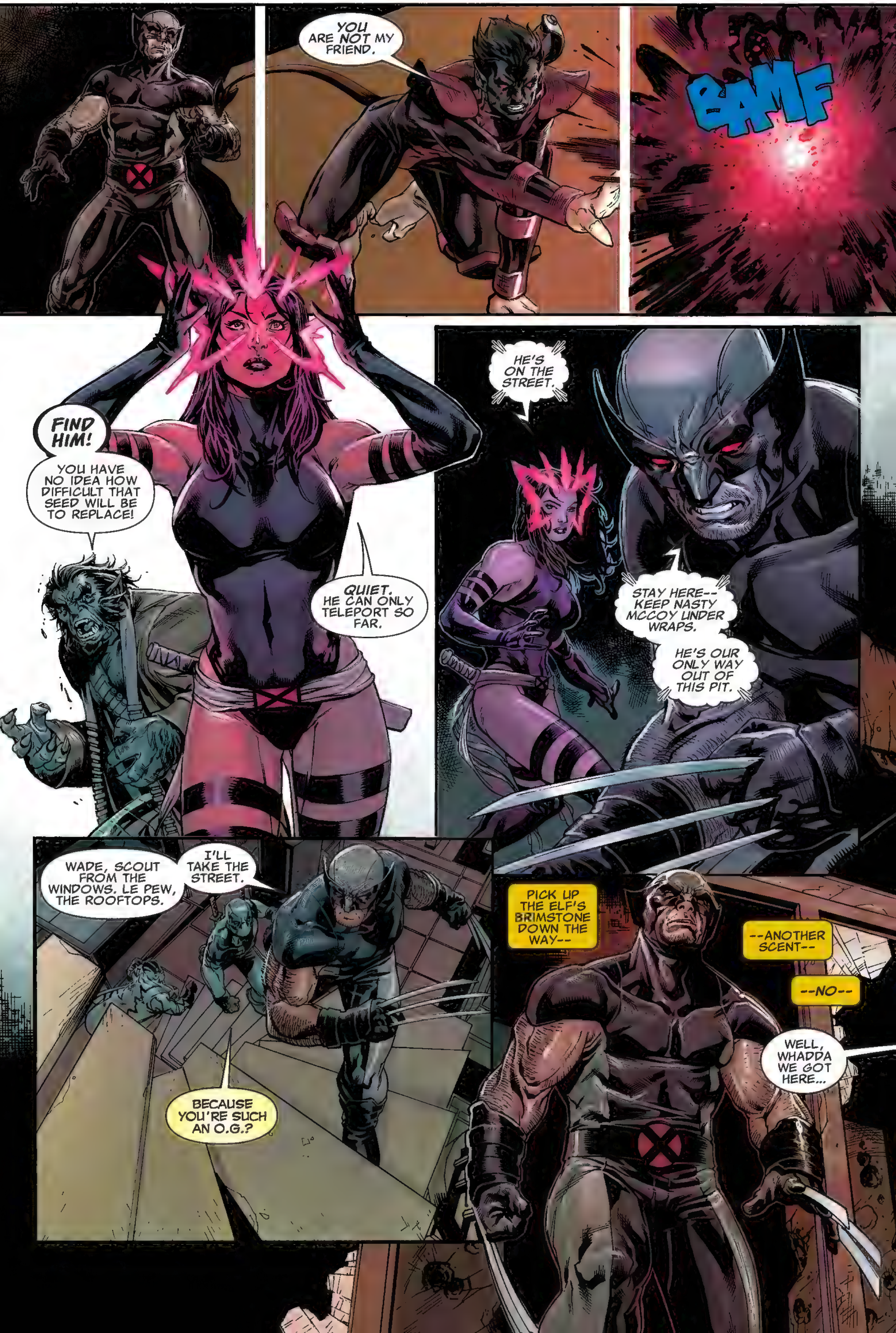

GET YOUR FOOD AND GET BACK TO WORK.
SHUFFLE YOUR OLD *HUMAN* BONES INSIDE OR I WILL *AID* YOU, WOMAN!
FORGIVE ME, MASTER AKKABA... IT'S MY FIRST MEAL IN DAYS...DOING MY *BEST*--
YOUR *BEST* IS WASTING MY TIME, GENE-TRASH!
TWOKK
IT'S BECAUSE SHE'S JUST AN OLD WOMAN.
WANNA SEE IF *MY* BEST MAKES THE *CUT*?
SNIKT
SNIKT

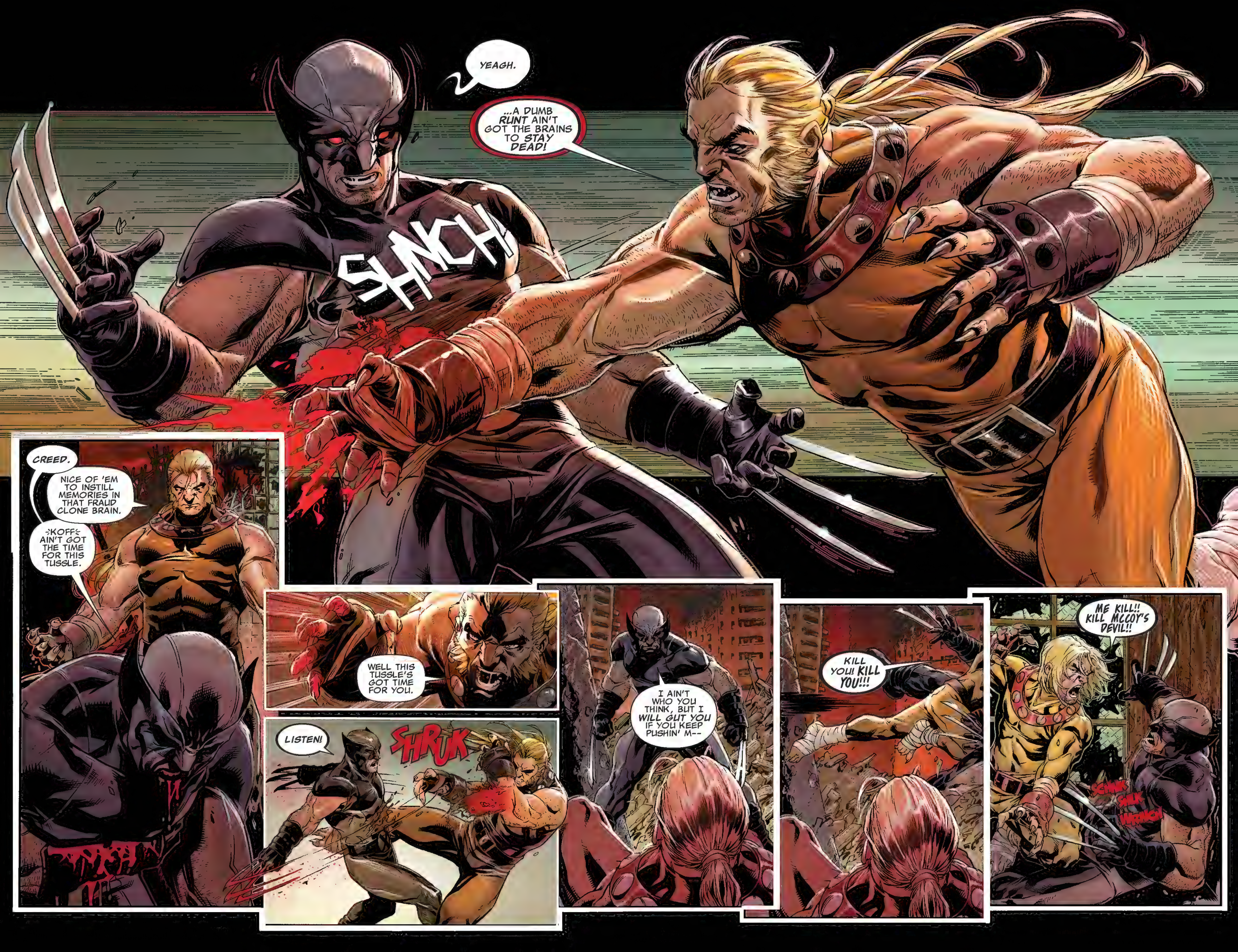

ANY I.D. ON THE OLD-LADY-BEATING CHUMPS I JUST DROPPED?
HEY! THEY'RE GIVING AWAY FREE SOUP!
I AM UNFAMILIAR WITH THE NEW MANAGEMENT.
QUITE UNDERSTATED. ARE YOU CERTAIN THIS IS YOUR LAB?
I SAID I WAS UNFAMILIAR WITH THE NEW MANAGEMENT...
DEEP-DEP -BEEP
WELCOME HOME, DR. MCCOY.
...THE LANDSCAPE IS STILL OF MY DESIGN.
HAVE THERE BEEN ANY VISITORS, DMITRI?
THE LABORATORY HAS NOT BEEN ACCESSED SINCE YOUR LAST VISIT FIVE THOUSAND AND SIX DAYS AGO.

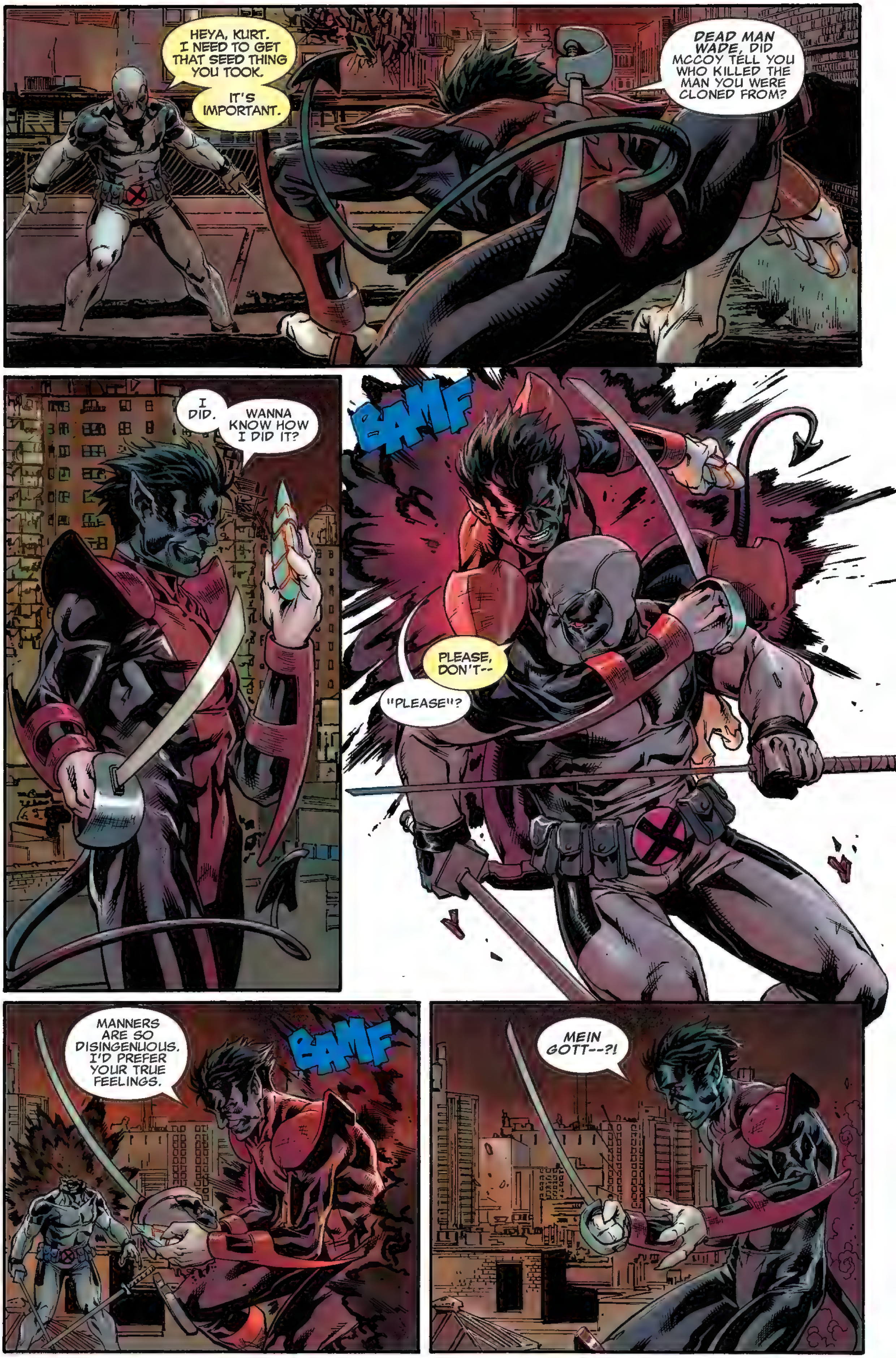

NICE DIGS. SORRY YOUR "DUDES IN GLASS JARS" DIDN'T SURVIVE. GUESS BRAIN-IN-A-JAR MAKES A CRAP HOUSE SITTER.
NO NEED FOR NERVOUS MOCKERY, X-MEN. YOU'RE QUITE SAFE IN MY COMPANY.
OUR HOST HAS PICKED UP ON OUR ANXIETY.
WE'RE VULNERABLE HERE, BETS. NO BRAVADO CAN HIDE IT.
AHH, THE OL' CREW.
WE HAD THE RULE OF THE ROOST FOR DECADES UNTIL MAGNETO AND A SMALL BAND OF IDIOTS UNDERMINED IT.
IS THAT--
SCOTT AND ALEX SUMMERS WERE LOYAL SERVANTS OF APOCALYPSE. ANSWERS THE NURTURE-NATURE DEBATE.
THEY DIED WHEN APOCALYPSE WAS KILLED. SPIES INFORMED ME SINISTER MADE A FAILED BID FOR POWER SOON AFTER.
BUT THEN MY SCOUTS DISAPPEARED...
OH, HEY, I'M SORRY, YOU MUST HAVE US MISTAKEN FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT YOUR STUPID FAKE WORLD'S HISTORY.
YOU'RE WASTING MY TIME, AND MY TIME IS MONEY, AND MY MIND IS ON MY MONEY AND MY MONEY IS ON MY MIND.
YES. OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES CURRENTLY HAVING THEIR TIME WASTED, IT IS YOURS I AM MOST CONCERNED WITH, MR. WILSON.

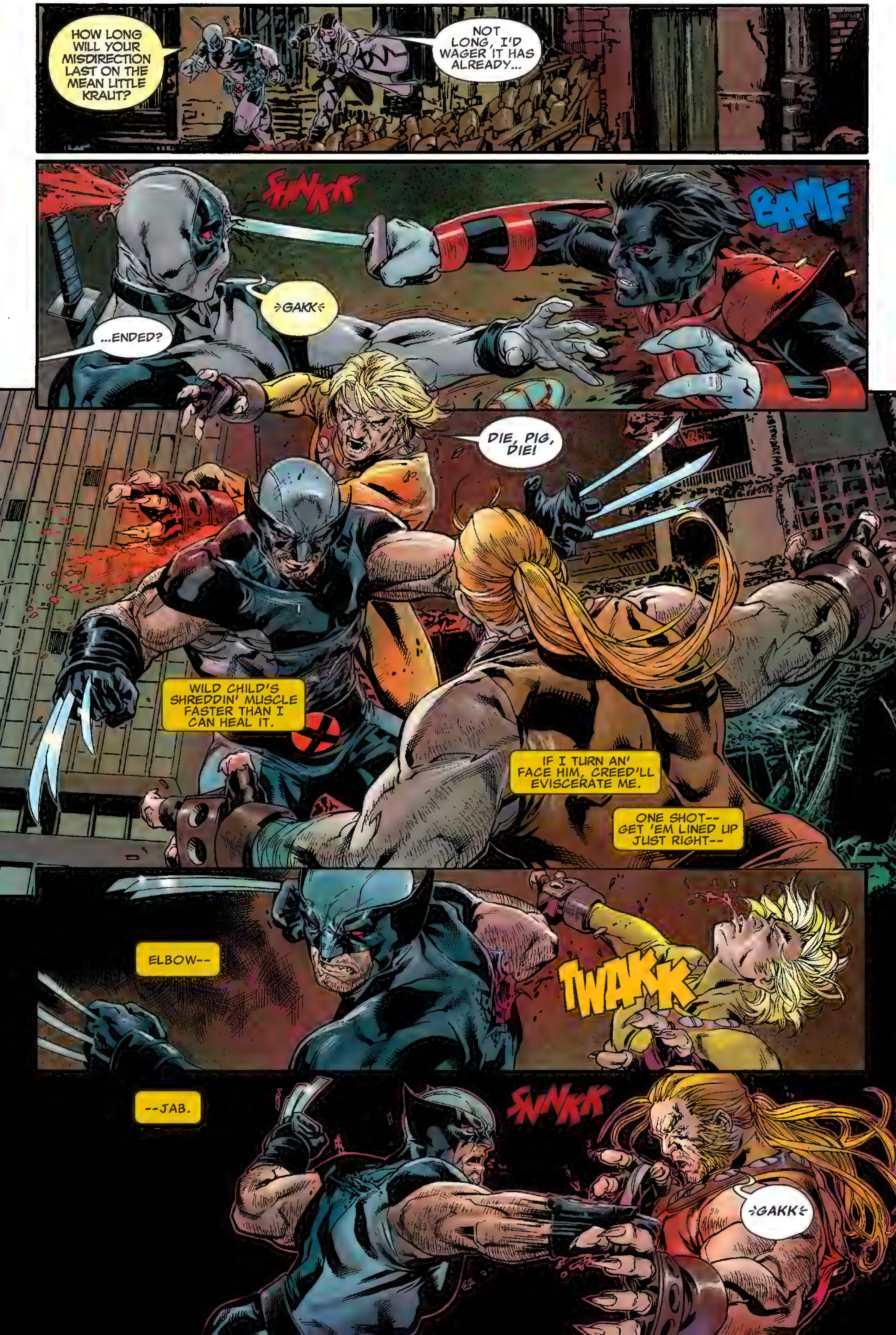

WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO SEE IS THE SEED PLANTED ON BARREN WORLDS BY CELESTIAL GARDENERS TO GROW NEW LIFE.
ACQUIRED FROM A CELESTIAL GARDENER THAT TREACHEROUS APOCALYPSE CALLED TO EARTH AND KILLED.
I GIVE YOU...
...THE CELESTIAL LIFE SEED.
ZZZERP
BAMF
DANKE FOR SHOWING ME THE ITEM YOU DESIRE, MEINE FREUNDE.
MCCOY, IF IT IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR YOU TO RETURN FOR IT AFTER ALL THIS TIME...
...I WOULD LIKE TO ENSURE YOU DO NOT OBTAIN IT.

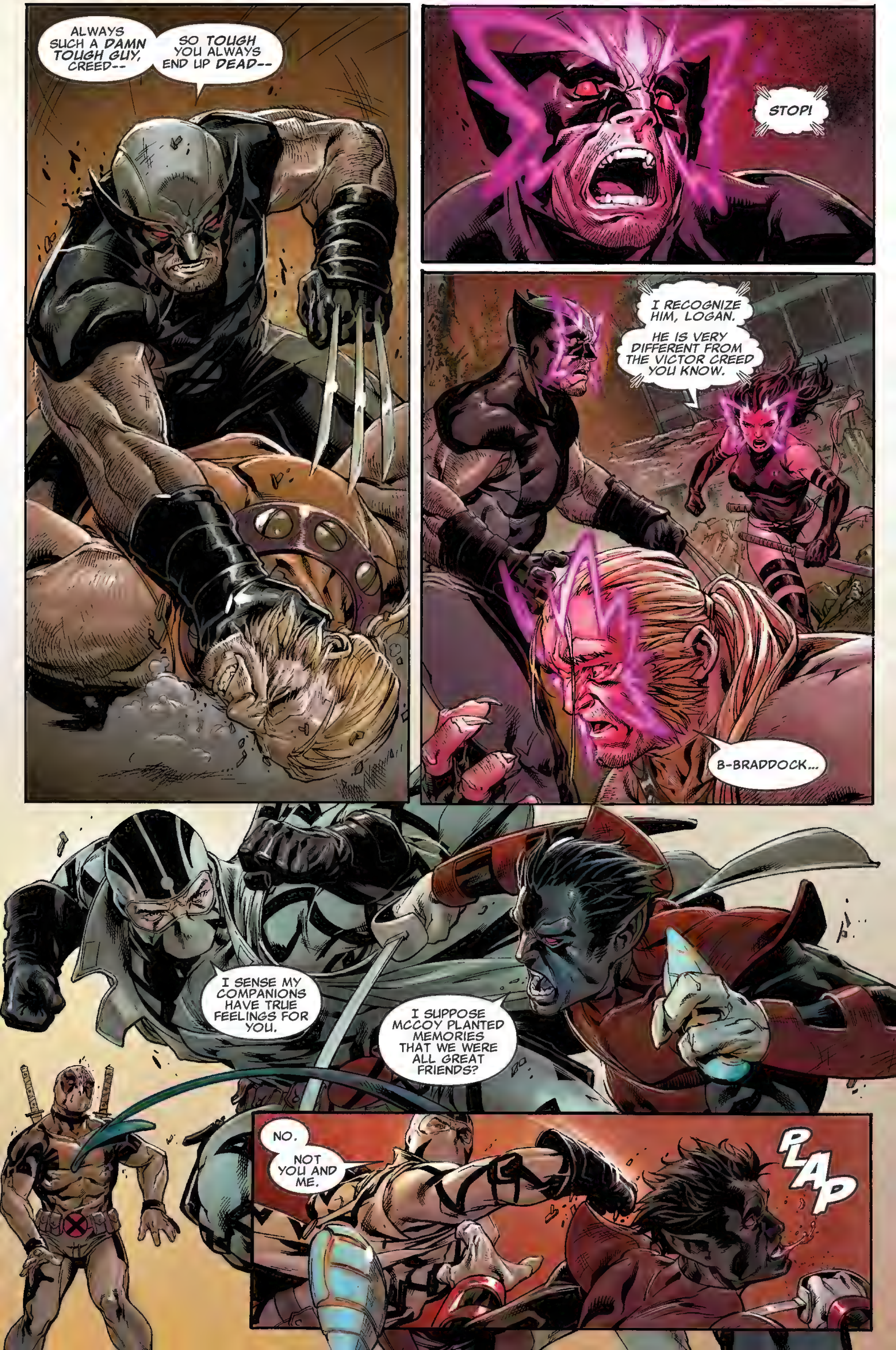

KURT DARKHOLME, YOU SLIPPERY IDIOT.
HOW HAVE *YOU* SURVIVED THIS LONG?
ZZZAAATT
GHRAHGH!
ENOUGH!
TWUNK
OOF
OVERREACT--
--ALMOST KILL OUR TICKET HOME.
KURT? LISTEN-- WE AIN'T ON MCCOY'S SIDE OF THE FENCE.
Y-YOU'RE DEAD...I-IT...IT *CANNOT* BE.
SEEIN' THE ELF ALIVE--
--IT'S LIKE A MULE KICK TO THE GUT.
I WAS THINKIN' THE SAME THING... IF YOU'LL LISTEN TO ME I CAN--
Y-YOUR HAND?
GOTTA CONTROL MY EMOTIONS.
CAN'T AFFORD TO GET DISTRACTED.

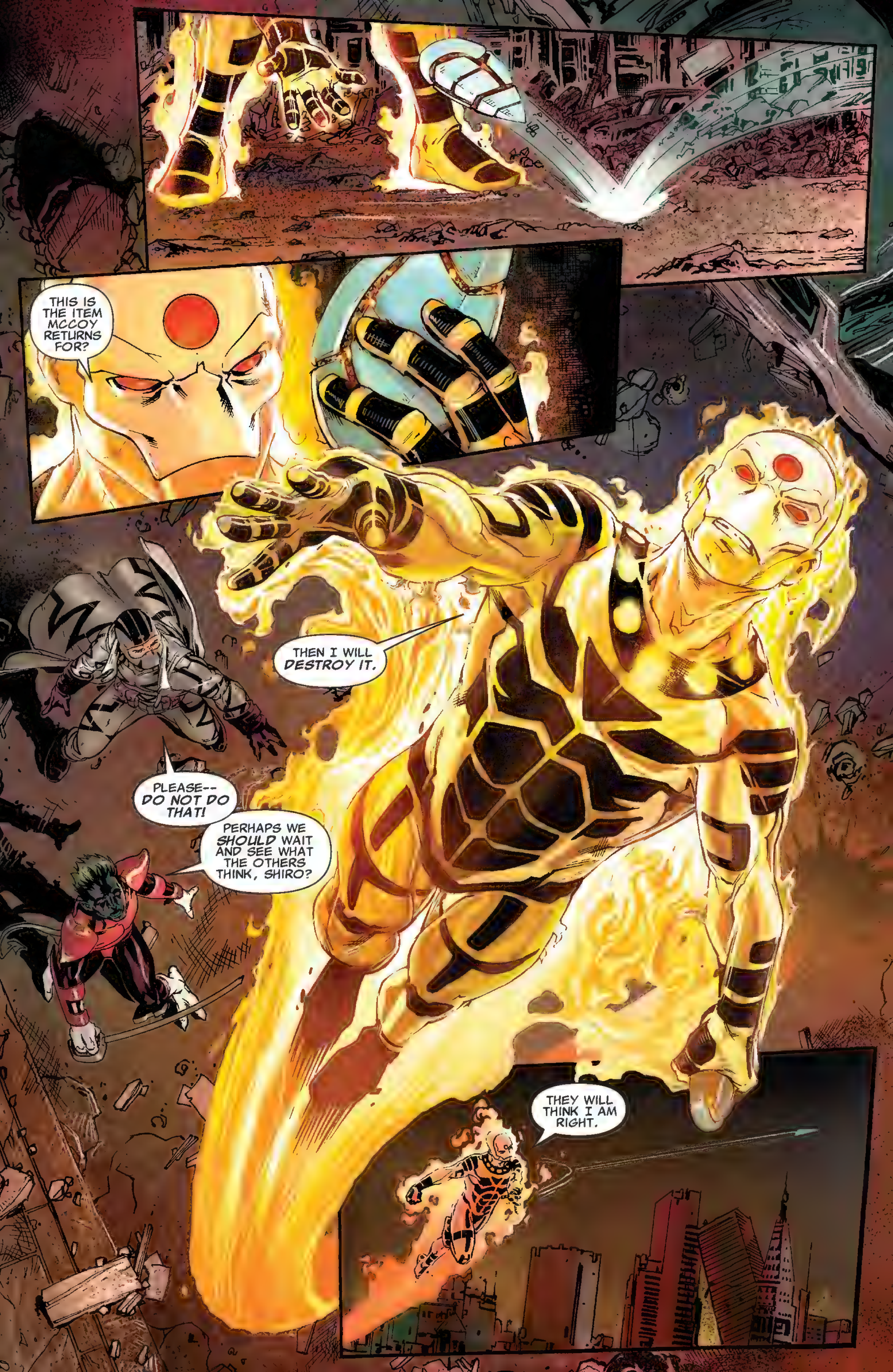

YOU ARE NOT MY FRIEND.
BAMF
FIND HIM!
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW DIFFICULT THAT SEED WILL BE TO REPLACE!
QUIET. HE CAN ONLY TELEPORT SO FAR.
HE'S ON THE STREET.
STAY HERE-- KEEP NASTY MCCOY UNDER WRAPS.
HE'S OUR ONLY WAY OUT OF THIS PIT.
WADE, SCOUT FROM THE WINDOWS. LE PEW, THE ROOFTOPS.
I'LL TAKE THE STREET.
BECAUSE YOU'RE SUCH AN O.G.?
PICK UP THE ELF'S BRIMSTONE DOWN THE WAY--
--ANOTHER SCENT--
--NO--
WELL, WHADDA WE GOT HERE...

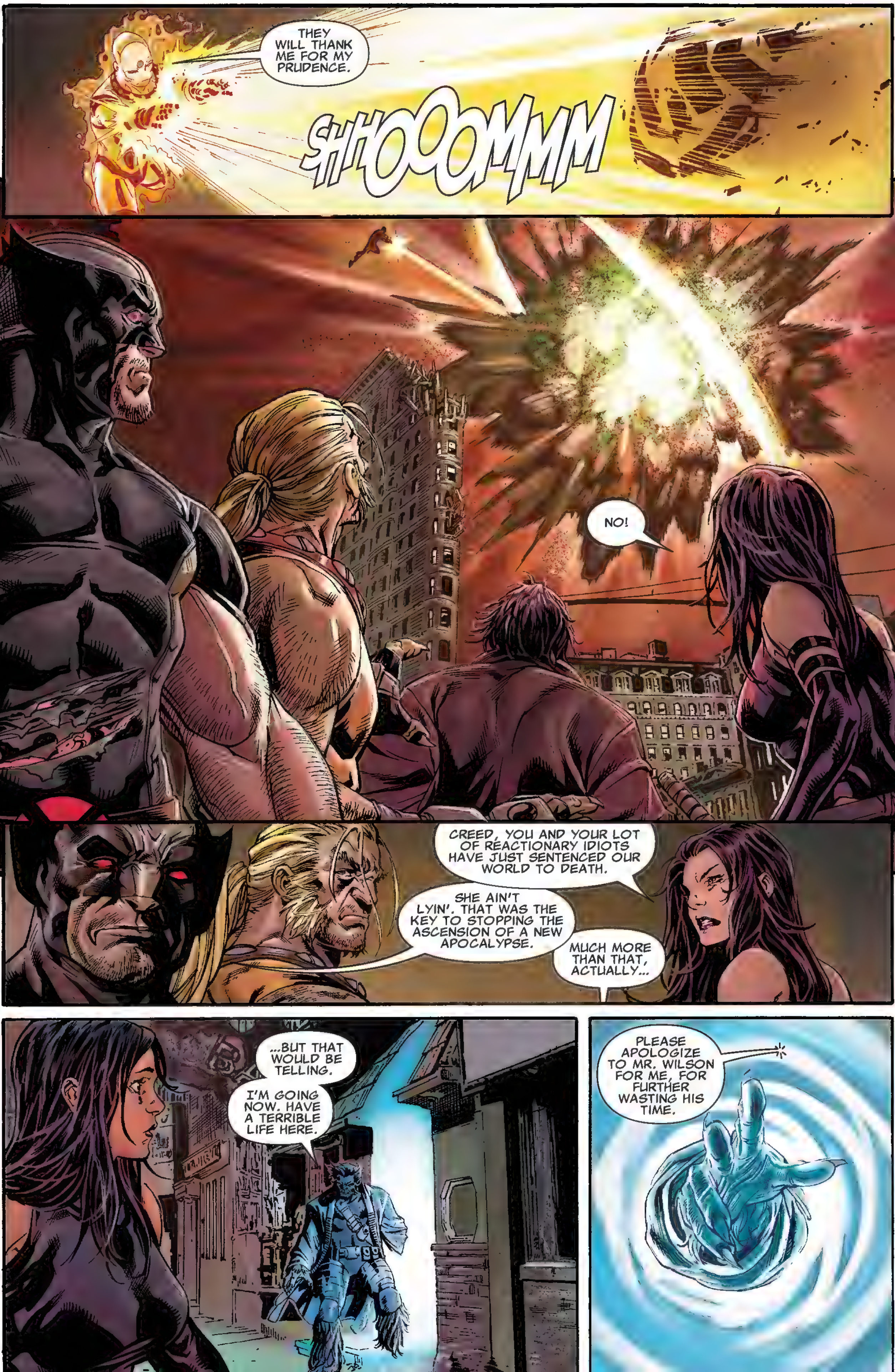

YEAGH.
...A DUMB RUNT AIN'T GOT THE BRAINS TO STAY DEAD!
SHNCH!
CREED.
NICE OF 'EM TO INSTILL MEMORIES IN THAT FRAUD CLONE BRAIN.
-KOFF- AIN'T GOT THE TIME FOR THIS TUSSLE.
WELL THIS TUSSLE'S GOT TIME FOR YOU.
LISTEN!
SHRUK
I AIN'T WHO YOU THINK, BUT I WILL GUT YOU IF YOU KEEP PUSHIN' M--
KILL YOU!! KILL YOU!!!
ME KILL!! KILL MCCOY'S DEVIL!!
SCHNK
SHLK
WRNCH

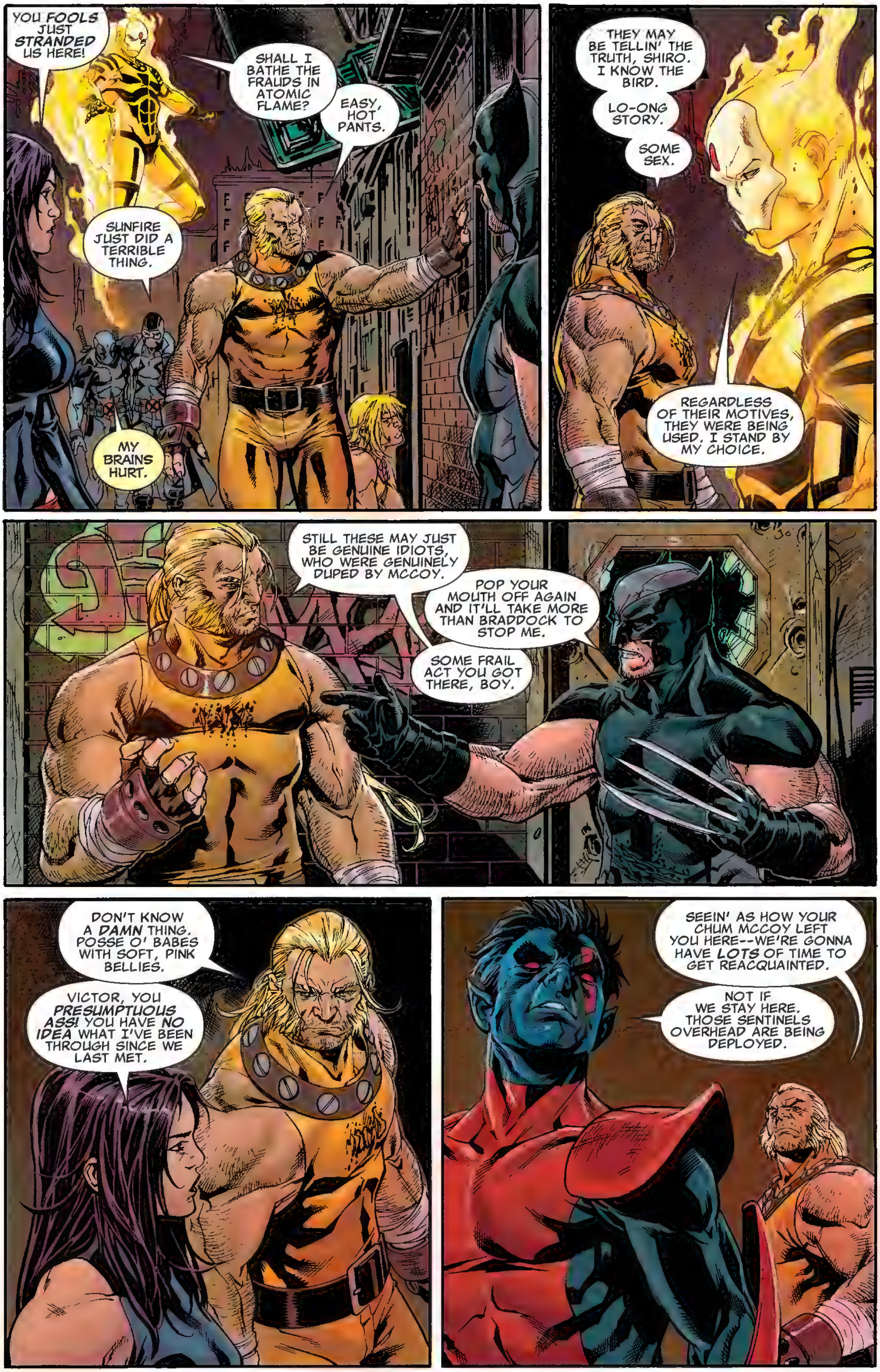

HEYA, KURT. I NEED TO GET THAT SEED THING YOU TOOK.
IT'S IMPORTANT.
DEAD MAN WADE, DID MCCOY TELL YOU WHO KILLED THE MAN YOU WERE CLONED FROM?
I DID.
WANNA KNOW HOW I DID IT?
BAMF
PLEASE, DON'T--
"PLEASE"?
MANNERS ARE SO DISINGENUOUS. I'D PREFER YOUR TRUE FEELINGS.
BAMF
MEIN GOTT--?!

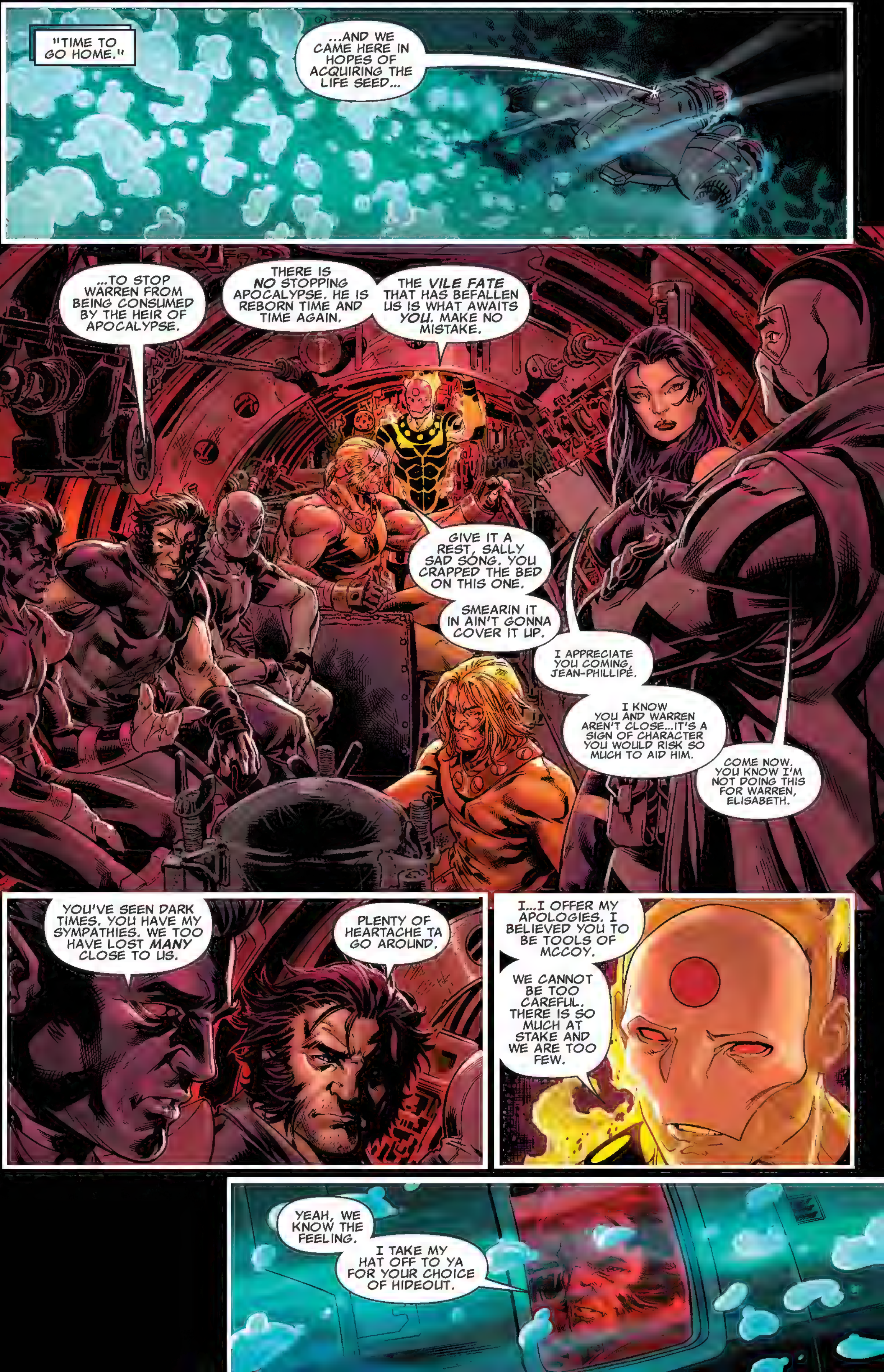

HOW LONG WILL YOUR MISDIRECTION LAST ON THE MEAN LITTLE KRAUT?
NOT LONG, I'D WAGER IT HAS ALREADY...
SHNKK
BAMF
GAKK
...ENDED?
DIE, PIG, DIE!
WILD CHILD'S SHREDDIN' MUSCLE FASTER THAN I CAN HEAL IT.
IF I TURN AN' FACE HIM, CREED'LL EVISCERATE ME.
ONE SHOT--GET 'EM LINED UP JUST RIGHT--
ELBOW--
TWAKK
--JAB.
SNKK
GAKK

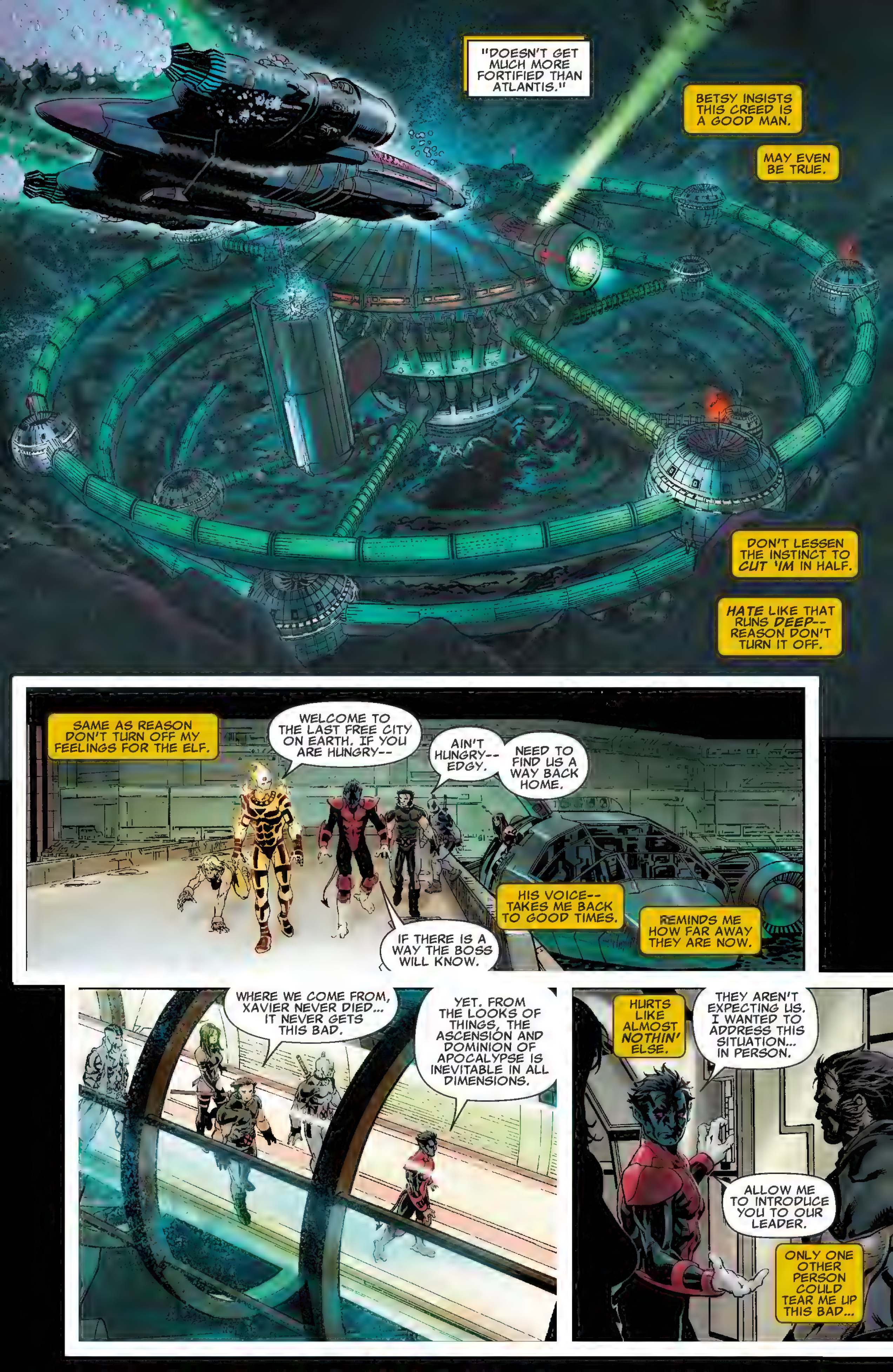

ALWAYS SUCH A DAMN TOUGH GUY, CREED--
SO TOUGH YOU ALWAYS END UP DEAD--
STOP!
I RECOGNIZE HIM, LOGAN.
HE IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE VICTOR CREED YOU KNOW.
B-BRADDOCK...
I SENSE MY COMPANIONS HAVE TRUE FEELINGS FOR YOU.
I SUPPOSE MCCOY PLANTED MEMORIES THAT WE WERE ALL GREAT FRIENDS?
NO.
NOT YOU AND ME.
PLAP

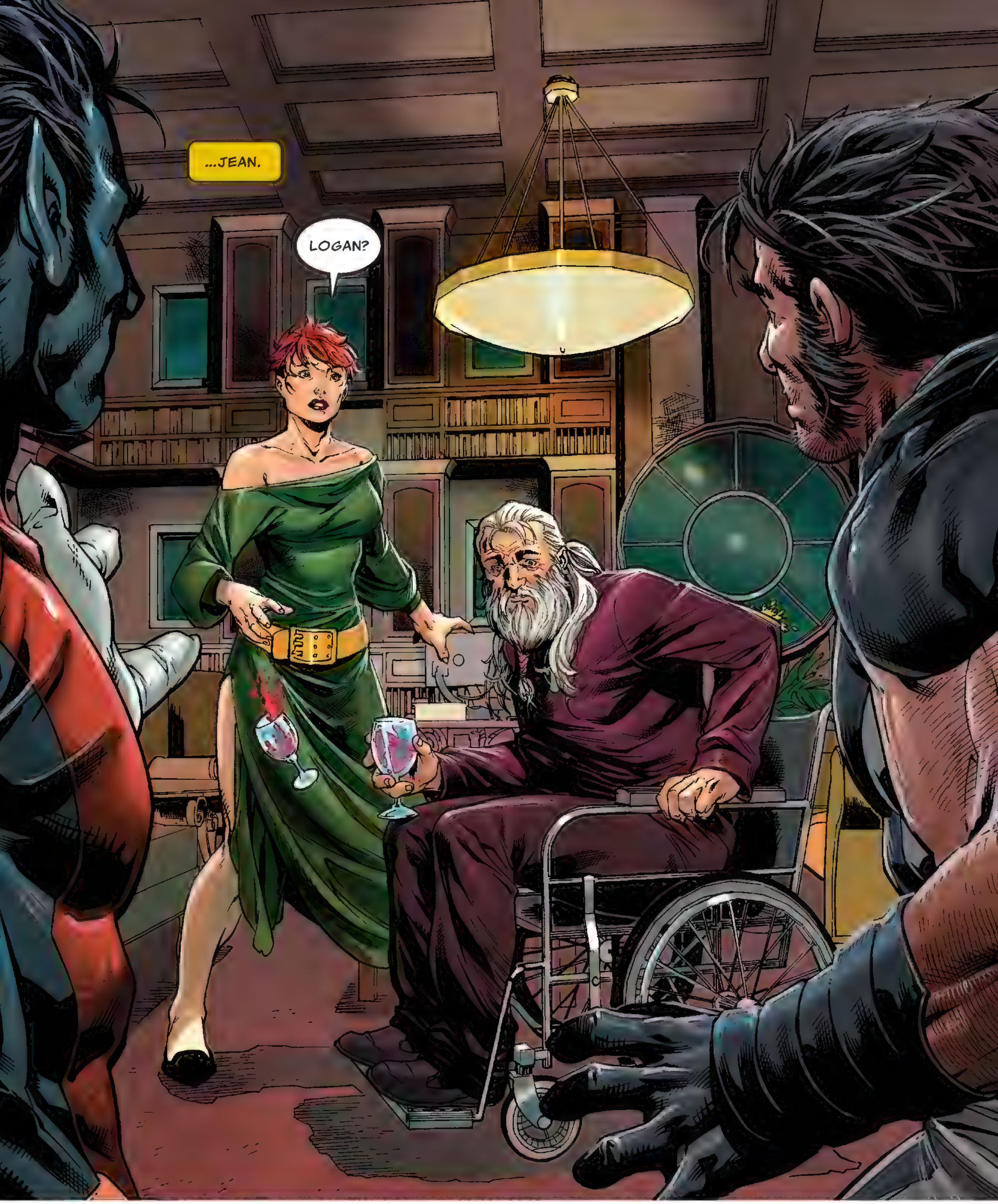

THIS IS THE ITEM MCCOY RETURNS FOR?
THEN I WILL *DESTROY* IT.
PLEASE-- *DO NOT DO THAT!*
PERHAPS WE *SHOULD* WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE OTHERS THINK, SHIRO?
THEY WILL THINK I AM RIGHT.

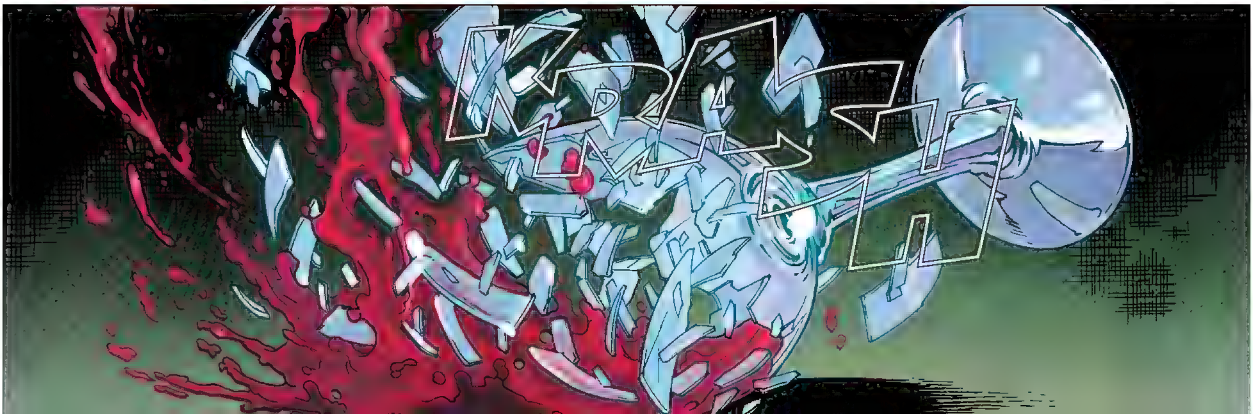

THEY WILL THANK ME FOR MY PRUDENCE.
SHHOOOMMMM
NO!
CREED, YOU AND YOUR LOT OF REACTIONARY IDIOTS HAVE JUST SENTENCED OUR WORLD TO DEATH.
SHE AIN'T LYIN'. THAT WAS THE KEY TO STOPPING THE ASCENSION OF A NEW APOCALYPSE.
MUCH MORE THAN THAT, ACTUALLY...
...BUT THAT WOULD BE TELLING.
I'M GOING NOW. HAVE A TERRIBLE LIFE HERE.
PLEASE APOLOGIZE TO MR. WILSON FOR ME, FOR FURTHER WASTING HIS TIME.


YOU FOOLS JUST STRANDED US HERE!
SHALL I BATHE THE FRAUDS IN ATOMIC FLAME?
EASY, HOT PANTS.
SUNFIRE JUST DID A TERRIBLE THING.
MY BRAINS HURT.
THEY MAY BE TELLIN' THE TRUTH, SHIRO. I KNOW THE BIRD.
LO-ONG STORY.
SOME SEX.
REGARDLESS OF THEIR MOTIVES, THEY WERE BEING USED. I STAND BY MY CHOICE.
STILL THESE MAY JUST BE GENUINE IDIOTS, WHO WERE GENUINELY DUPED BY MCCOY.
POP YOUR MOUTH OFF AGAIN AND IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN BRADDOCK TO STOP ME.
SOME FRAIL ACT YOU GOT THERE, BOY.
DON'T KNOW A DAMN THING. POSSE O' BABES WITH SOFT, PINK BELLIES.
VICTOR, YOU PRESUMPTUOUS ASS! YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH SINCE WE LAST MET.
SEEIN' AS HOW YOUR CHUM MCCOY LEFT YOU HERE--WE'RE GONNA HAVE LOTS OF TIME TO GET REACQUAINTED.
NOT IF WE STAY HERE. THOSE SENTINELS OVERHEAD ARE BEING DEPLOYED.


"TIME TO GO HOME."
...AND WE CAME HERE IN HOPES OF ACQUIRING THE LIFE SEED...
...TO STOP WARREN FROM BEING CONSUMED BY THE HEIR OF APOCALYPSE.
THERE IS *NO* STOPPING APOCALYPSE. HE IS REBORN TIME AND TIME AGAIN.
THE *VILE FATE* THAT HAS BEFALLEN US IS WHAT AWAITS *YOU*. MAKE NO MISTAKE.
GIVE IT A REST, SALLY SAD SONG. YOU CRAPPED THE BED ON THIS ONE.
SMEARIN IT IN AIN'T GONNA COVER IT UP.
I APPRECIATE YOU COMING, JEAN-PHILLIPE.
I KNOW YOU AND WARREN AREN'T CLOSE...IT'S A SIGN OF CHARACTER YOU WOULD RISK SO MUCH TO AID HIM.
COME NOW. YOU KNOW I'M NOT DOING THIS FOR WARREN, ELISABETH.
YOU'VE SEEN DARK TIMES. YOU HAVE MY SYMPATHIES. WE TOO HAVE LOST *MANY* CLOSE TO US.
PLENTY OF HEARTACHE TA GO AROUND.
I...I OFFER MY APOLOGIES. I BELIEVED YOU TO BE TOOLS OF MCCOY.
WE CANNOT BE TOO CAREFUL. THERE IS SO MUCH AT STAKE AND WE ARE TOO FEW.
YEAH, WE KNOW THE FEELING.
I TAKE MY HAT OFF TO YA FOR YOUR CHOICE OF HIDEOUT.


"DOESN'T GET MUCH MORE FORTIFIED THAN ATLANTIS."
BETSY INSISTS THIS CREED IS A GOOD MAN.
MAY EVEN BE TRUE.
DON'T LESSEN THE INSTINCT TO *CUT 'IM* IN HALF.
HATE LIKE THAT RUNS *DEEP*-- REASON DON'T TURN IT OFF.
SAME AS REASON DON'T TURN OFF MY FEELINGS FOR THE ELF.
WELCOME TO THE LAST FREE CITY ON EARTH. IF YOU ARE HUNGRY--
AIN'T HUNGRY-- EDGY.
NEED TO FIND US A WAY BACK HOME.
IF THERE IS A WAY THE BOSS WILL KNOW.
HIS VOICE-- TAKES ME BACK TO GOOD TIMES.
REMINDS ME HOW FAR AWAY THEY ARE NOW.
WHERE WE COME FROM, XAVIER NEVER DIED... IT NEVER GETS THIS BAD.
YET. FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, THE ASCENSION AND DOMINION OF APOCALYPSE IS INEVITABLE IN ALL DIMENSIONS.
HURTS LIKE ALMOST *NOTHIN'* ELSE.
THEY AREN'T EXPECTING US. I WANTED TO ADDRESS THIS SITUATION... IN PERSON.
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO OUR LEADER.
ONLY ONE OTHER PERSON COULD TEAR ME UP THIS BAD...


...JEAN.
LOGAN?

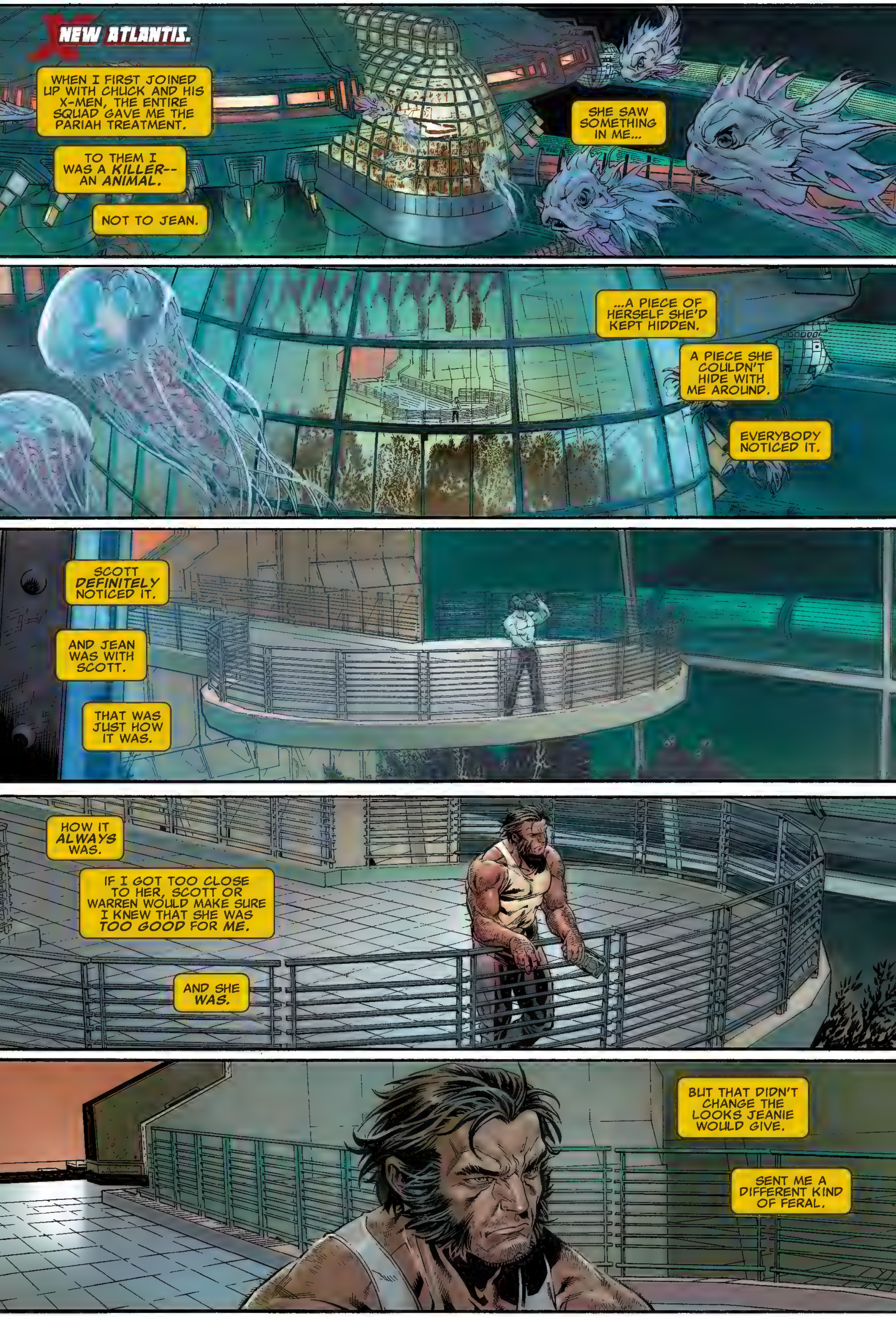

KRASH

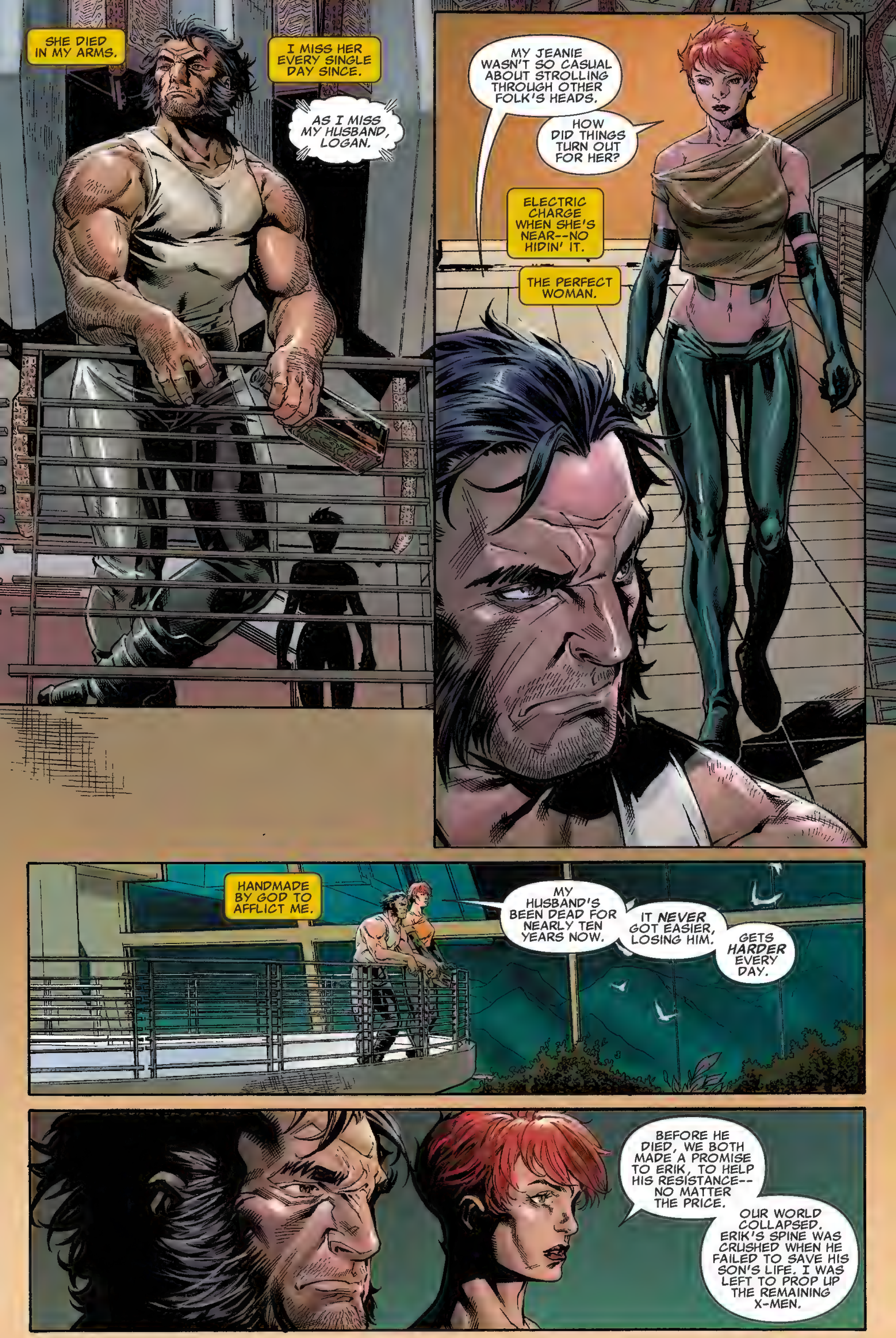
UNCANNY X-FORCE 12 VARIANT
ART BY ADAM KUBERT & JUSTIN PONSOR

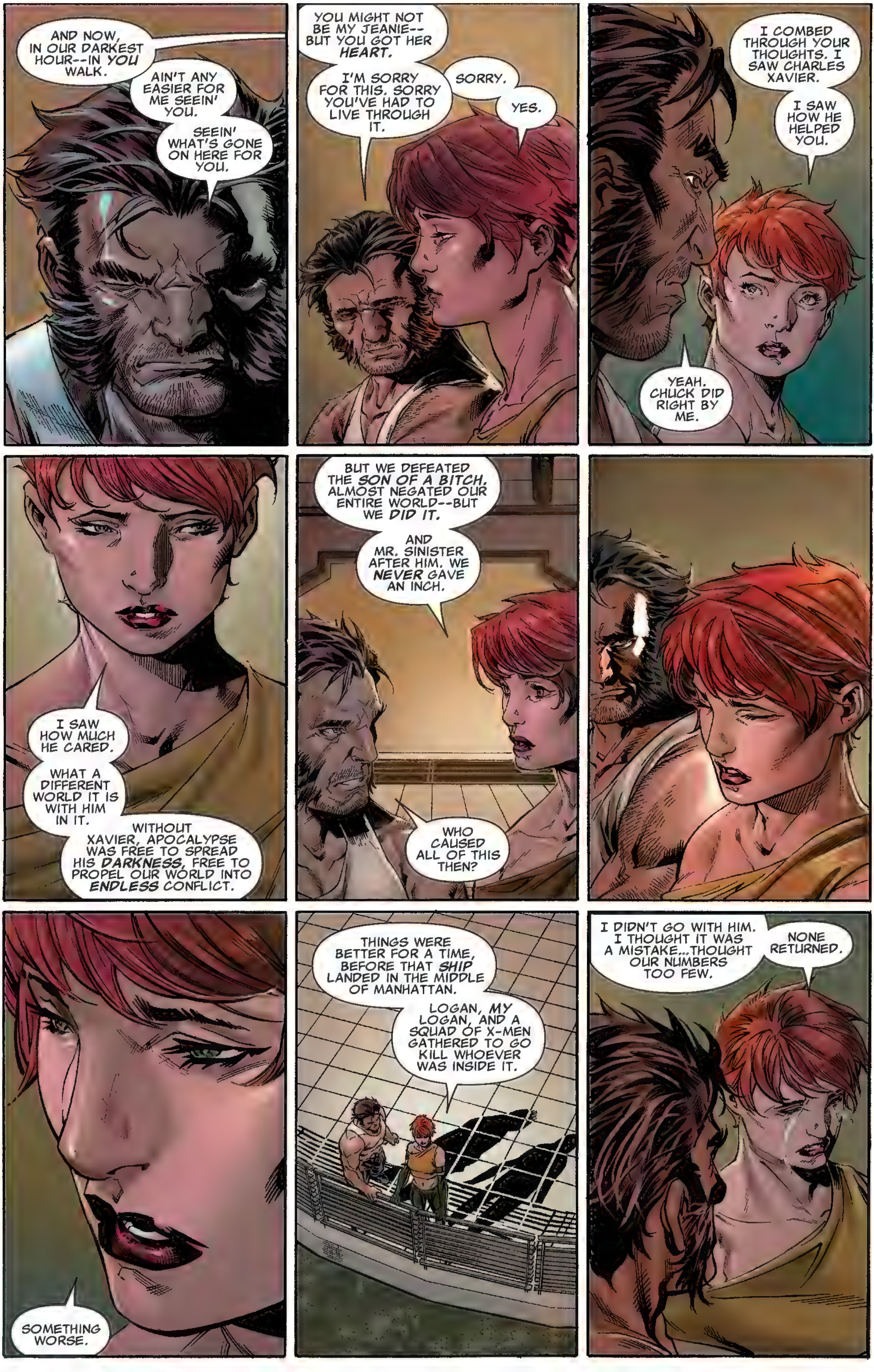
12

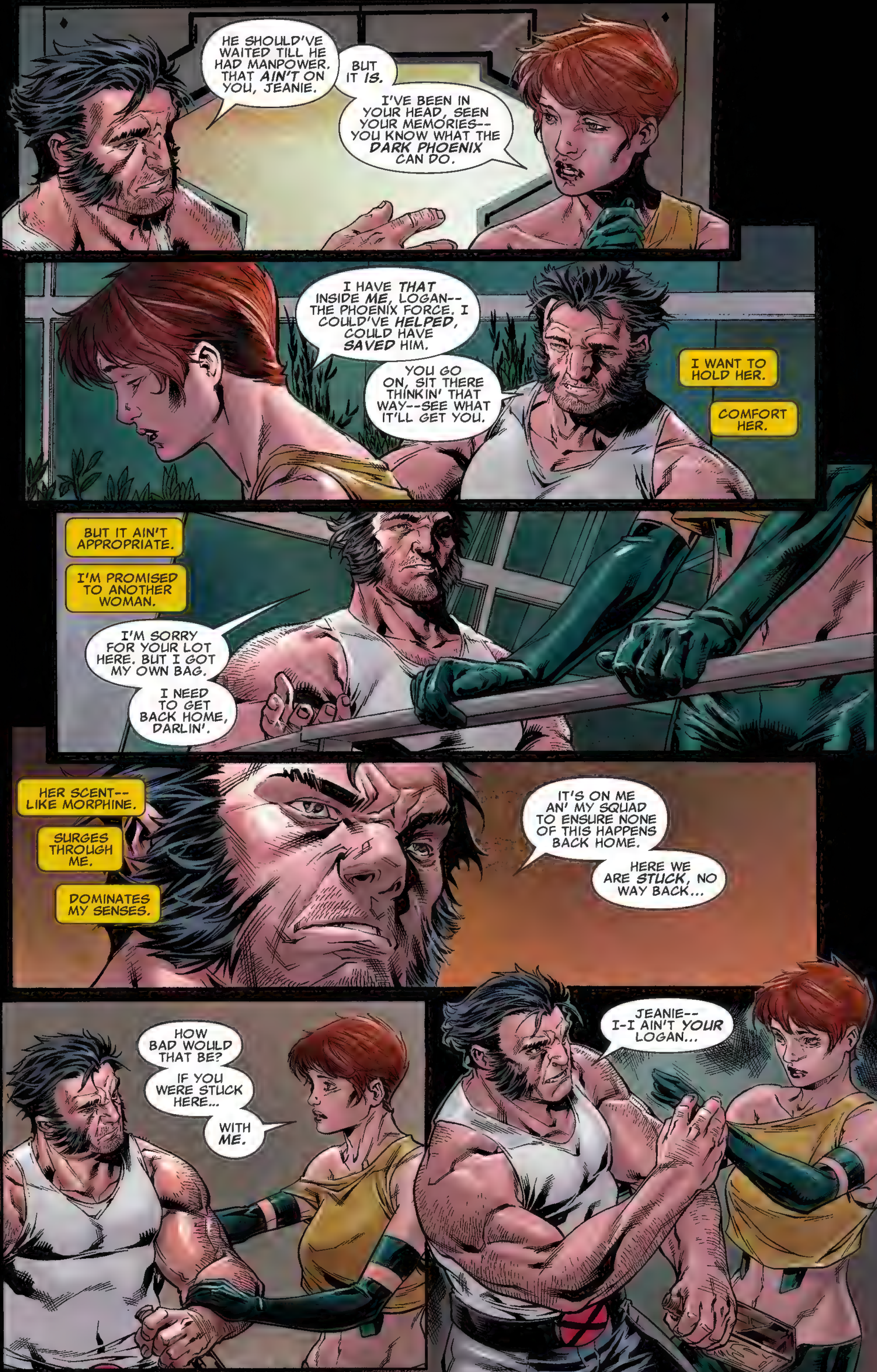
THE DARK ANGEL SAGA

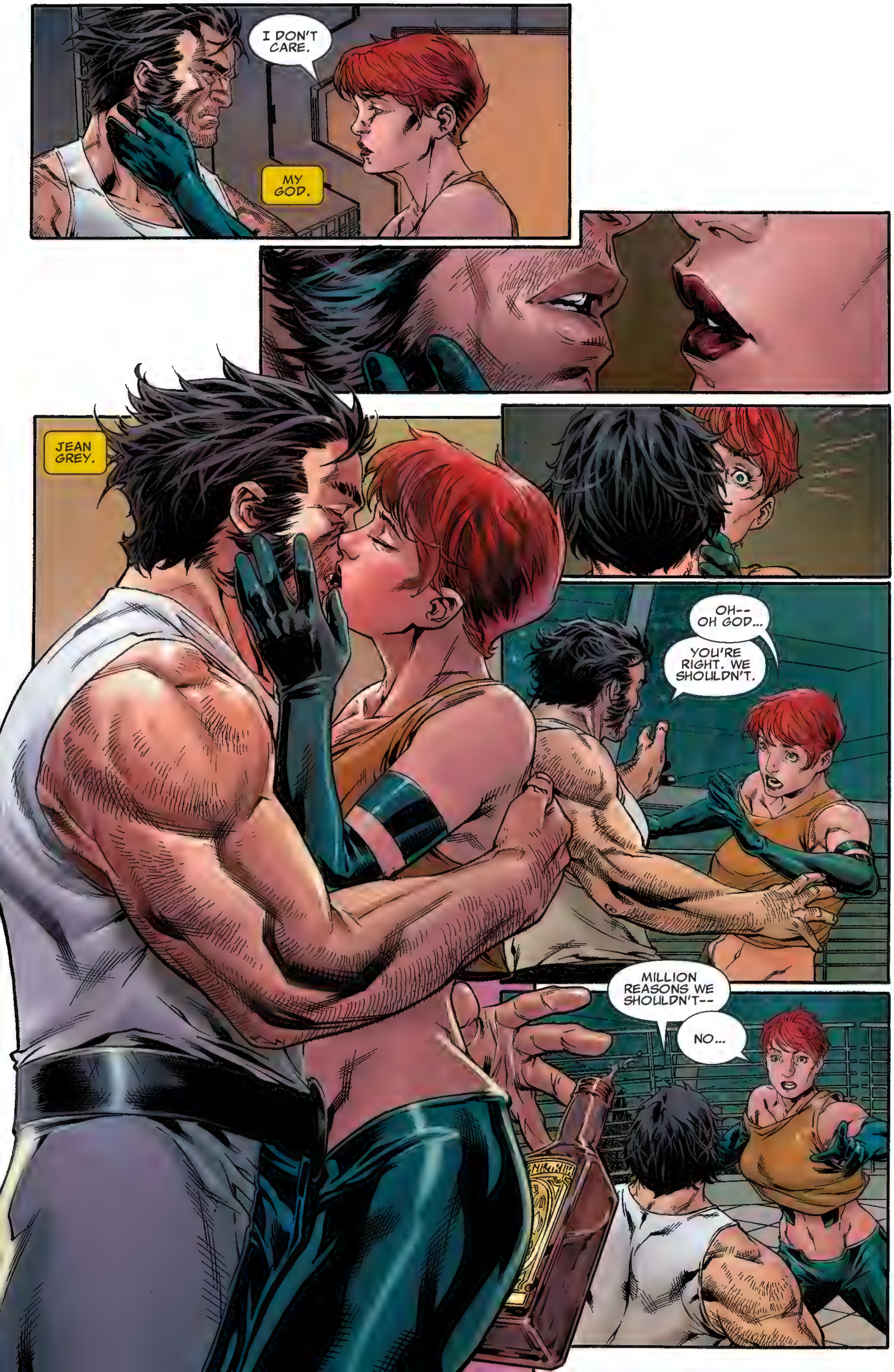
CHAPTER 2: INTERRUPTIONS

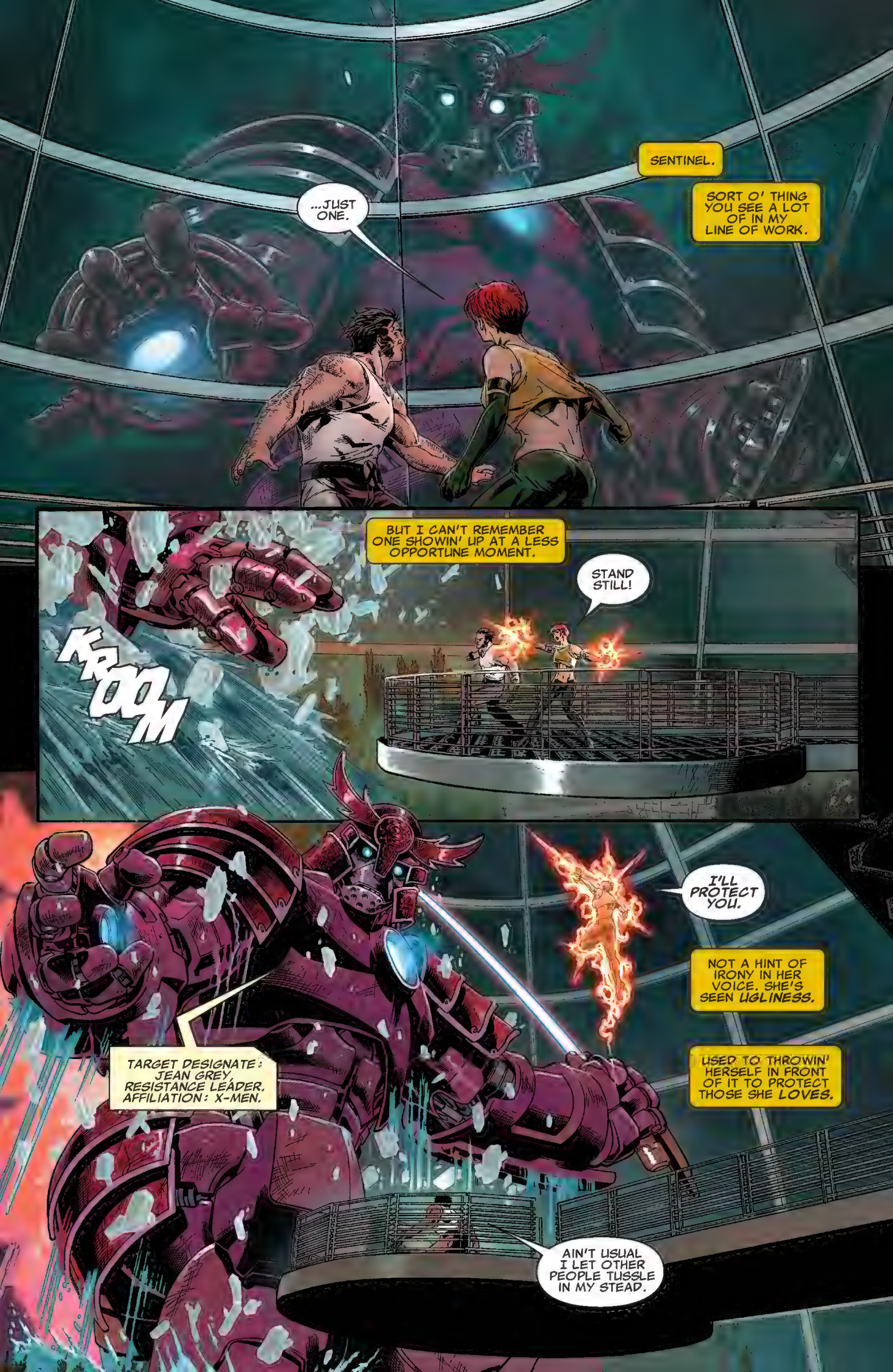

NEW ATLANTIS.
WHEN I FIRST JOINED UP WITH CHUCK AND HIS X-MEN, THE ENTIRE SQUAD GAVE ME THE PARIAH TREATMENT.
TO THEM I WAS A *KILLER*-- AN *ANIMAL*.
NOT TO JEAN.
SHE SAW SOMETHING IN ME...
...A PIECE OF HERSELF SHE'D KEPT HIDDEN.
A PIECE SHE COULDN'T HIDE WITH ME AROUND.
EVERYBODY NOTICED IT.
SCOTT *DEFINITELY* NOTICED IT.
AND JEAN WAS WITH SCOTT.
THAT WAS JUST HOW IT WAS.
HOW IT *ALWAYS* WAS.
IF I GOT TOO CLOSE TO HER, SCOTT OR WARREN WOULD MAKE SURE I KNEW THAT SHE WAS *TOO GOOD* FOR *ME*.
AND SHE *WAS*.
BUT THAT DIDN'T CHANGE THE LOOKS JEANIE WOULD GIVE.
SENT ME A DIFFERENT KIND OF FERAL.

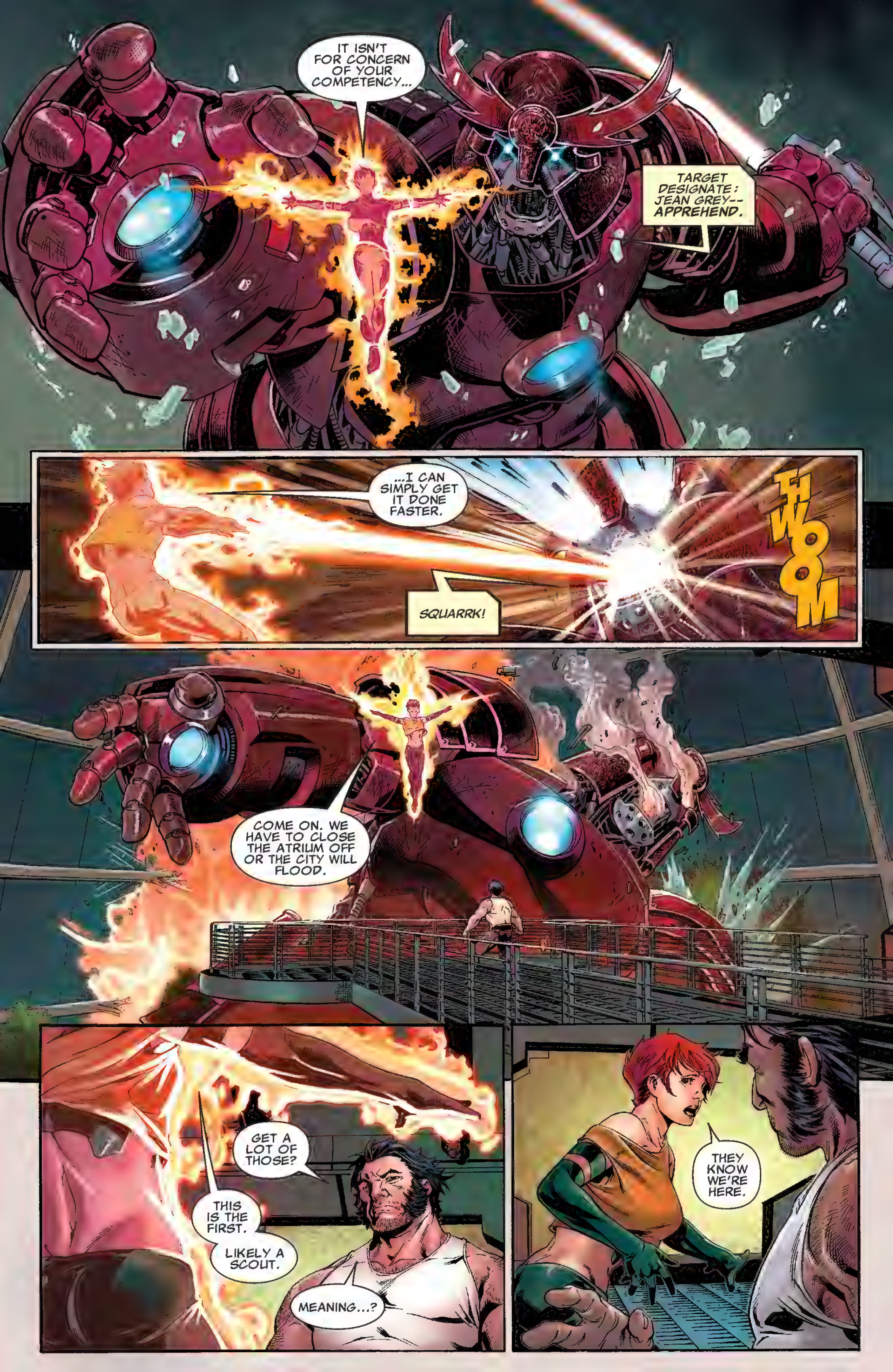

SHE DIED IN MY ARMS.
I MISS HER EVERY SINGLE DAY SINCE.
AS I MISS MY HUSBAND, LOGAN.
MY JEANIE WASN'T SO CASUAL ABOUT STROLLING THROUGH OTHER FOLK'S HEADS.
HOW DID THINGS TURN OUT FOR HER?
ELECTRIC CHARGE WHEN SHE'S NEAR--NO HIDIN' IT.
THE PERFECT WOMAN.
HANDMADE BY GOD TO AFFLICT ME.
MY HUSBAND'S BEEN DEAD FOR NEARLY TEN YEARS NOW.
IT *NEVER* GOT EASIER, LOSING HIM.
GETS *HARDER* EVERY DAY.
BEFORE HE DIED, WE BOTH MADE A PROMISE TO ERIK, TO HELP HIS RESISTANCE--NO MATTER THE PRICE.
OUR WORLD COLLAPSED. ERIK'S SPINE WAS CRUSHED WHEN HE FAILED TO SAVE HIS SON'S LIFE. I WAS LEFT TO PROP UP THE REMAINING X-MEN.

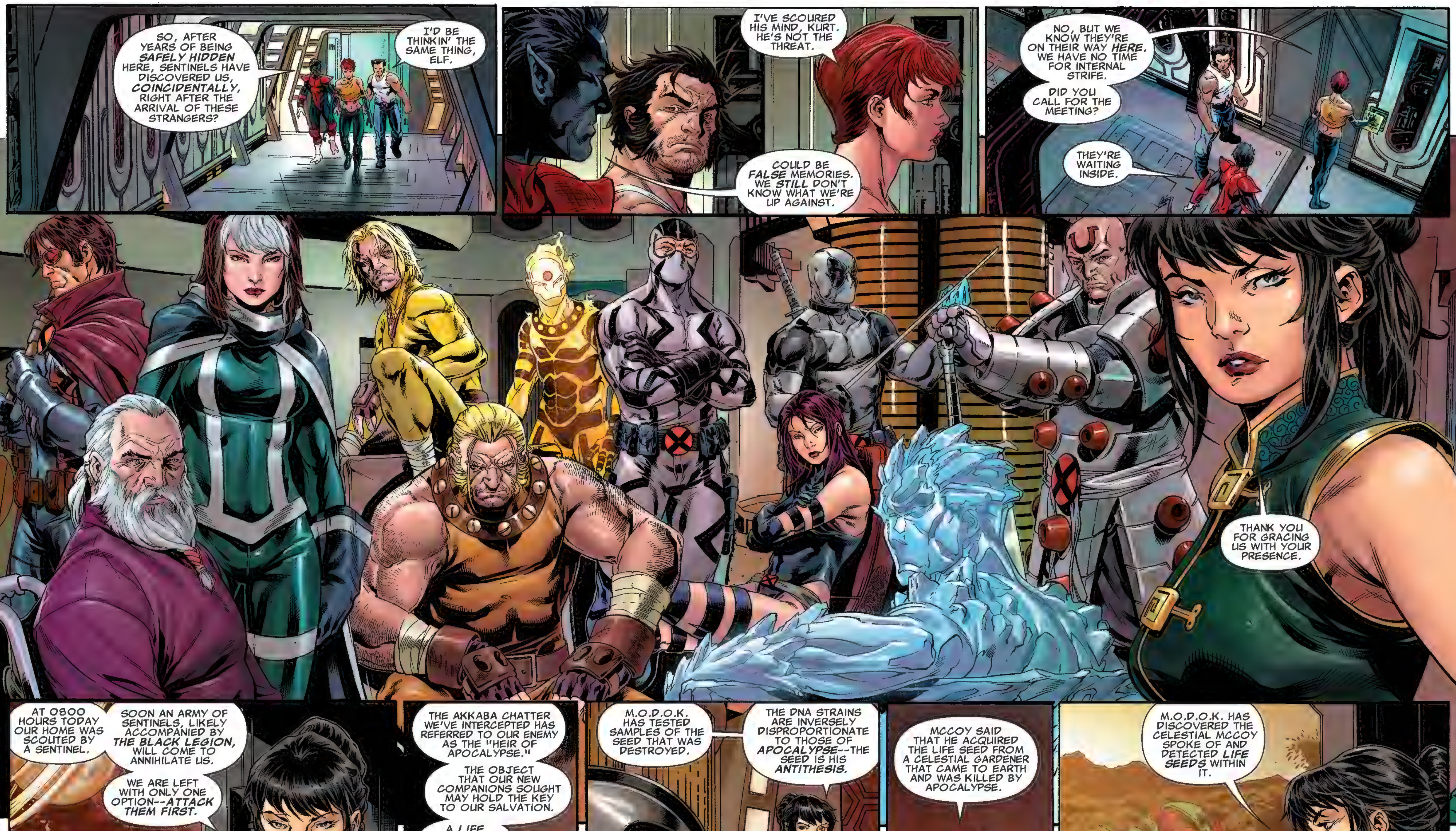

AND NOW, IN OUR DARKEST HOUR--IN *YOU* WALK.
AIN'T ANY EASIER FOR ME SEEIN' YOU.
SEEIN' WHAT'S GONE ON HERE FOR YOU.
YOU MIGHT NOT BE MY JEANIE-- BUT YOU GOT HER *HEART.*
I'M SORRY FOR THIS. SORRY YOU'VE HAD TO LIVE THROUGH IT.
SORRY.
YES.
I COMBED THROUGH YOUR THOUGHTS. I SAW CHARLES XAVIER.
I SAW HOW HE HELPED YOU.
YEAH. CHUCK DID RIGHT BY ME.
I SAW HOW MUCH HE CARED.
WHAT A DIFFERENT WORLD IT IS WITH HIM IN IT.
WITHOUT XAVIER, APOCALYPSE WAS FREE TO SPREAD HIS *DARKNESS,* FREE TO PROPEL OUR WORLD INTO *ENDLESS* CONFLICT.
BUT WE DEFEATED THE *SON OF A BITCH,* ALMOST NEGATED OUR ENTIRE WORLD--BUT WE *DID IT.*
AND MR. SINISTER AFTER HIM. WE *NEVER* GAVE AN INCH.
WHO CAUSED ALL OF THIS THEN?
SOMETHING WORSE.
THINGS WERE BETTER FOR A TIME, BEFORE THAT *SHIP* LANDED IN THE MIDDLE OF MANHATTAN.
LOGAN, *MY* LOGAN, AND A SQUAD OF X-MEN GATHERED TO GO KILL WHOEVER WAS INSIDE IT.
I DIDN'T GO WITH HIM. I THOUGHT IT WAS A MISTAKE...THOUGHT OUR NUMBERS TOO FEW.
NONE RETURNED.

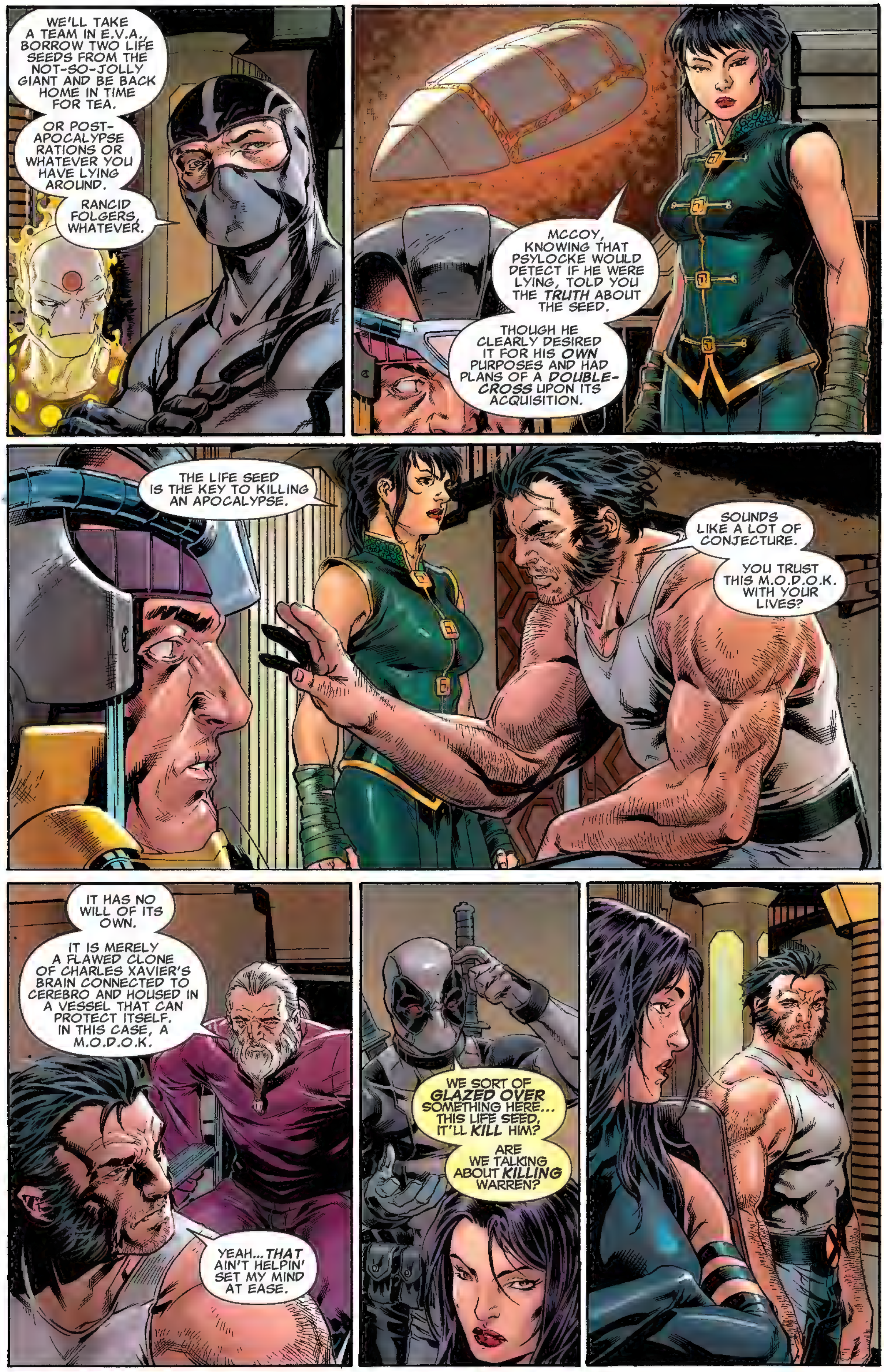

HE SHOULD'VE WAITED TILL HE HAD MANPOWER. THAT *AIN'T* ON YOU, JEANIE.
BUT IT *IS.*
I'VE BEEN IN YOUR HEAD, SEEN YOUR MEMORIES-- YOU KNOW WHAT THE *DARK PHOENIX* CAN DO.
I HAVE *THAT* INSIDE *ME*, LOGAN-- THE PHOENIX FORCE. I COULD'VE *HELPED*, COULD HAVE *SAVED* HIM.
YOU GO ON, SIT THERE THINKIN' THAT WAY--SEE WHAT IT'LL GET YOU.
I WANT TO HOLD HER.
COMFORT HER.
BUT IT AIN'T APPROPRIATE.
I'M PROMISED TO ANOTHER WOMAN.
I'M SORRY FOR YOUR LOT HERE. BUT I GOT MY OWN BAG.
I NEED TO GET BACK HOME, DARLIN'.
HER SCENT-- LIKE MORPHINE.
SURGES THROUGH ME.
DOMINATES MY SENSES.
IT'S ON ME AN' MY SQUAD TO ENSURE NONE OF THIS HAPPENS BACK HOME.
HERE WE ARE *STUCK*, NO WAY BACK...
HOW BAD WOULD THAT BE?
IF YOU WERE STUCK HERE...
WITH *ME.*
JEANIE-- I-I AIN'T *YOUR* LOGAN...

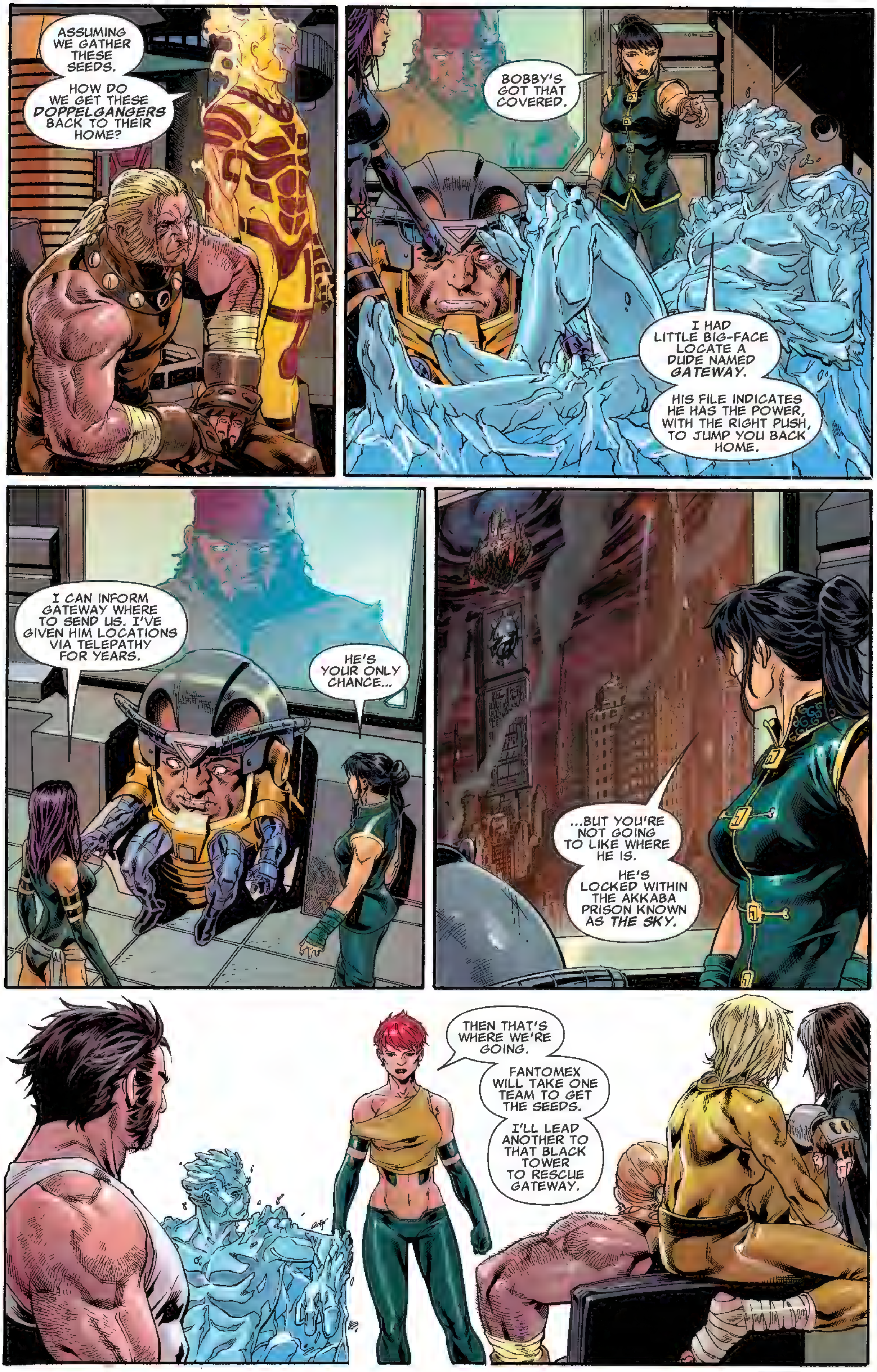

I DON'T CARE.
MY GOD.
JEAN GREY.
OH-- OH GOD...
YOU'RE RIGHT. WE SHOULDN'T.
MILLION REASONS WE SHOULDN'T--
NO...

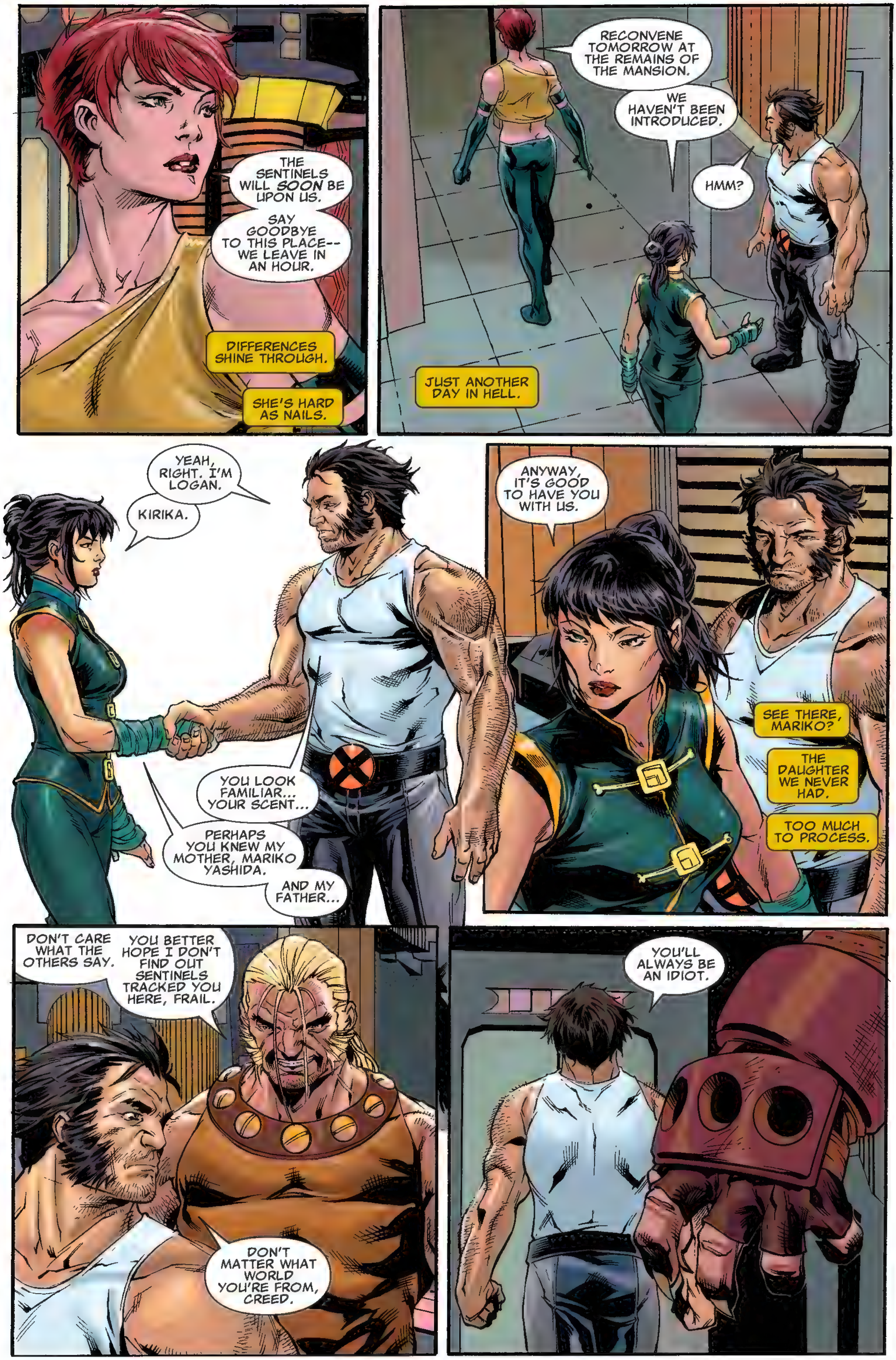

SENTINEL.
SORT O' THING YOU SEE A LOT OF IN MY LINE OF WORK.
...JUST ONE.
BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER ONE SHOWIN' UP AT A LESS OPPORTUNE MOMENT.
STAND STILL!
KROOM
I'LL PROTECT YOU.
NOT A HINT OF IRONY IN HER VOICE. SHE'S SEEN UGLINESS.
USED TO THROWIN' HERSELF IN FRONT OF IT TO PROTECT THOSE SHE LOVES.
TARGET DESIGNATE: JEAN GREY, RESISTANCE LEADER. AFFILIATION: X-MEN.
AIN'T USUAL I LET OTHER PEOPLE TUSSLE IN MY STEAD.

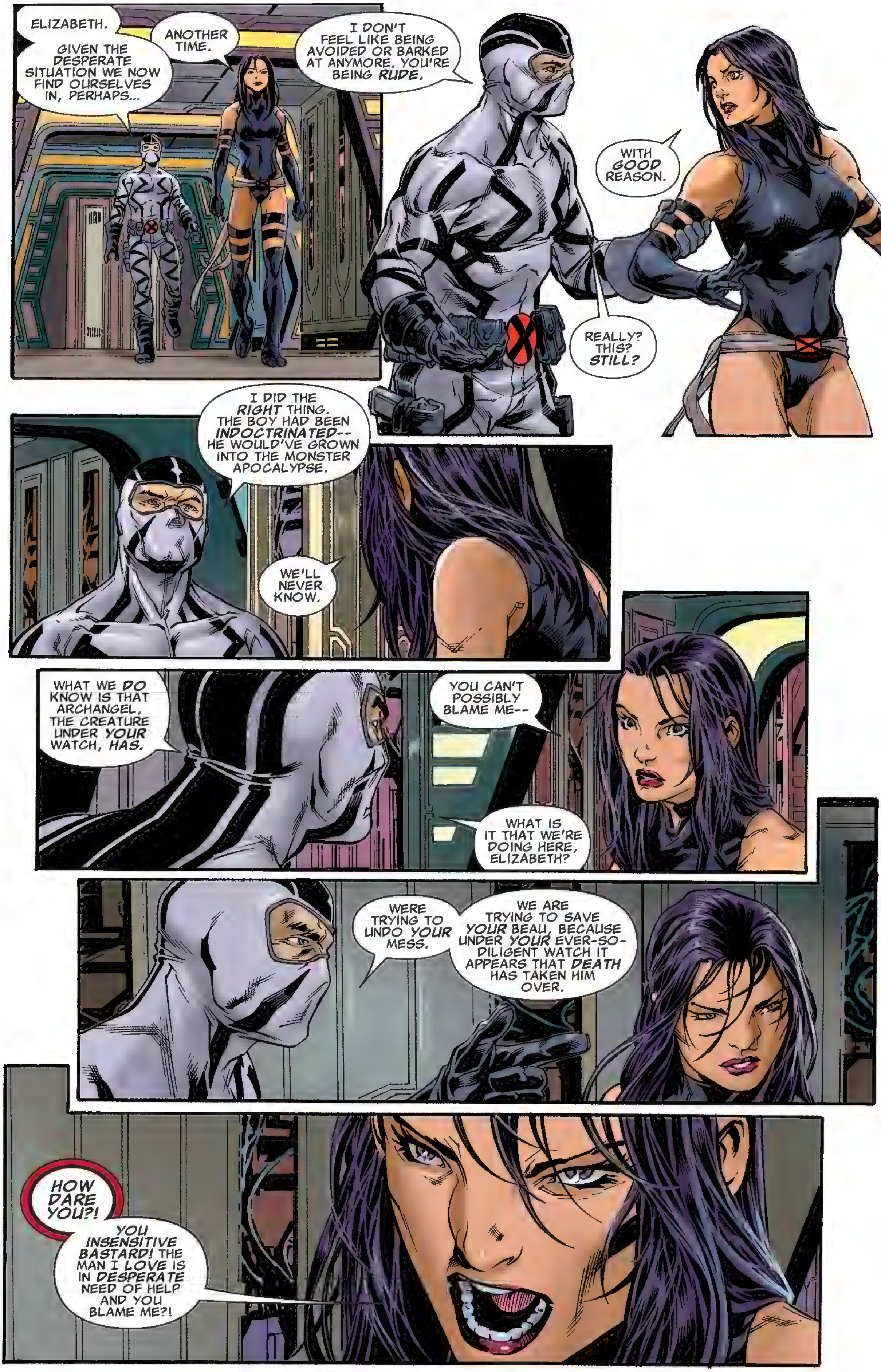

IT ISN'T FOR CONCERN OF YOUR COMPETENCY...
TARGET DESIGNATE: JEAN GREY-- APPREHEND.
...I CAN SIMPLY GET IT DONE FASTER.
SQUARRK!
THWOOM
COME ON. WE HAVE TO CLOSE THE ATRIUM OFF OR THE CITY WILL FLOOD.
GET A LOT OF THOSE?
THIS IS THE FIRST.
LIKELY A SCOUT.
MEANING...?
THEY KNOW WE'RE HERE.

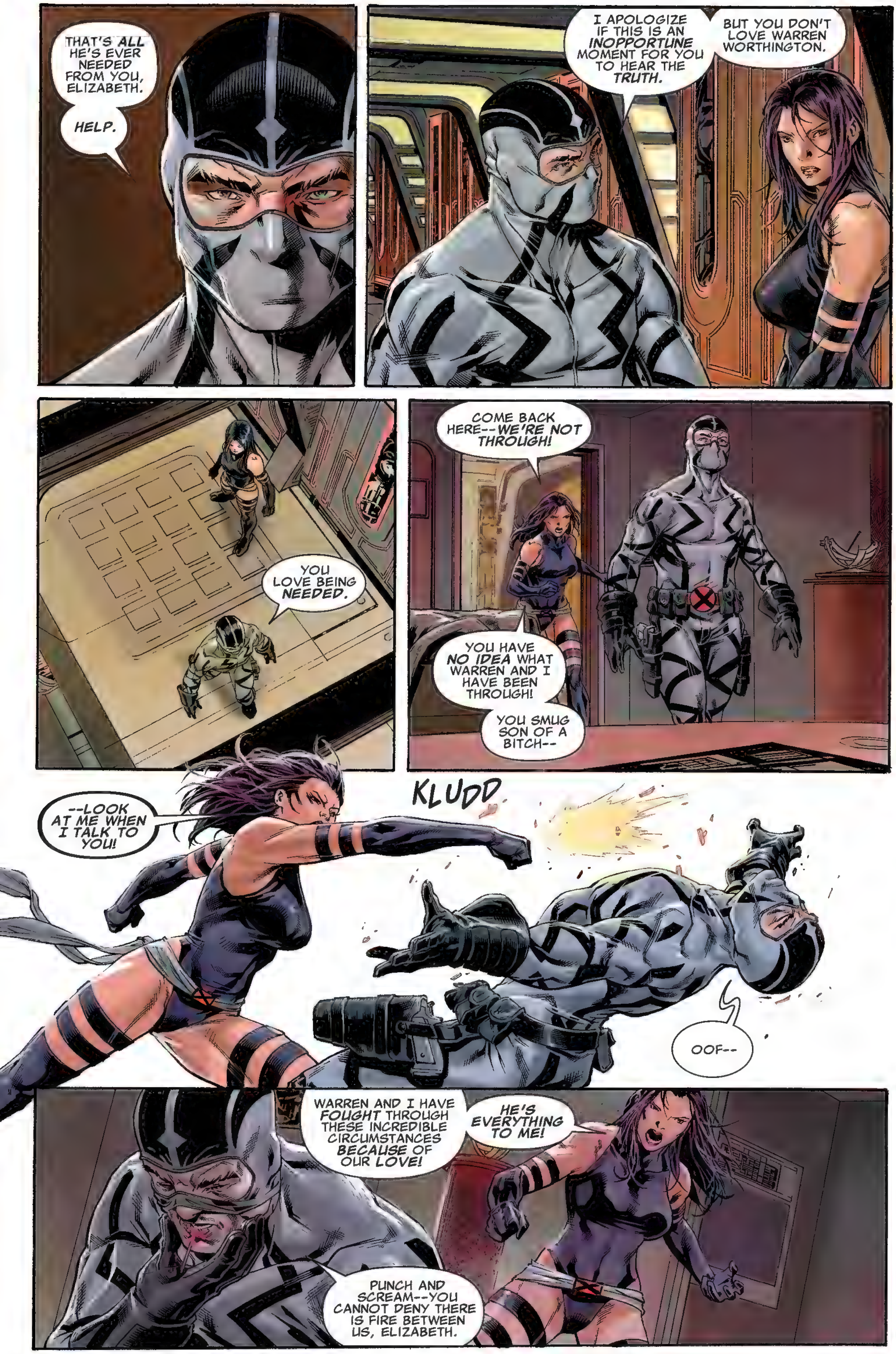

SO, AFTER YEARS OF BEING *SAFELY HIDDEN* HERE, SENTINELS HAVE DISCOVERED US, *COINCIDENTALLY*, RIGHT AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF THESE STRANGERS?
I'D BE THINKIN' THE SAME THING, ELF.
I'VE SCOURED HIS MIND, KURT. HE'S NOT THE THREAT.
COULD BE *FALSE* MEMORIES. WE *STILL* DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST.
NO, BUT WE KNOW THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY *HERE*. WE HAVE NO TIME FOR INTERNAL STRIFE.
DID YOU CALL FOR THE MEETING?
THEY'RE WAITING INSIDE.
THANK YOU FOR GRACING US WITH YOUR PRESENCE.
AT 0800 HOURS TODAY OUR HOME WAS SCOUTED BY A SENTINEL.
SOON AN ARMY OF SENTINELS, LIKELY ACCOMPANIED BY *THE BLACK LEGION*, WILL COME TO ANNIHILATE US.
WE ARE LEFT WITH ONLY ONE OPTION--*ATTACK THEM FIRST*.
THE AKKABA CHATTER WE'VE INTERCEPTED HAS REFERRED TO OUR ENEMY AS THE "HEIR OF APOCALYPSE."
THE OBJECT THAT OUR NEW COMPANIONS SOUGHT MAY HOLD THE KEY TO OUR SALVATION.
A *LIFE SEED* MAY BE OUR *ONLY* SOLUTION.
M.O.D.O.K. HAS TESTED SAMPLES OF THE SEED THAT WAS DESTROYED.
THE DNA STRAINS ARE INVERSELY DISPROPORTIONATE TO THOSE OF *APOCALYPSE*--THE SEED IS HIS *ANTITHESIS*.
MCCOY SAID THAT HE ACQUIRED THE LIFE SEED FROM A CELESTIAL GARDENER THAT CAME TO EARTH AND WAS KILLED BY APOCALYPSE.
M.O.D.O.K. HAS DISCOVERED THE CELESTIAL MCCOY SPOKE OF AND DETECTED *LIFE SEEDS* WITHIN IT.

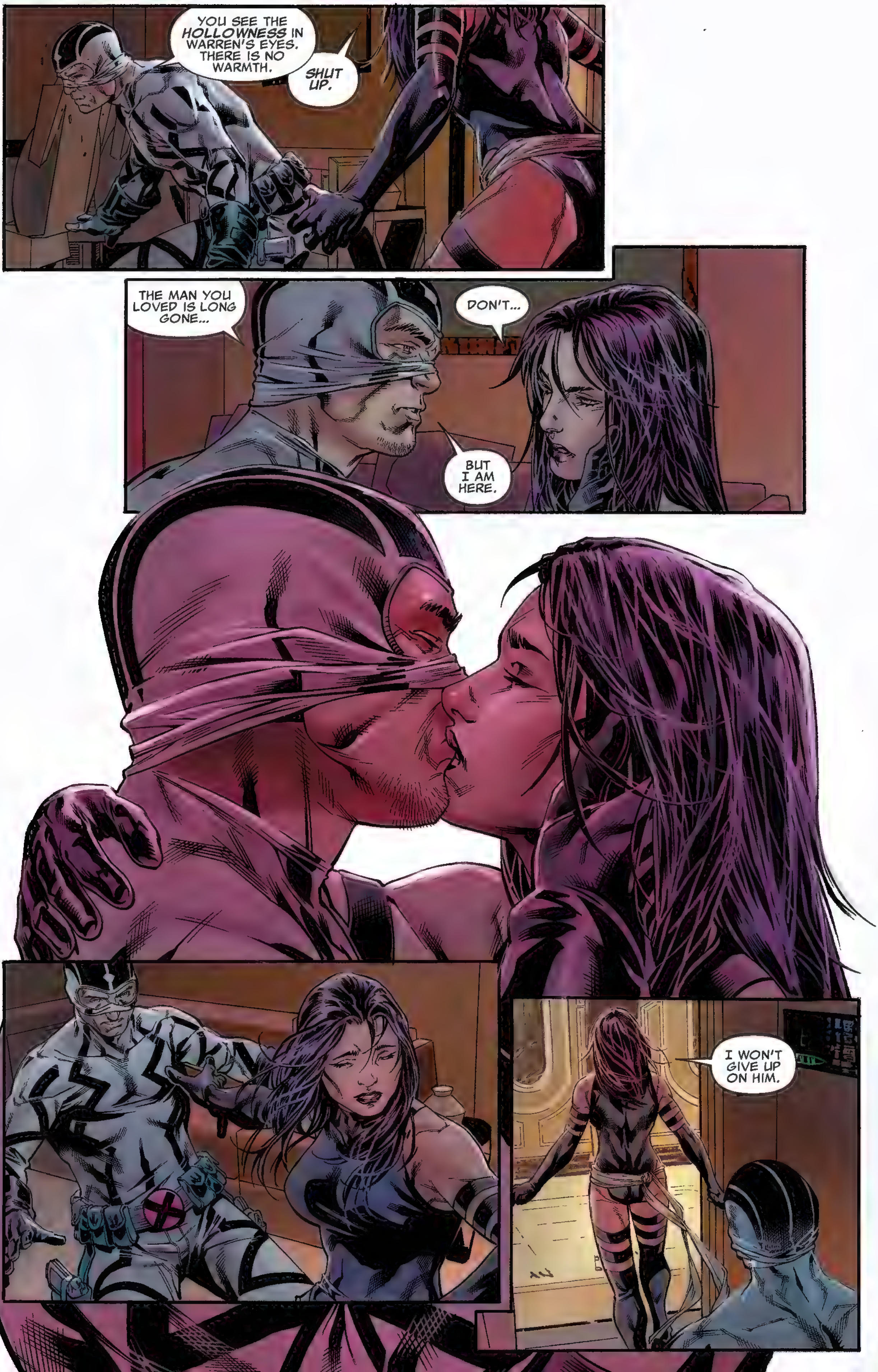

WE'LL TAKE A TEAM IN E.V.A., BORROW TWO LIFE SEEDS FROM THE NOT-SO-JOLLY GIANT AND BE BACK HOME IN TIME FOR TEA.
OR POST-APOCALYPSE RATIONS OR WHATEVER YOU HAVE LYING AROUND.
RANCID FOLGERS, WHATEVER.
MCCOY, KNOWING THAT PSYLOCKE WOULD DETECT IF HE WERE LYING, TOLD YOU THE *TRUTH* ABOUT THE SEED.
THOUGH HE CLEARLY DESIRED IT FOR HIS *OWN* PURPOSES AND HAD PLANS OF A *DOUBLE-CROSS* UPON ITS ACQUISITION.
THE LIFE SEED IS THE KEY TO KILLING AN APOCALYPSE.
SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF CONJECTURE.
YOU TRUST THIS M.O.D.O.K. WITH YOUR LIVES?
IT HAS NO WILL OF ITS OWN.
IT IS MERELY A FLAWED CLONE OF CHARLES XAVIER'S BRAIN CONNECTED TO CEREBRO AND HOUSED IN A VESSEL THAT CAN PROTECT ITSELF. IN THIS CASE, A M.O.D.O.K.
YEAH... THAT AIN'T HELPIN' SET MY MIND AT EASE.
WE SORT OF *GLAZED OVER* SOMETHING HERE... THIS LIFE SEED, IT'LL *KILL* HIM?
ARE WE TALKING ABOUT *KILLING* WARREN?

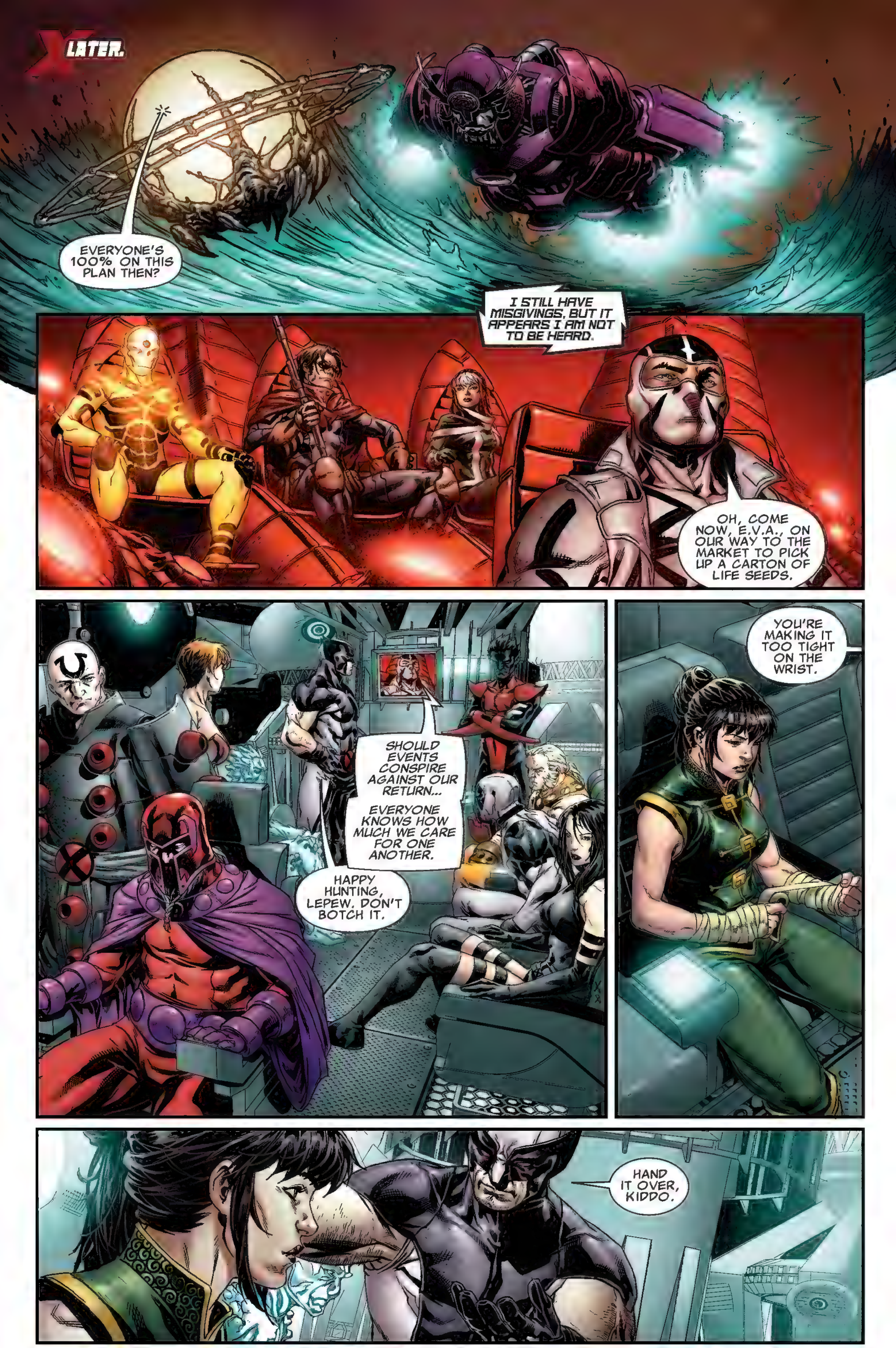

ASSUMING WE GATHER THESE SEEDS.
HOW DO WE GET THESE *DOPPELGANGERS* BACK TO THEIR HOME?
BOBBY'S GOT THAT COVERED.
I HAD LITTLE BIG-FACE LOCATE A DUDE NAMED *GATEWAY*.
HIS FILE INDICATES HE HAS THE POWER, WITH THE RIGHT PUSH, TO JUMP YOU BACK HOME.
I CAN INFORM GATEWAY WHERE TO SEND US. I'VE GIVEN HIM LOCATIONS VIA TELEPATHY FOR YEARS.
HE'S YOUR ONLY CHANCE...
...BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE WHERE HE IS.
HE'S LOCKED WITHIN THE AKKABA PRISON KNOWN AS *THE SKY*.
THEN THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING.
FANTOMEX WILL TAKE ONE TEAM TO GET THE SEEDS.
I'LL LEAD ANOTHER TO THAT BLACK TOWER TO RESCUE GATEWAY.

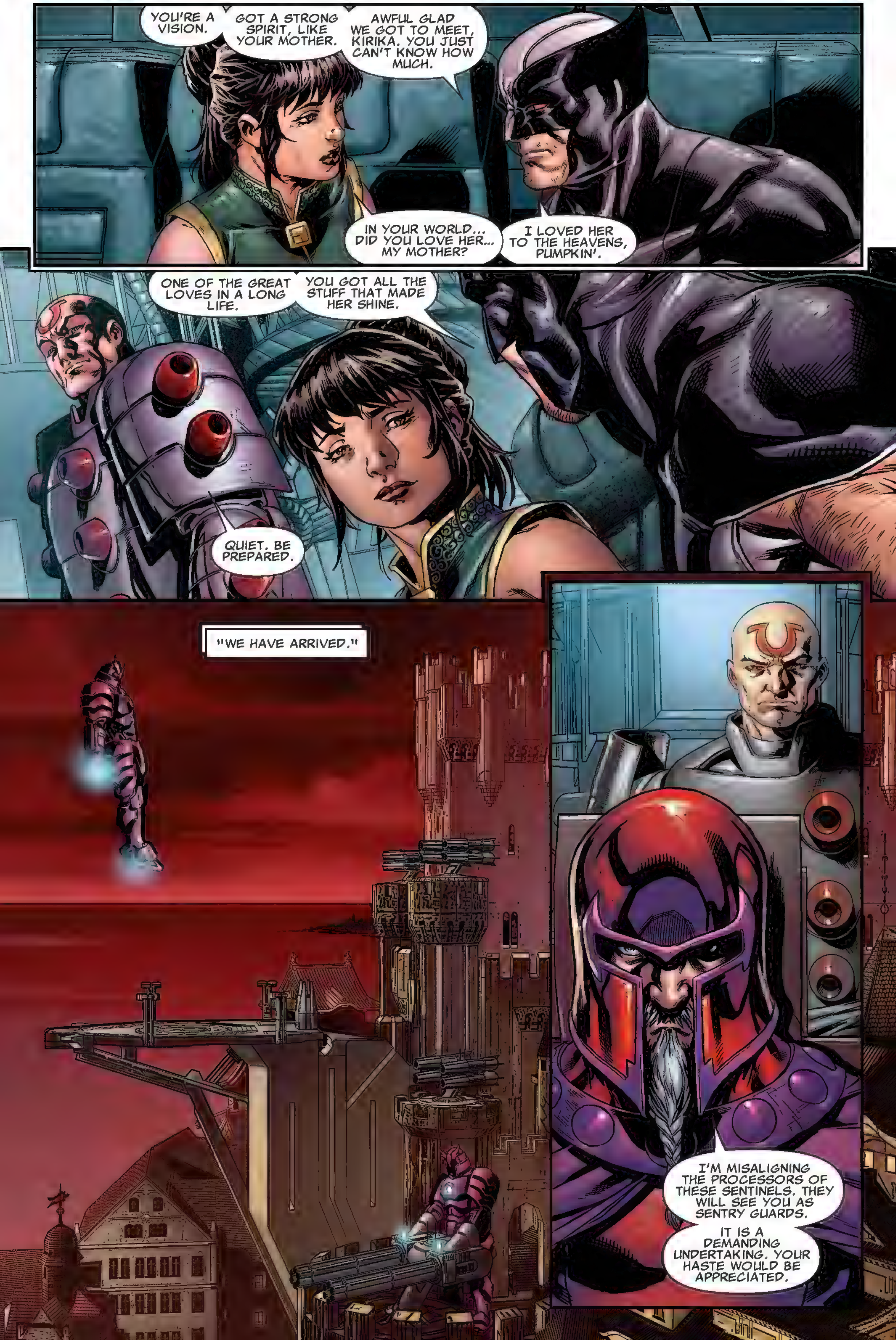

THE SENTINELS WILL SOON BE UPON US.
SAY GOODBYE TO THIS PLACE-- WE LEAVE IN AN HOUR.
DIFFERENCES SHINE THROUGH.
SHE'S HARD AS NAILS.
RECONVENE TOMORROW AT THE REMAINS OF THE MANSION.
WE HAVEN'T BEEN INTRODUCED.
HMM?
JUST ANOTHER DAY IN HELL.
KIRIKA.
YEAH, RIGHT. I'M LOGAN.
YOU LOOK FAMILIAR... YOUR SCENT...
PERHAPS YOU KNEW MY MOTHER, MARIKO YASHIDA.
AND MY FATHER...
ANYWAY, IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU WITH US.
SEE THERE, MARIKO?
THE DAUGHTER WE NEVER HAD.
TOO MUCH TO PROCESS.
DON'T CARE WHAT THE OTHERS SAY.
YOU BETTER HOPE I DON'T FIND OUT SENTINELS TRACKED YOU HERE, FRAIL.
DON'T MATTER WHAT WORLD YOU'RE FROM, CREED.
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE AN IDIOT.

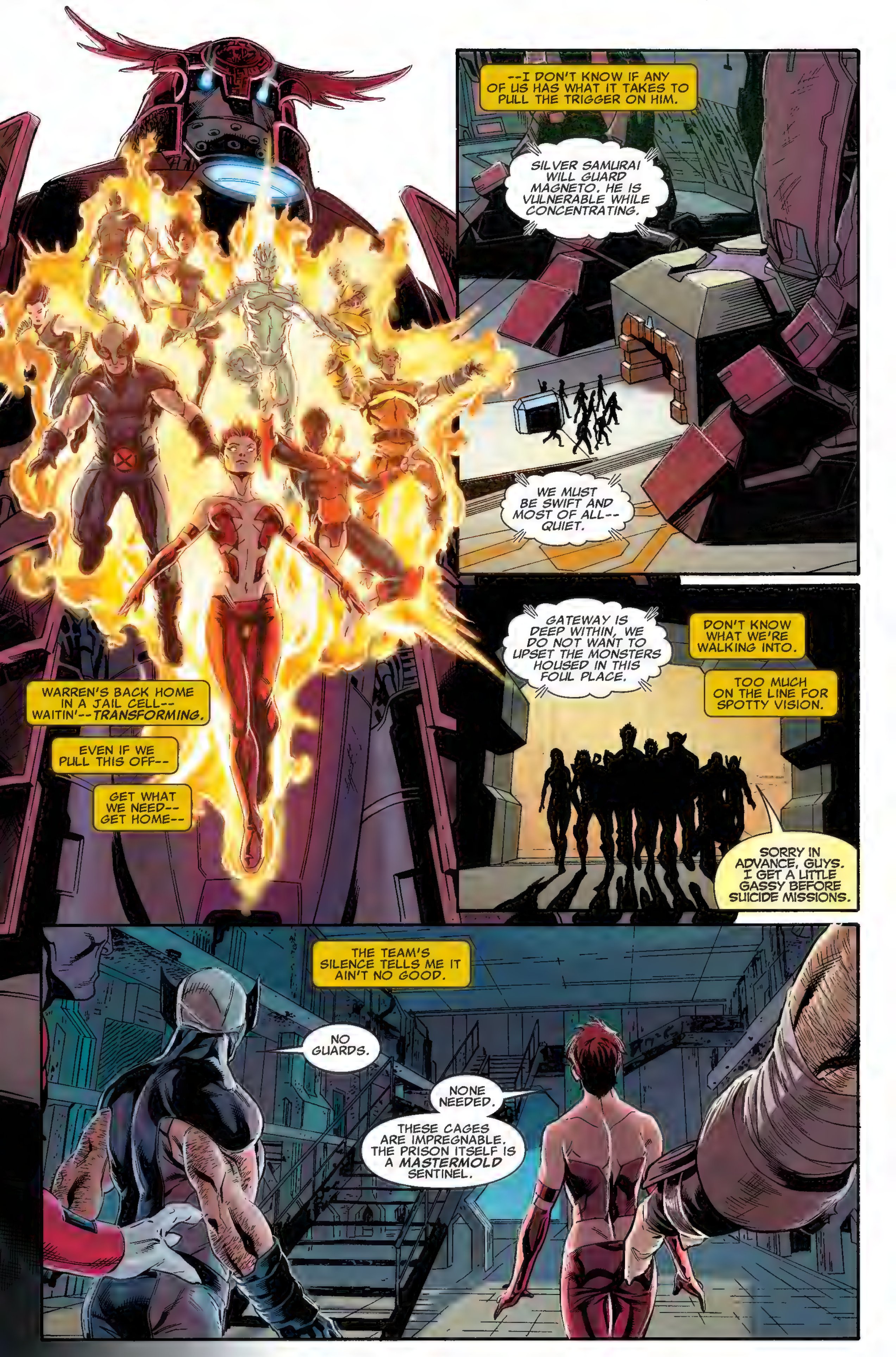

ELIZABETH.
GIVEN THE DESPERATE SITUATION WE NOW FIND OURSELVES IN, PERHAPS...
ANOTHER TIME.
I DON'T FEEL LIKE BEING AVOIDED OR BARKED AT ANYMORE. YOU'RE BEING *RUDE*.
WITH *GOOD* REASON.
REALLY? THIS? *STILL?*
I DID THE *RIGHT* THING. THE BOY HAD BEEN *INDOCTRINATED*-- HE WOULD'VE GROWN INTO THE MONSTER APOCALYPSE.
WE'LL NEVER KNOW.
WHAT WE *DO* KNOW IS THAT ARCHANGEL, THE CREATURE UNDER *YOUR* WATCH, *HAS*.
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY BLAME ME--
WHAT IS IT THAT WE'RE DOING HERE, ELIZABETH?
WERE TRYING TO UNDO *YOUR* MESS.
WE ARE TRYING TO SAVE *YOUR* BEAU, BECAUSE UNDER *YOUR* EVER-SO-DILIGENT WATCH IT APPEARS THAT *DEATH* HAS TAKEN HIM OVER.
HOW DARE YOU?!
YOU *INSENSITIVE BASTARD!* THE MAN I *LOVE* IS IN *DESPERATE* NEED OF HELP AND YOU BLAME ME?!

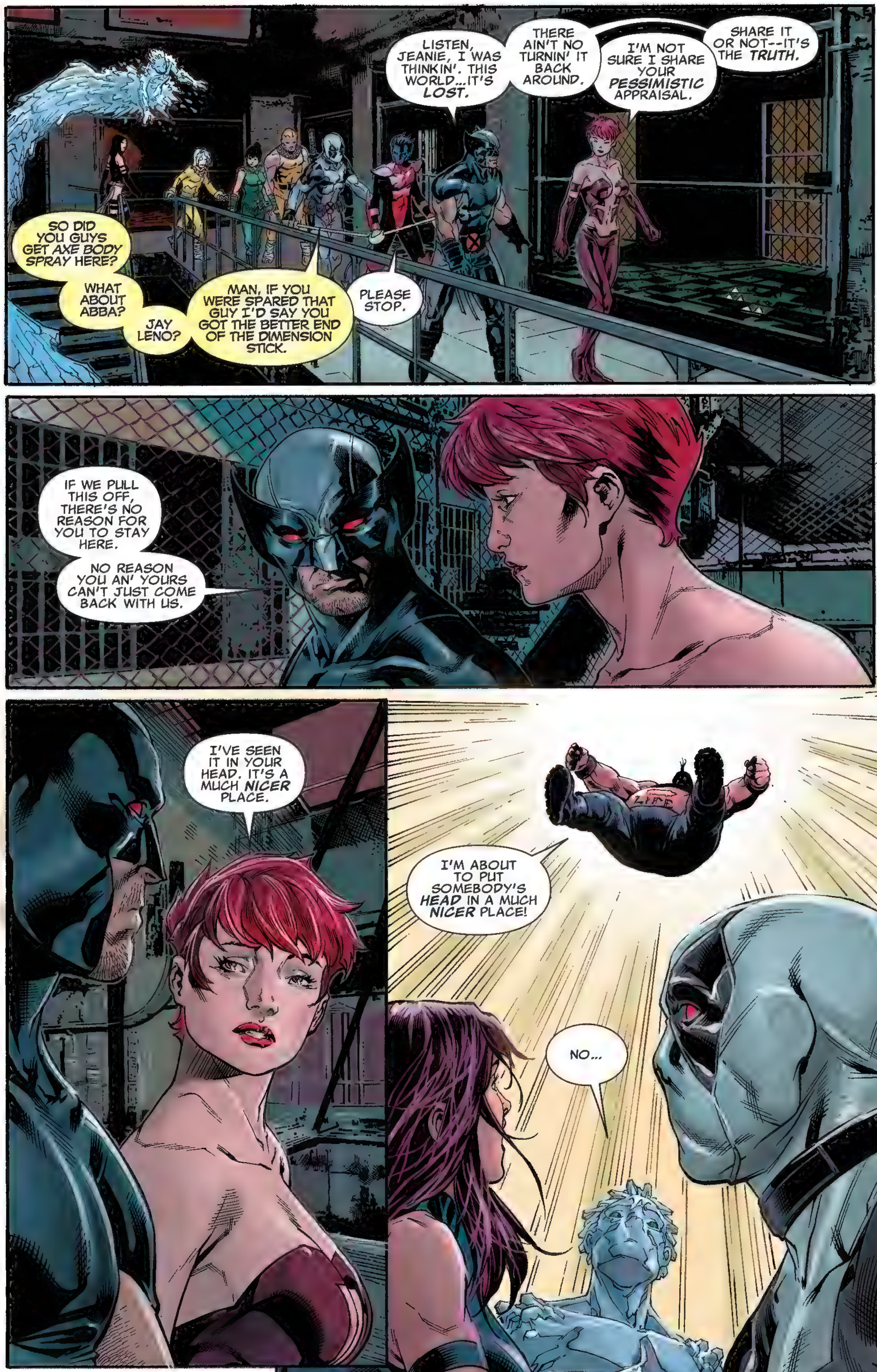

THAT'S ALL HE'S EVER NEEDED FROM YOU, ELIZABETH.
HELP.
I APOLOGIZE IF THIS IS AN INOPPORTUNE MOMENT FOR YOU TO HEAR THE TRUTH.
BUT YOU DON'T LOVE WARREN WORTHINGTON.
YOU LOVE BEING NEEDED.
COME BACK HERE--WE'RE NOT THROUGH!
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WARREN AND I HAVE BEEN THROUGH!
YOU SMUG SON OF A BITCH--
--LOOK AT ME WHEN I TALK TO YOU!
KLUDD
OOF--
WARREN AND I HAVE FOUGHT THROUGH THESE INCREDIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES BECAUSE OF OUR LOVE!
HE'S EVERYTHING TO ME!
PUNCH AND SCREAM--YOU CANNOT DENY THERE IS FIRE BETWEEN US, ELIZABETH.

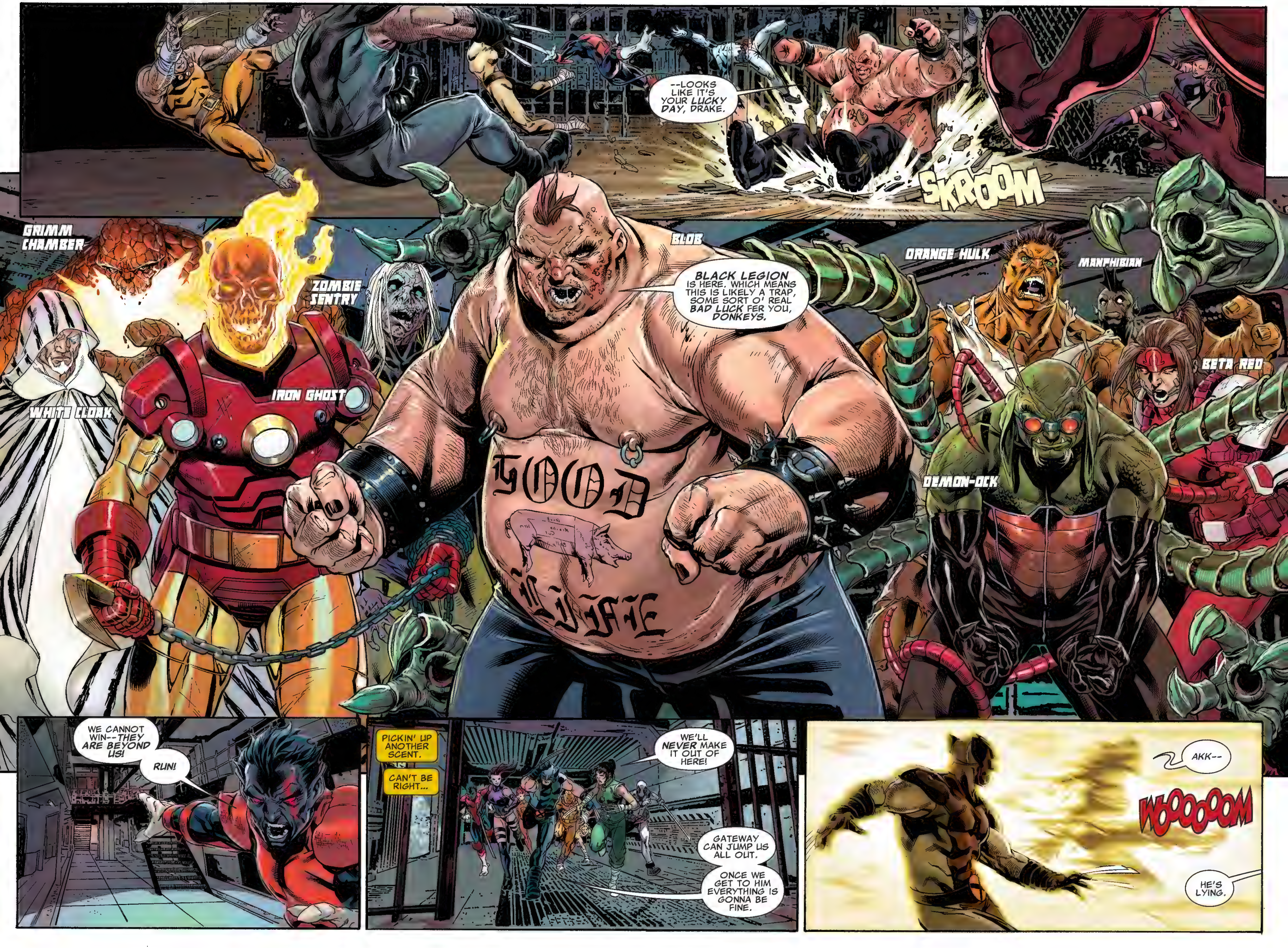

YOU SEE THE *HOLLOWNESS* IN WARREN'S EYES. THERE IS NO WARMTH.
SHUT UP.
THE MAN YOU LOVED IS LONG GONE...
DON'T...
BUT I AM HERE.
I WON'T GIVE UP ON HIM.

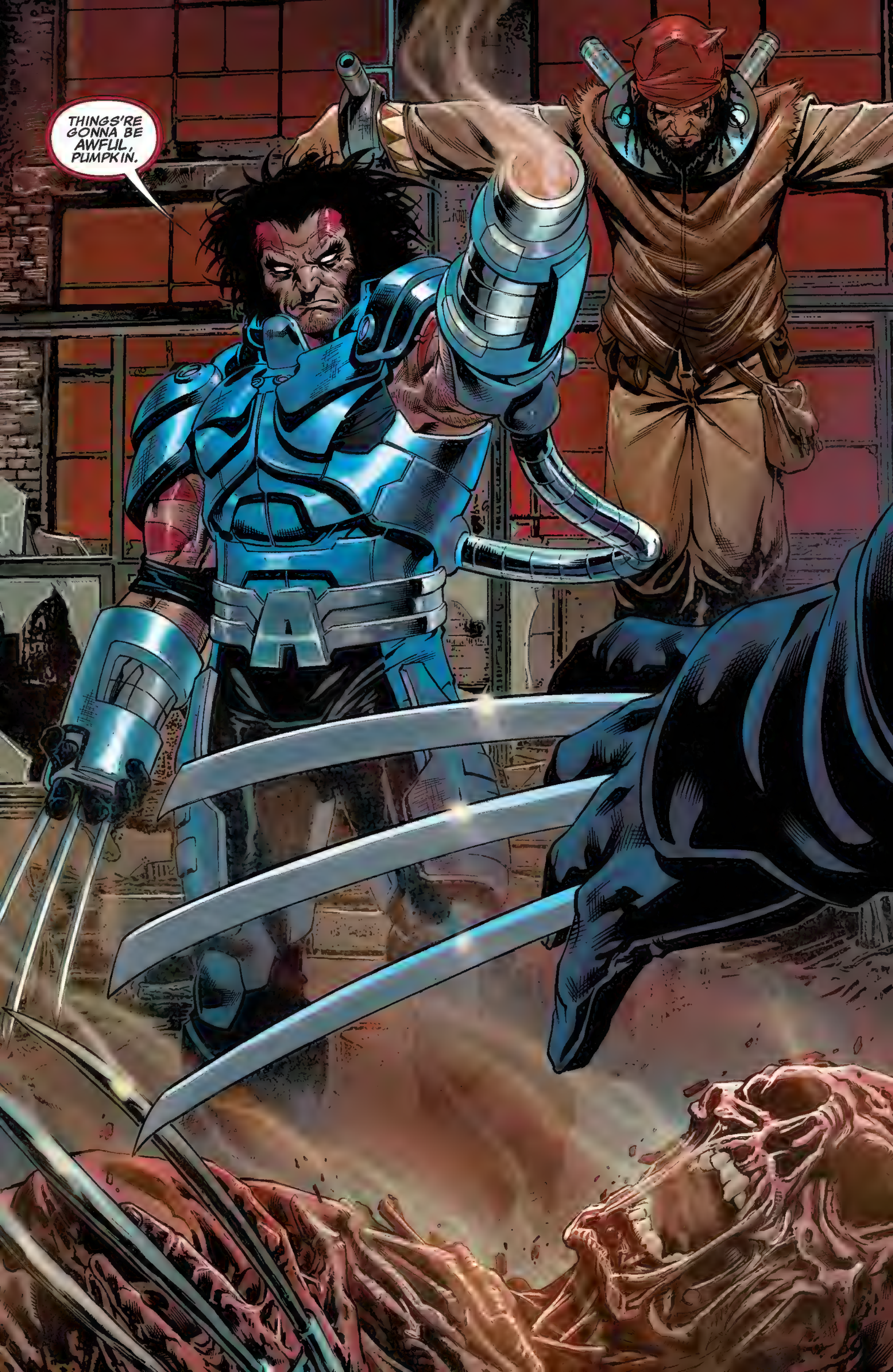

LATER.
EVERYONE'S 100% ON THIS PLAN THEN?
I STILL HAVE MISGIVINGS, BUT IT APPEARS I AM NOT TO BE HEARD.
OH, COME NOW, E.V.A., ON OUR WAY TO THE MARKET TO PICK UP A CARTON OF LIFE SEEDS.
SHOULD EVENTS CONSPIRE AGAINST OUR RETURN...
EVERYONE KNOWS HOW MUCH WE CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER.
HAPPY HUNTING, LEPEW. DON'T BOTCH IT.
YOU'RE MAKING IT TOO TIGHT ON THE WRIST.
HAND IT OVER, KIDDO.


YOU'RE A VISION.
GOT A STRONG SPIRIT, LIKE YOUR MOTHER.
AWFUL GLAD WE GOT TO MEET, KIRIKA. YOU JUST CAN'T KNOW HOW MUCH.
IN YOUR WORLD... DID YOU LOVE HER... MY MOTHER?
I LOVED HER TO THE HEAVENS, PUMPKIN'.
ONE OF THE GREAT LOVES IN A LONG LIFE.
YOU GOT ALL THE STUFF THAT MADE HER SHINE.
QUIET. BE PREPARED.
"WE HAVE ARRIVED."
I'M MISALIGNING THE PROCESSORS OF THESE SENTINELS. THEY WILL SEE YOU AS SENTRY GUARDS.
IT IS A DEMANDING UNDERTAKING. YOUR HASTE WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

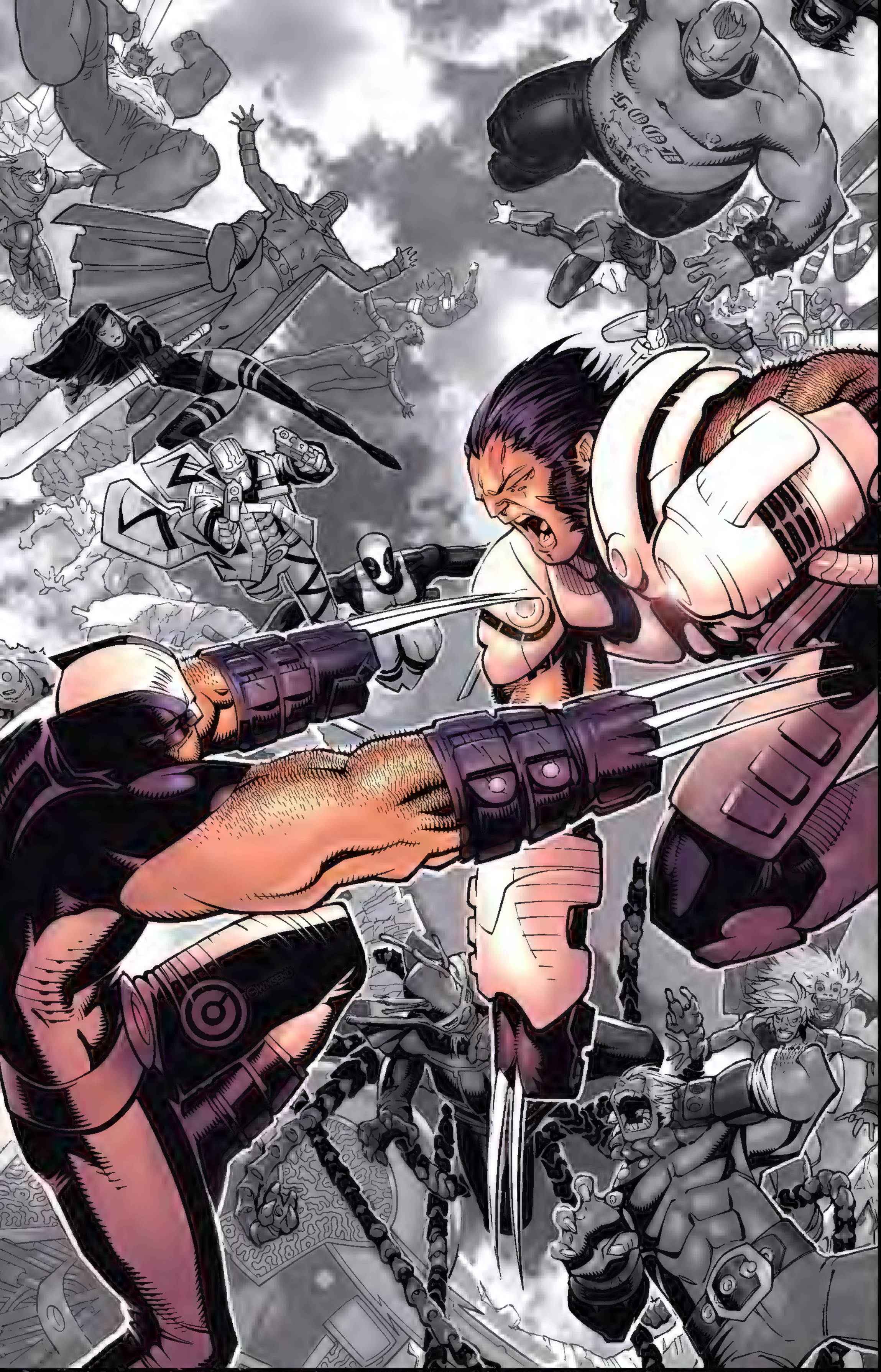

WARREN'S BACK HOME IN A JAIL CELL-- WAITIN'--*TRANSFORMING*.
EVEN IF WE PULL THIS OFF--
GET WHAT WE NEED-- GET HOME--
--I DON'T KNOW IF ANY OF US HAS WHAT IT TAKES TO PULL THE TRIGGER ON HIM.
SILVER SAMURAI WILL GUARD MAGNETO. HE IS VULNERABLE WHILE CONCENTRATING.
WE MUST BE SWIFT AND MOST OF ALL-- QUIET.
GATEWAY IS DEEP WITHIN. WE DO NOT WANT TO UPSET THE MONSTERS HOUSED IN THIS FOUL PLACE.
DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE WALKING INTO.
TOO MUCH ON THE LINE FOR SPOTTY VISION.
SORRY IN ADVANCE, GUYS. I GET A LITTLE GASSY BEFORE SUICIDE MISSIONS.
THE TEAM'S SILENCE TELLS ME IT AIN'T NO GOOD.
NO GUARDS.
NONE NEEDED.
THESE CAGES ARE IMPREGNABLE. THE PRISON ITSELF IS A *MASTERMOLD* SENTINEL.


LISTEN, JEANIE, I WAS THINKIN'. THIS WORLD...IT'S *LOST.*
THERE AIN'T NO TURNIN' IT BACK AROUND.
I'M NOT SURE I SHARE YOUR *PESSIMISTIC* APPRAISAL.
SHARE IT OR NOT--IT'S THE *TRUTH.*
SO DID YOU GUYS GET *AXE BODY SPRAY* HERE?
WHAT ABOUT ABBA?
JAY LENO?
MAN, IF YOU WERE SPARED THAT GUY I'D SAY YOU GOT THE BETTER END OF THE DIMENSION STICK.
PLEASE STOP.
IF WE PULL THIS OFF, THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO STAY HERE.
NO REASON YOU AN' YOURS CAN'T JUST COME BACK WITH US.
I'VE SEEN IT IN YOUR HEAD. IT'S A MUCH *NICER* PLACE.
I'M ABOUT TO PUT SOMEBODY'S *HEAD* IN A MUCH *NICER* PLACE!
NO...


--LOOKS LIKE IT'S YOUR LUCKY DAY, DRAKE.
SKROOM
GRIMM CHAMBER
WHITE CLOAK
IRON GHOST
ZOMBIE SENTRY
BLOB
BLACK LEGION IS HERE. WHICH MEANS THIS IS LIKELY A TRAP, SOME SORT O' REAL BAD LUCK FER YOU, DONKEYS.
GOOD LIFE
ORANGE HULK
MANPHIBIAN
BETA RED
DEMON-OCK
WE CANNOT WIN--THEY ARE BEYOND US!
RUN!
PICKIN' UP ANOTHER SCENT.
CAN'T BE RIGHT...
WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT OUT OF HERE!
GATEWAY CAN JUMP US ALL OUT.
ONCE WE GET TO HIM EVERYTHING IS GONNA BE FINE.
AKK--
WOOOOOOM
HE'S LYING.



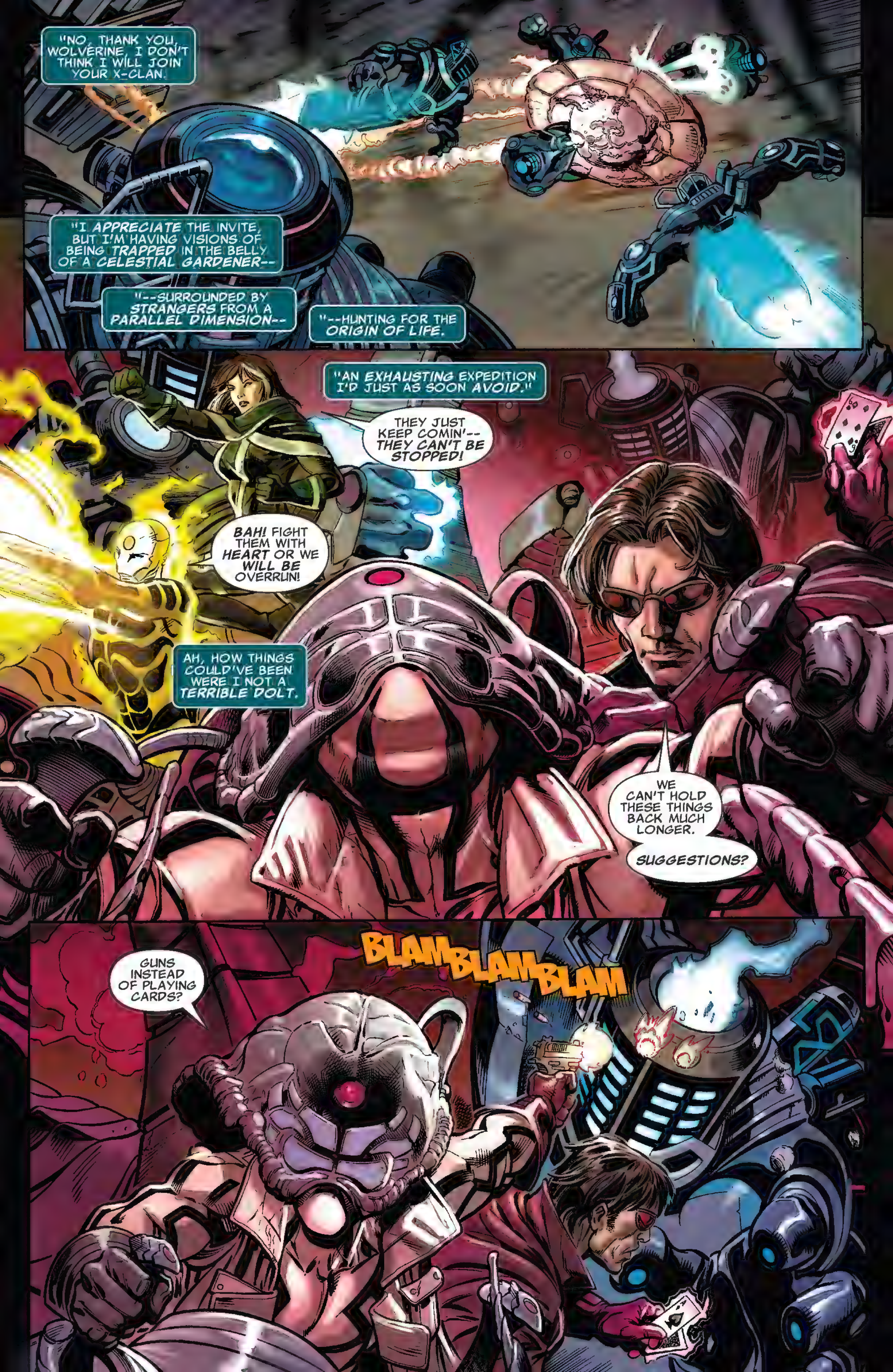
THINGS'RE GONNA BE AWFUL, PUMPKIN.

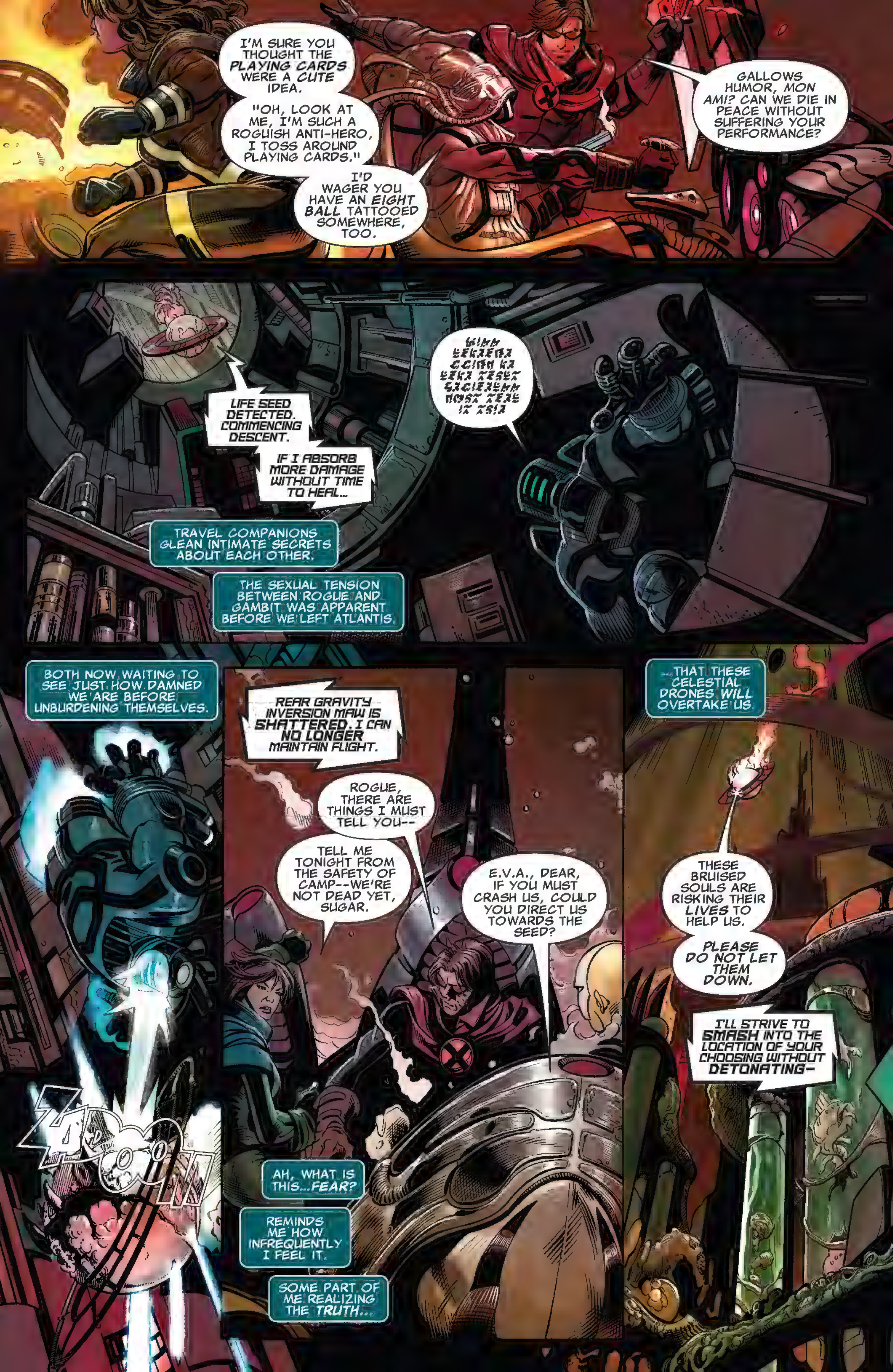


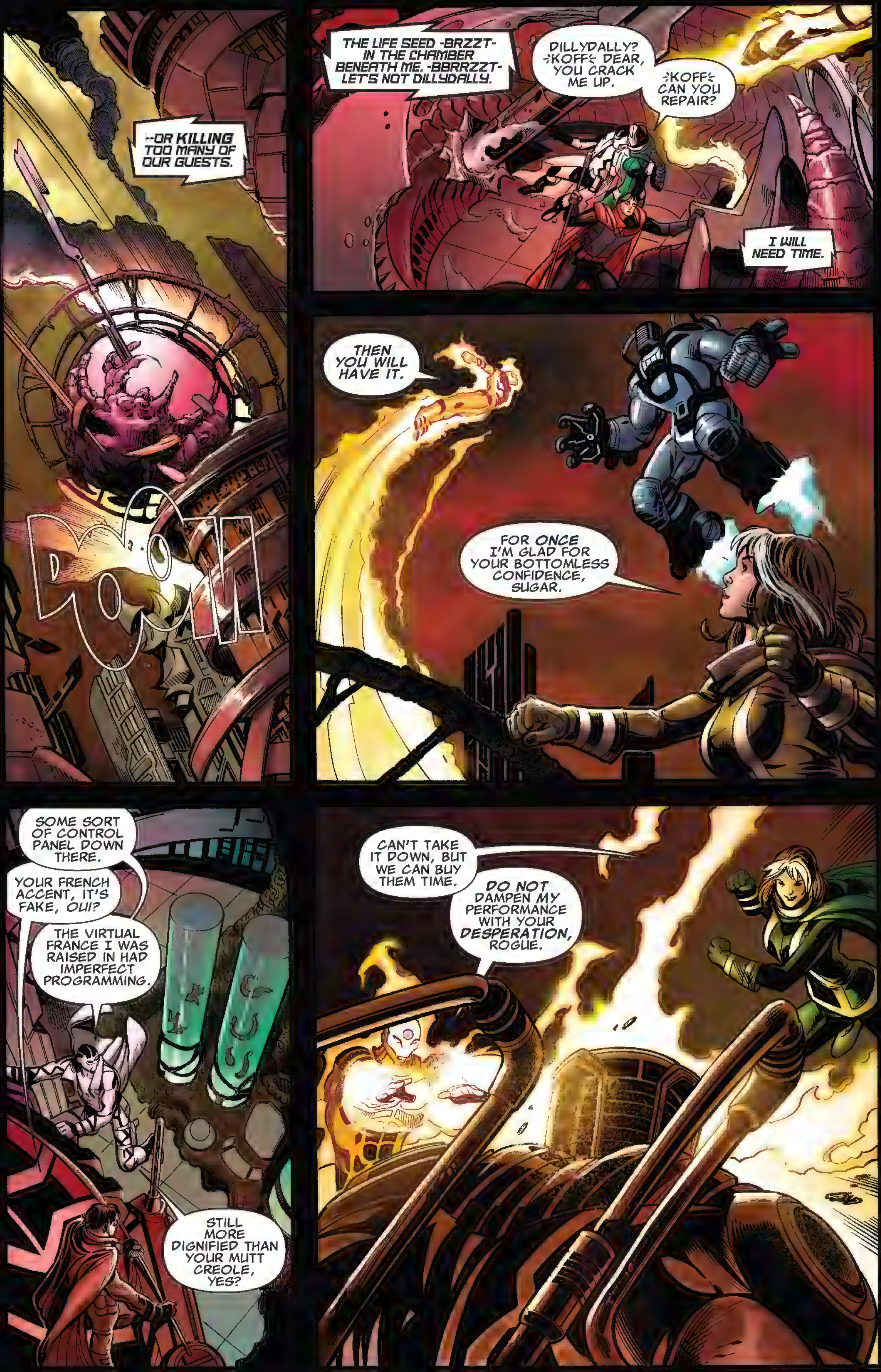
UNCANNY X-FORCE 13 VARIANT
ART BY CHRIS BACHALO & TIM TOWNSEND

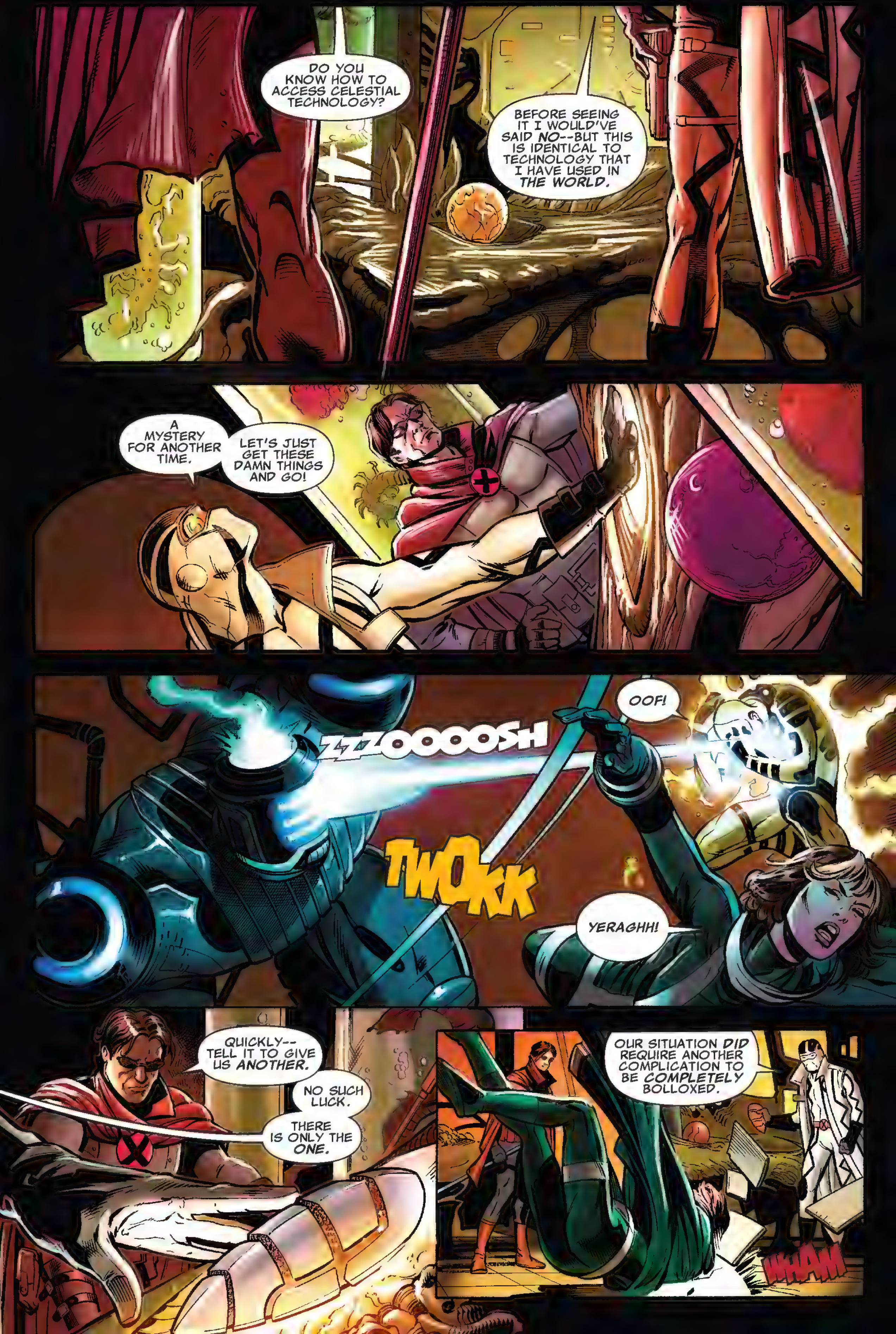
13 THE DARK ANGEL SAGA

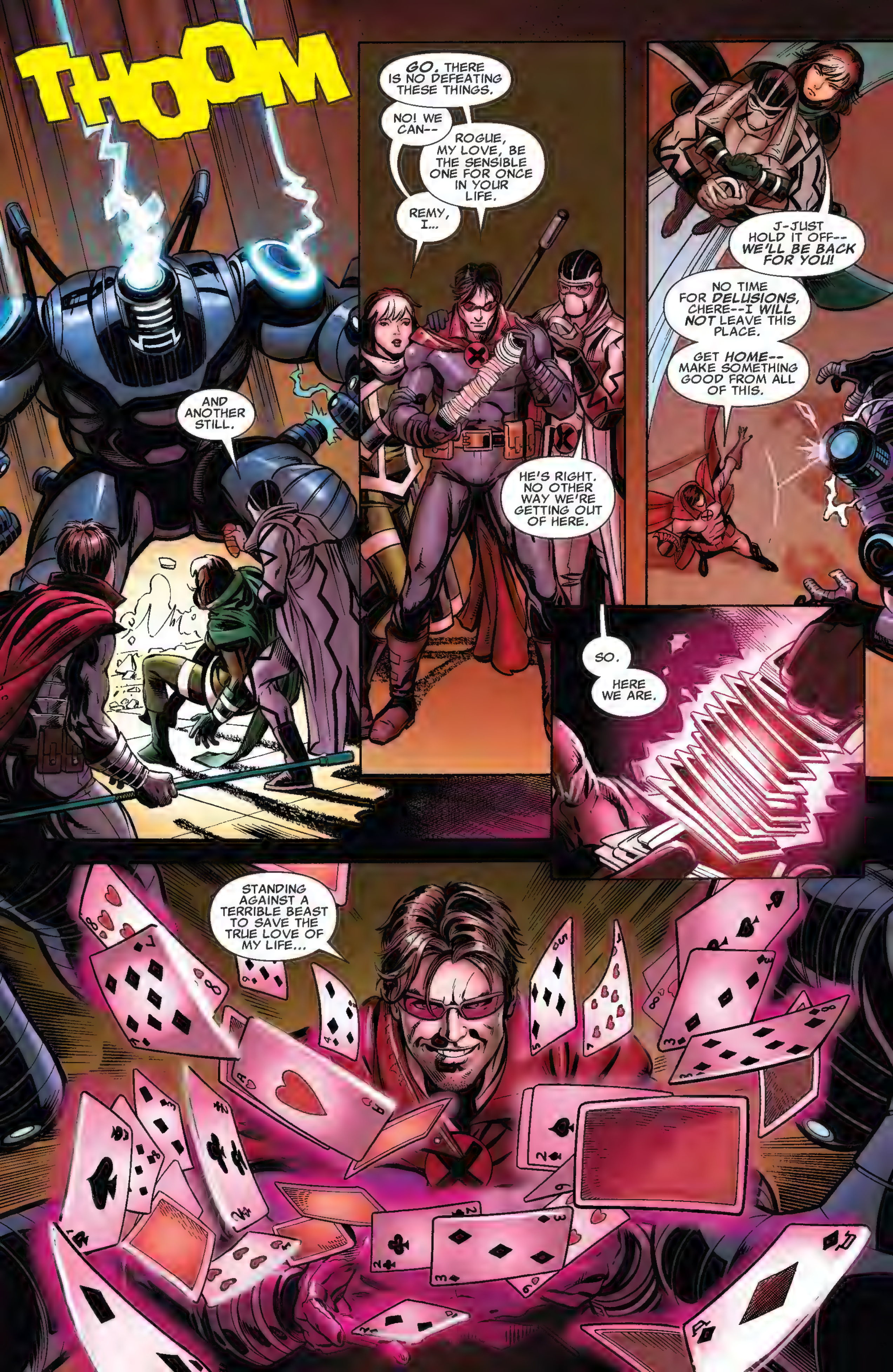
CHAPTER 3: MY WORLD WON'T STOP WITHOUT YOU

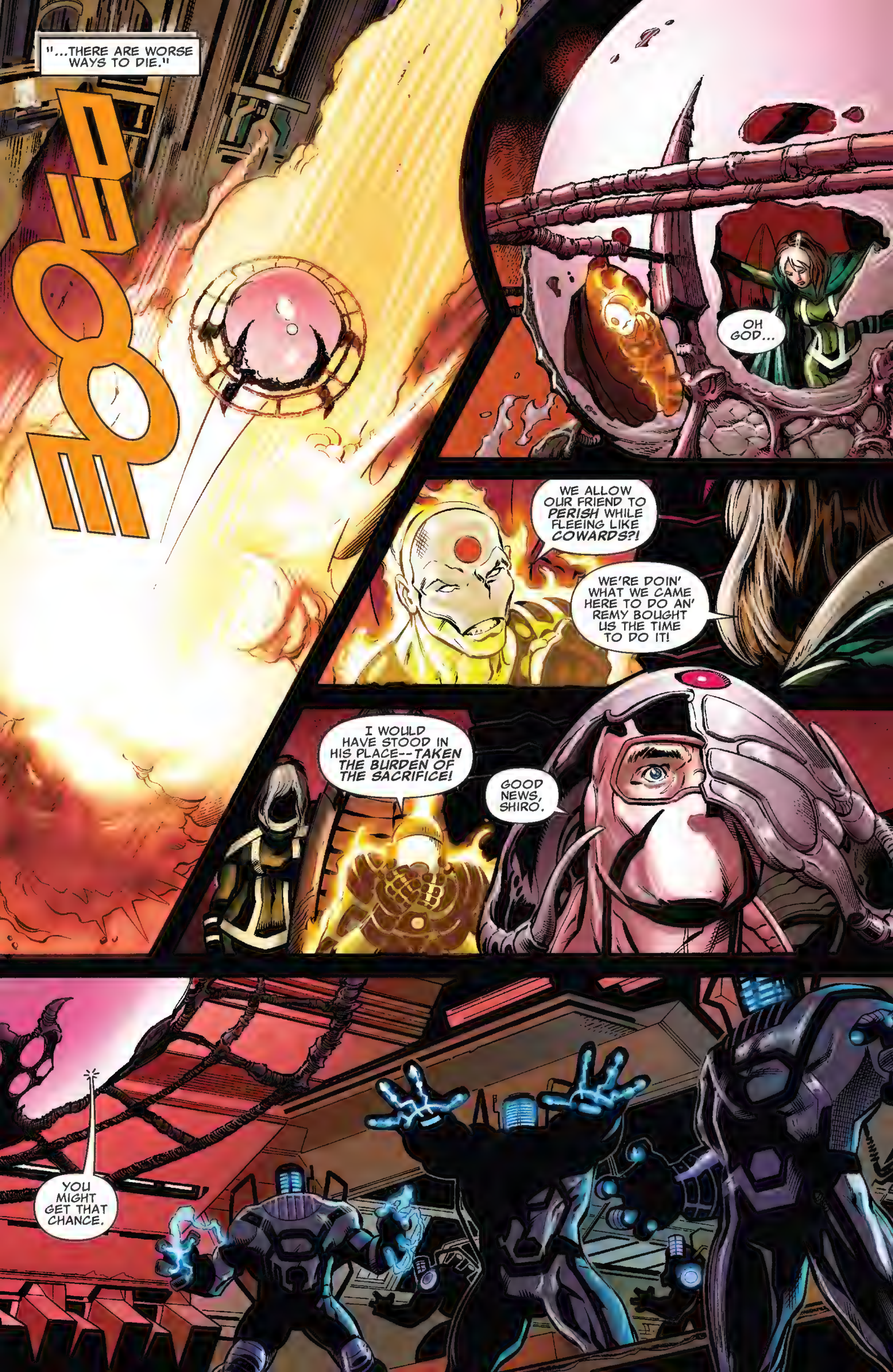

"NO, THANK YOU, WOLVERINE, I DON'T THINK I WILL JOIN YOUR X-CLAN.
"I *APPRECIATE* THE INVITE, BUT I'M HAVING VISIONS OF BEING *TRAPPED* IN THE BELLY OF A *CELESTIAL GARDENER*--
"--SURROUNDED BY *STRANGERS* FROM A *PARALLEL DIMENSION*--
"--HUNTING FOR THE *ORIGIN OF LIFE*.
"AN *EXHAUSTING* EXPEDITION I'D JUST AS SOON *AVOID*."
THEY JUST KEEP COMIN'-- *THEY CAN'T BE STOPPED!*
BAH! FIGHT THEM WITH *HEART* OR WE *WILL BE* OVERRUN!
AH, HOW THINGS COULD'VE BEEN WERE I NOT A *TERRIBLE DOLT*.
WE CAN'T HOLD THESE THINGS BACK MUCH LONGER.
SUGGESTIONS?
BLAM BLAM BLAM
GUNS INSTEAD OF PLAYING CARDS?

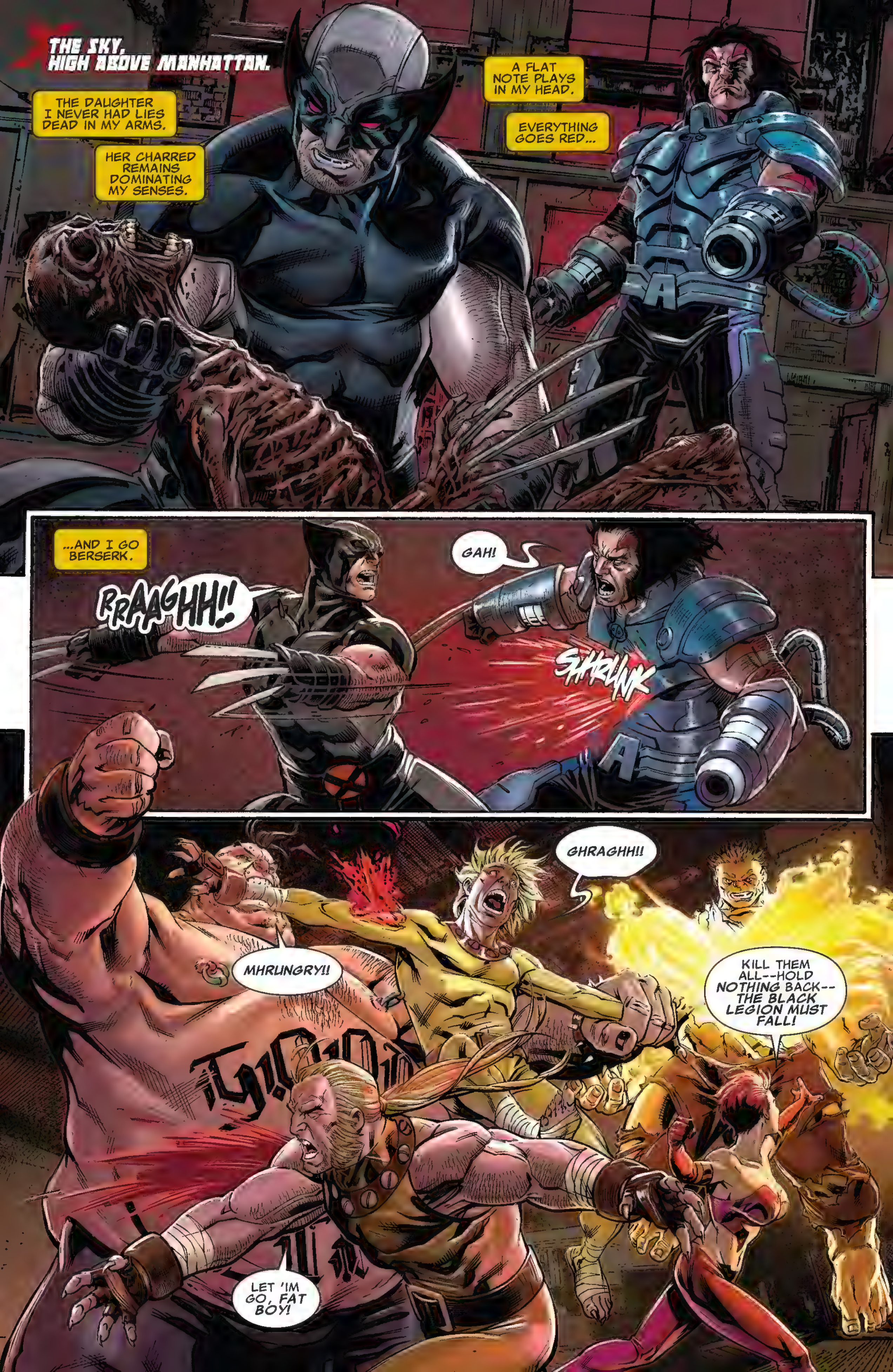

I'M SURE YOU THOUGHT THE PLAYING CARDS WERE A CUTE IDEA.
"OH, LOOK AT ME, I'M SUCH A ROGUISH ANTI-HERO, I TOSS AROUND PLAYING CARDS."
I'D WAGER YOU HAVE AN EIGHT BALL TATTOOED SOMEWHERE, TOO.
GALLOWS HUMOR, MON AMI? CAN WE DIE IN PEACE WITHOUT SUFFERING YOUR PERFORMANCE?
LIFE SEED DETECTED. COMMENCING DESCENT.
IF I ABSORB MORE DAMAGE WITHOUT TIME TO HEAL...
TRAVEL COMPANIONS GLEAN INTIMATE SECRETS ABOUT EACH OTHER.
THE SEXUAL TENSION BETWEEN ROGUE AND GAMBIT WAS APPARENT BEFORE WE LEFT ATLANTIS.
BOTH NOW WAITING TO SEE JUST HOW DAMNED WE ARE BEFORE UNBURDENING THEMSELVES.
ZADOOM
REAR GRAVITY INVERSION MAW IS SHATTERED. I CAN NO LONGER MAINTAIN FLIGHT.
ROGUE, THERE ARE THINGS I MUST TELL YOU--
TELL ME TONIGHT FROM THE SAFETY OF CAMP--WE'RE NOT DEAD YET, SUGAR.
E.V.A., DEAR, IF YOU MUST CRASH US, COULD YOU DIRECT US TOWARDS THE SEED?
AH, WHAT IS THIS...FEAR?
REMINDS ME HOW INFREQUENTLY I FEEL IT.
SOME PART OF ME REALIZING THE TRUTH...
...THAT THESE CELESTIAL DRONES WILL OVERTAKE US.
THESE BRUISED SOULS ARE RISKING THEIR LIVES TO HELP US.
PLEASE DO NOT LET THEM DOWN.
I'LL STRIVE TO SMASH INTO THE LOCATION OF YOUR CHOOSING WITHOUT DETONATING--

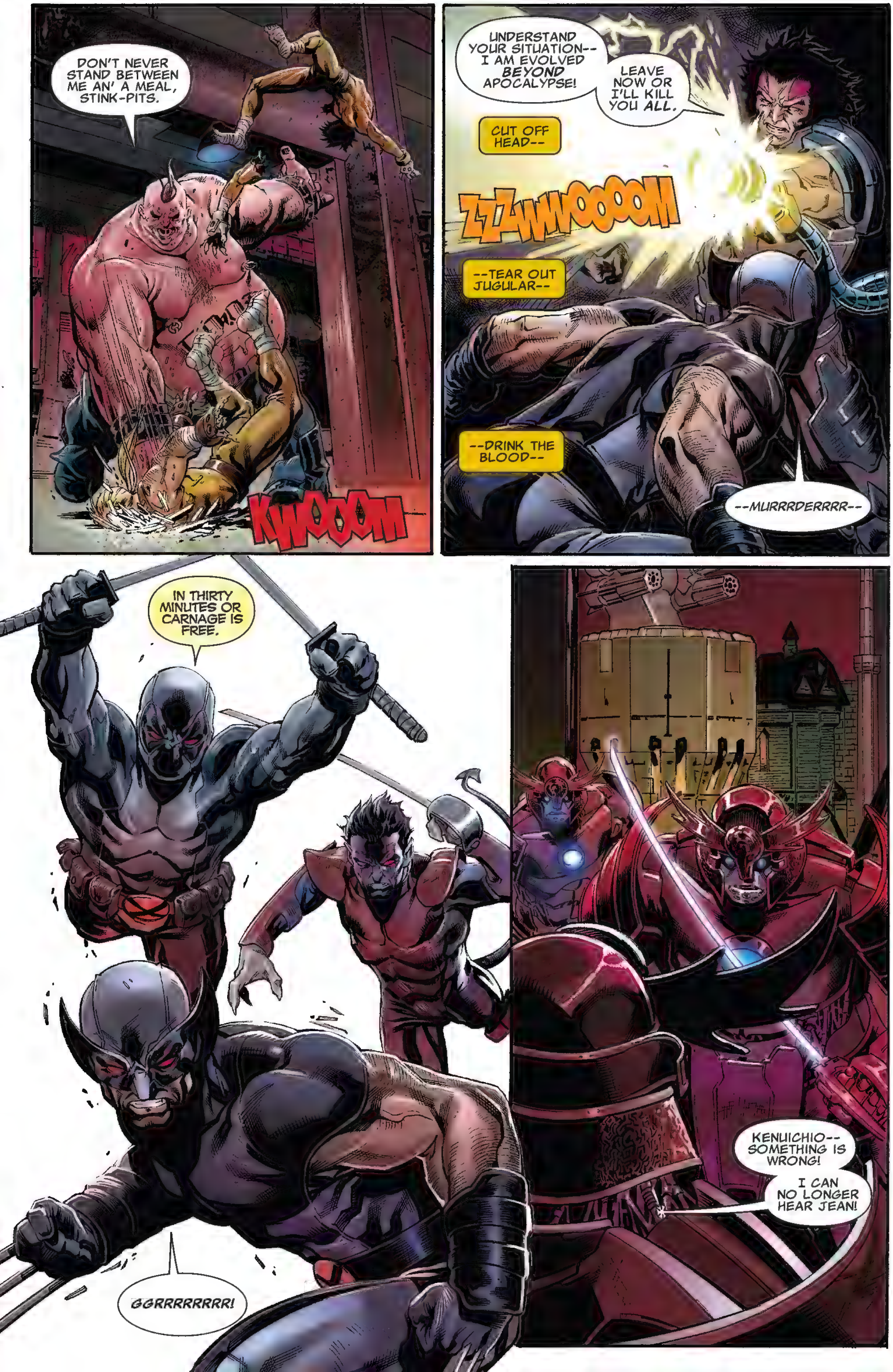

--OR KILLING TOO MANY OF OUR GUESTS.
BOOM
THE LIFE SEED -BRZZT- IN THE CHAMBER BENEATH ME. -BBRRZZT- LET'S NOT DILLYDALLY.
DILLYDALLY? ⊰KOFF⊱ DEAR, YOU CRACK ME UP.
⊰KOFF⊱ CAN YOU REPAIR?
I WILL NEED TIME.
THEN YOU WILL HAVE IT.
FOR ONCE I'M GLAD FOR YOUR BOTTOMLESS CONFIDENCE, SUGAR.
SOME SORT OF CONTROL PANEL DOWN THERE.
YOUR FRENCH ACCENT, IT'S FAKE, OUI?
THE VIRTUAL FRANCE I WAS RAISED IN HAD IMPERFECT PROGRAMMING.
STILL MORE DIGNIFIED THAN YOUR MUTT CREOLE, YES?
CAN'T TAKE IT DOWN, BUT WE CAN BUY THEM TIME.
DO NOT DAMPEN MY PERFORMANCE WITH YOUR DESPERATION, ROGUE.

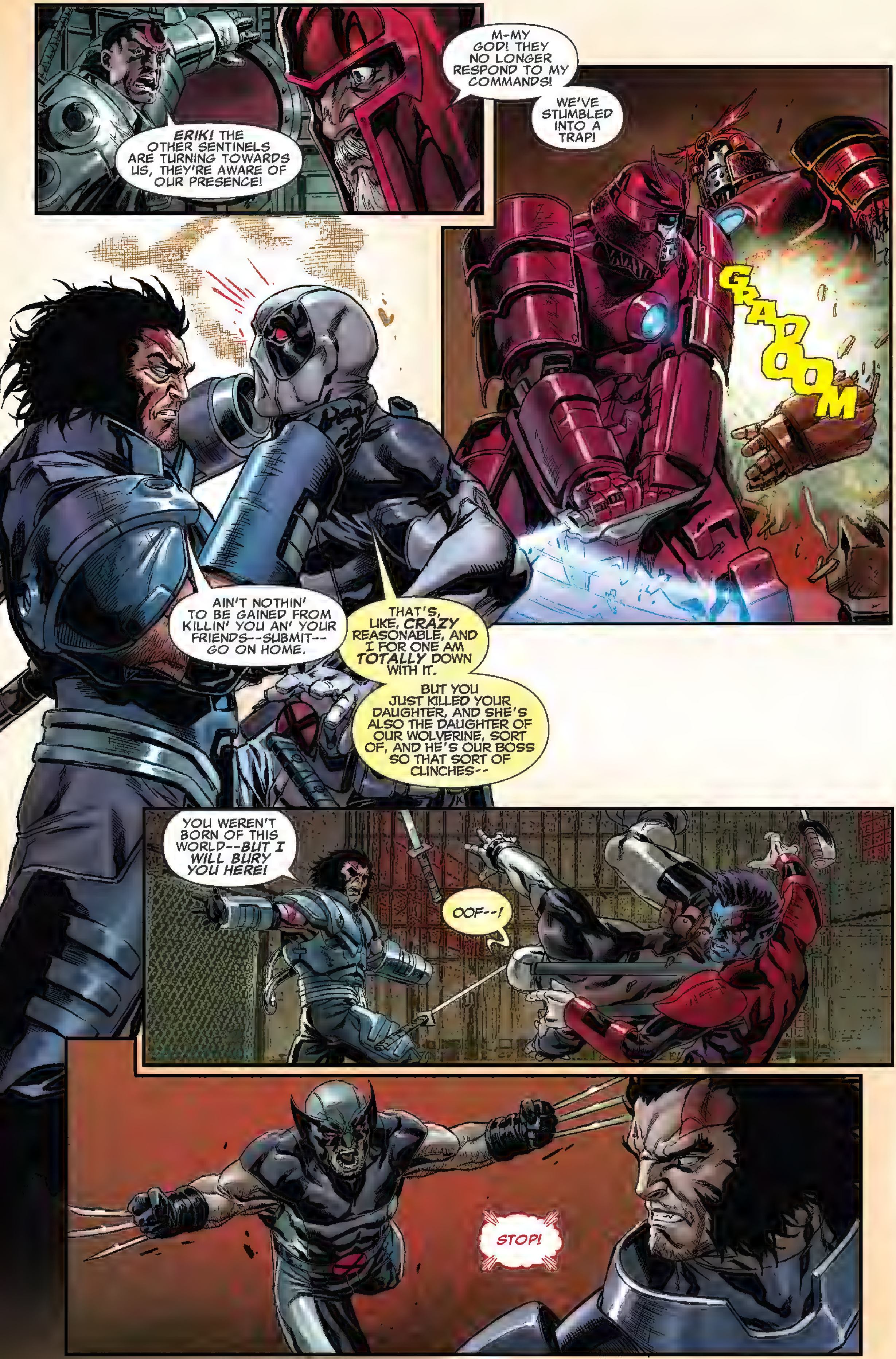

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO ACCESS CELESTIAL TECHNOLOGY?
BEFORE SEEING IT I WOULD'VE SAID *NO*--BUT THIS IS IDENTICAL TO TECHNOLOGY THAT I HAVE USED IN *THE WORLD.*
A MYSTERY FOR ANOTHER TIME.
LET'S JUST GET THESE DAMN THINGS AND GO!
OOF!
ZZZOOOOOSH
TWOKK
YERAGHH!
QUICKLY--TELL IT TO GIVE US *ANOTHER.*
NO SUCH LUCK.
THERE IS ONLY THE *ONE.*
OUR SITUATION *DID* REQUIRE ANOTHER COMPLICATION TO BE *COMPLETELY* BOLLOXED.
WHAM

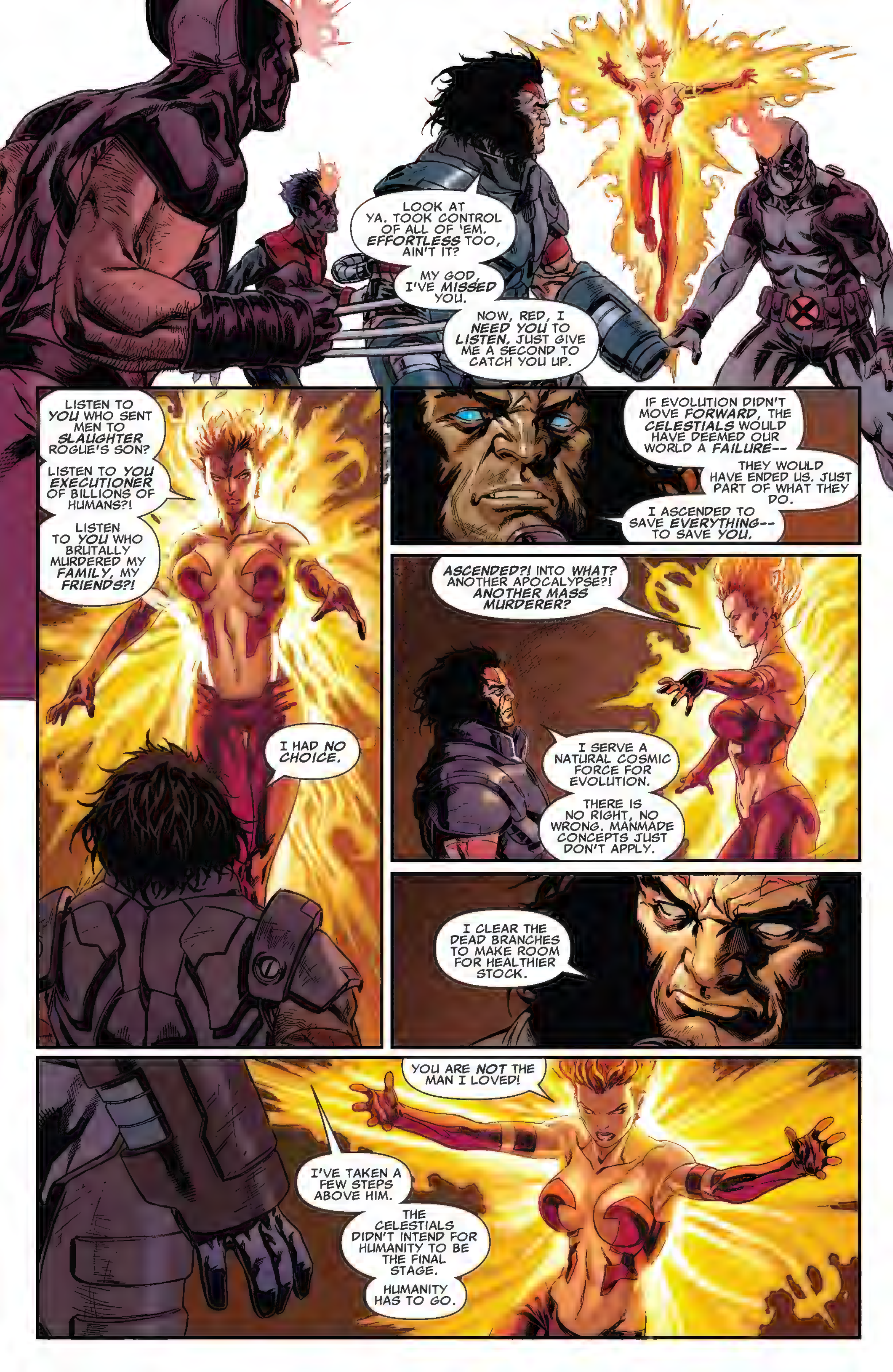

THOOM
AND ANOTHER STILL.
GO. THERE IS NO DEFEATING THESE THINGS.
NO! WE CAN--
ROGUE, MY LOVE, BE THE SENSIBLE ONE FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE.
REMY, I...
HE'S RIGHT. NO OTHER WAY WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE.
J-JUST HOLD IT OFF-- WE'LL BE BACK FOR YOU!
NO TIME FOR DELUSIONS, CHERE--I WILL NOT LEAVE THIS PLACE.
GET HOME-- MAKE SOMETHING GOOD FROM ALL OF THIS.
SO.
HERE WE ARE.
STANDING AGAINST A TERRIBLE BEAST TO SAVE THE TRUE LOVE OF MY LIFE...

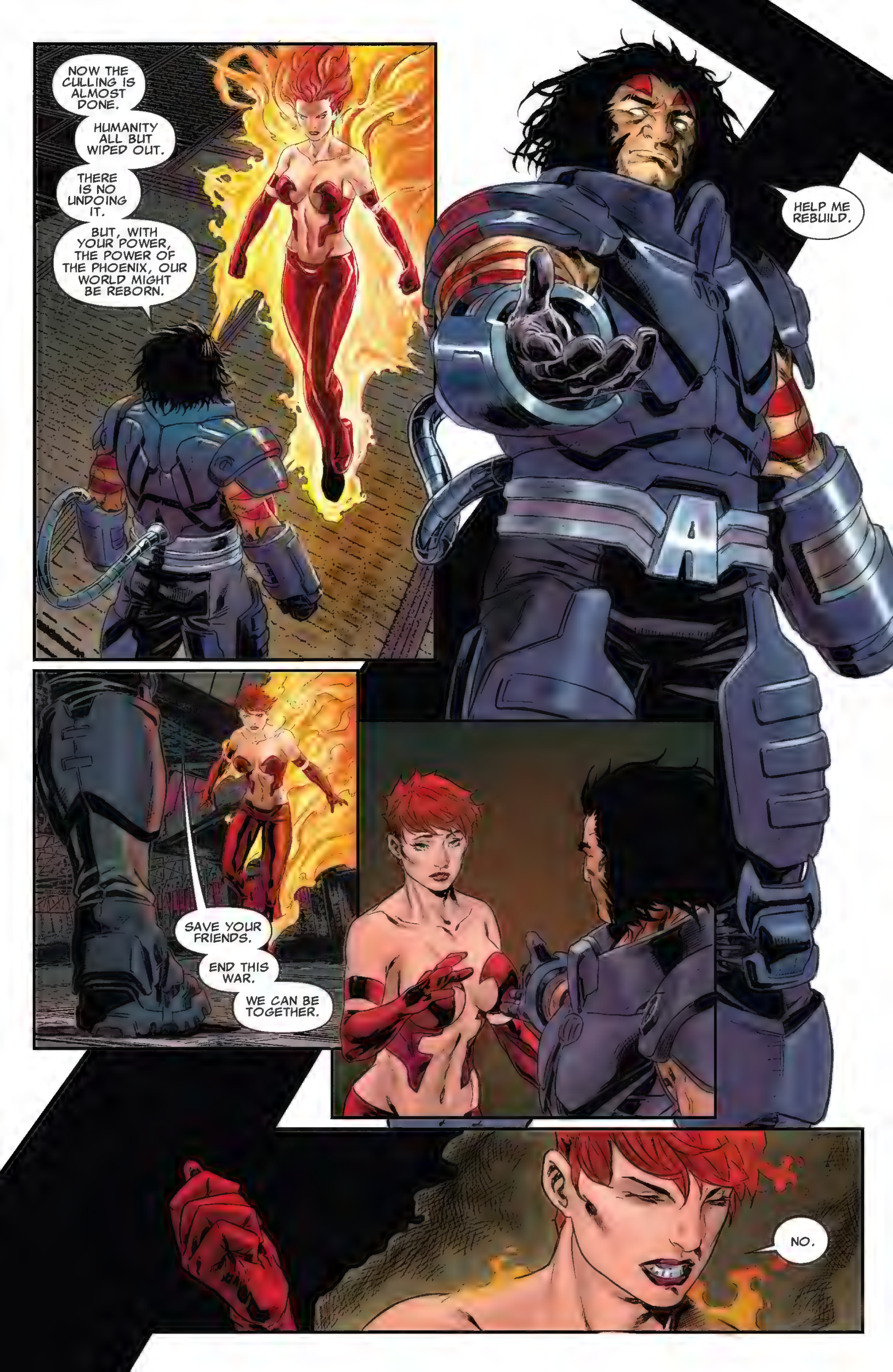

"...THERE ARE WORSE WAYS TO DIE."
BOOM
OH GOD...
WE ALLOW OUR FRIEND TO *PERISH* WHILE FLEEING LIKE *COWARDS?!*
WE'RE DOIN' WHAT WE CAME HERE TO DO AN' REMY BOUGHT US THE TIME TO DO IT!
I WOULD HAVE STOOD IN HIS PLACE--*TAKEN THE BURDEN OF THE SACRIFICE!*
GOOD NEWS, SHIRO.
YOU MIGHT GET THAT CHANCE.

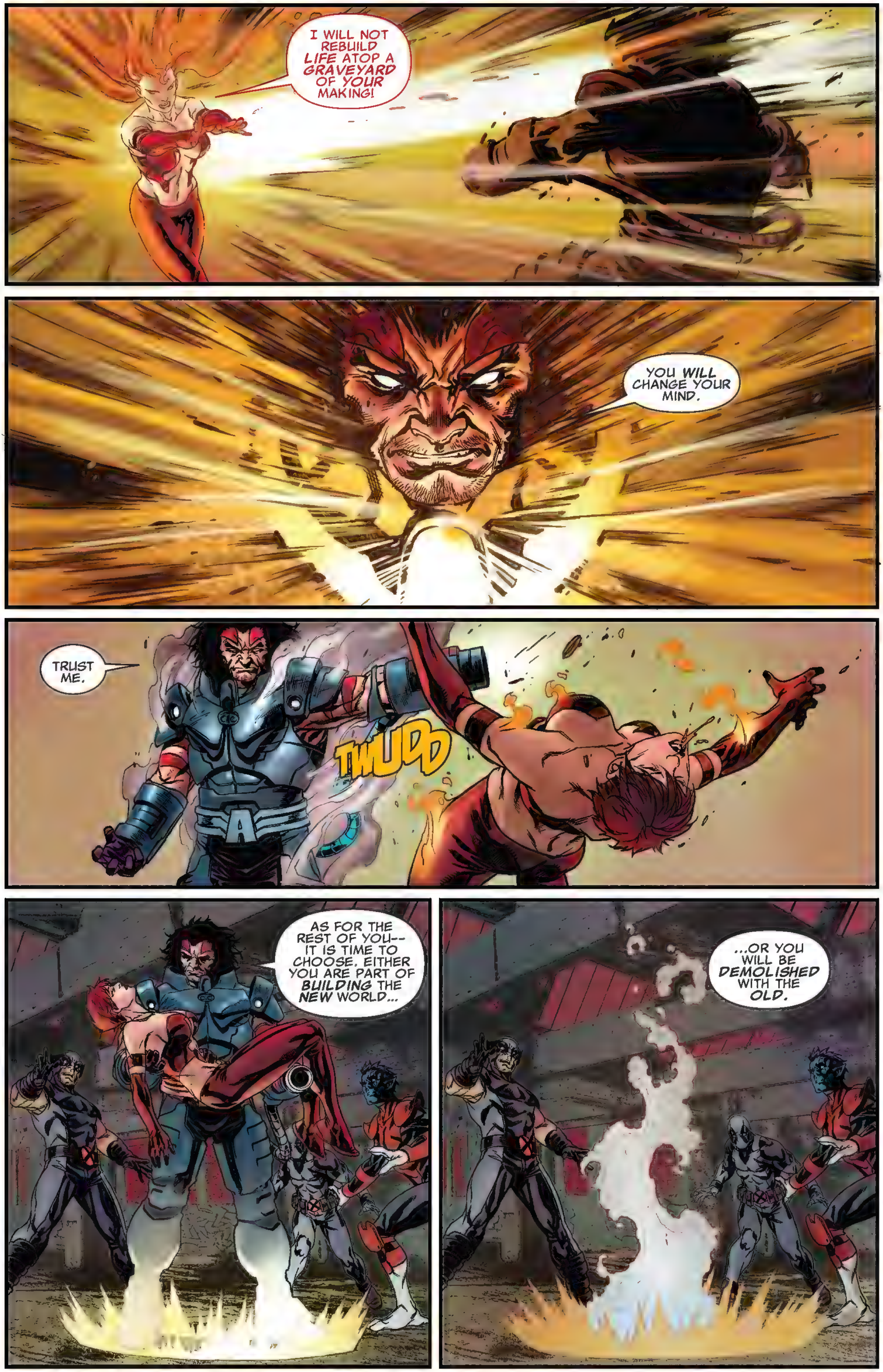

THE SKY, HIGH ABOVE MANHATTAN.
THE DAUGHTER I NEVER HAD LIES DEAD IN MY ARMS.
HER CHARRED REMAINS DOMINATING MY SENSES.
A FLAT NOTE PLAYS IN MY HEAD.
EVERYTHING GOES RED...
...AND I GO BERSERK.
RRAAGHH!!
GAH!
SHHRUNK
GHRAGHH!!
MHRUNGRY!!
KILL THEM ALL--HOLD NOTHING BACK--THE BLACK LEGION MUST FALL!
LET 'IM GO, FAT BOY!

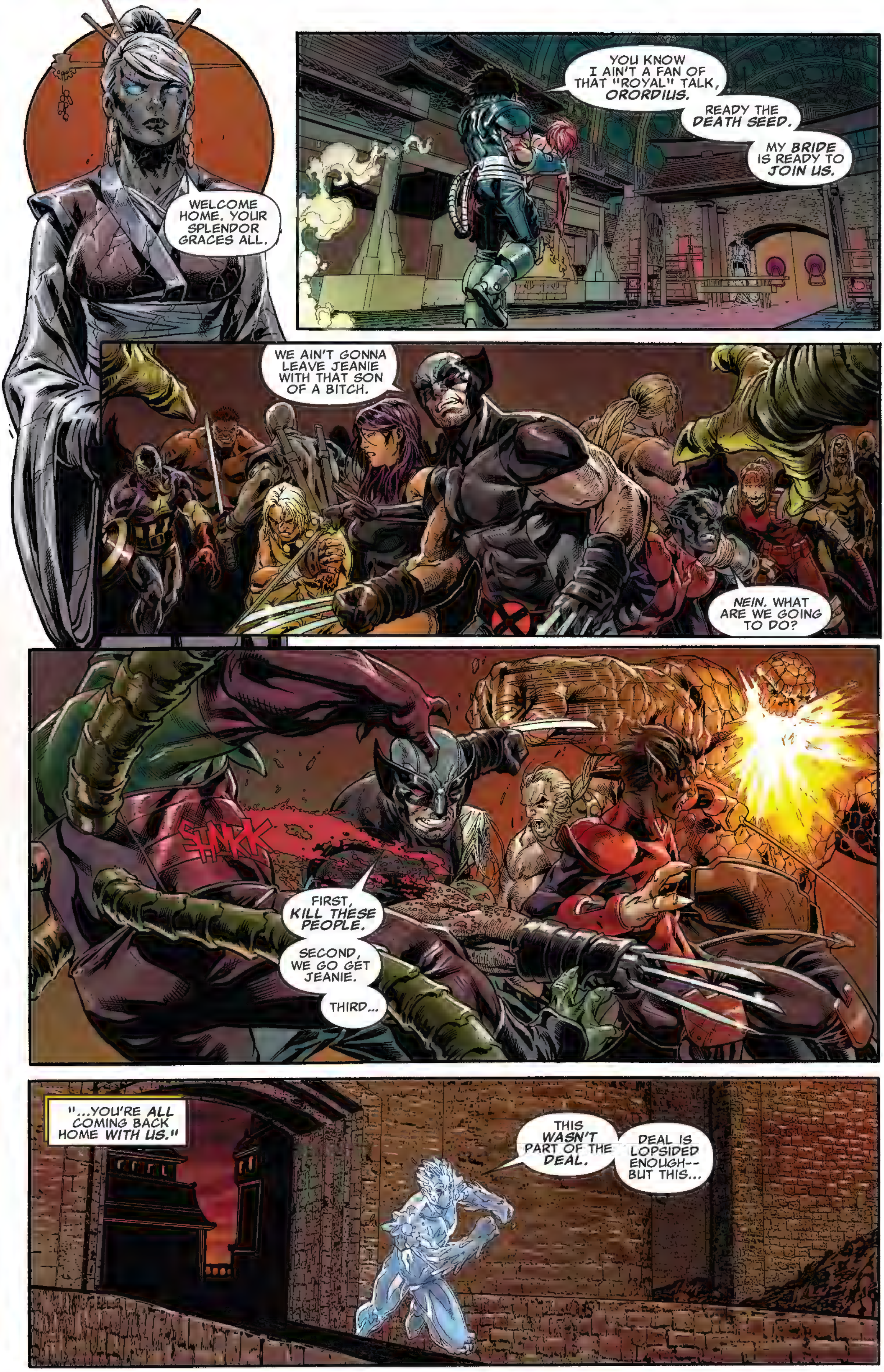

DON'T NEVER STAND BETWEEN ME AN' A MEAL, STINK-PITS.
KWOOOM
UNDERSTAND YOUR SITUATION-- I AM EVOLVED BEYOND APOCALYPSE!
LEAVE NOW OR I'LL KILL YOU ALL.
CUT OFF HEAD--
ZZZWWOOOOM
--TEAR OUT JUGULAR--
--DRINK THE BLOOD--
--MURRRDERRRR--
IN THIRTY MINUTES OR CARNAGE IS FREE.
GGRRRRRRRR!
KENUICHIO-- SOMETHING IS WRONG!
I CAN NO LONGER HEAR JEAN!

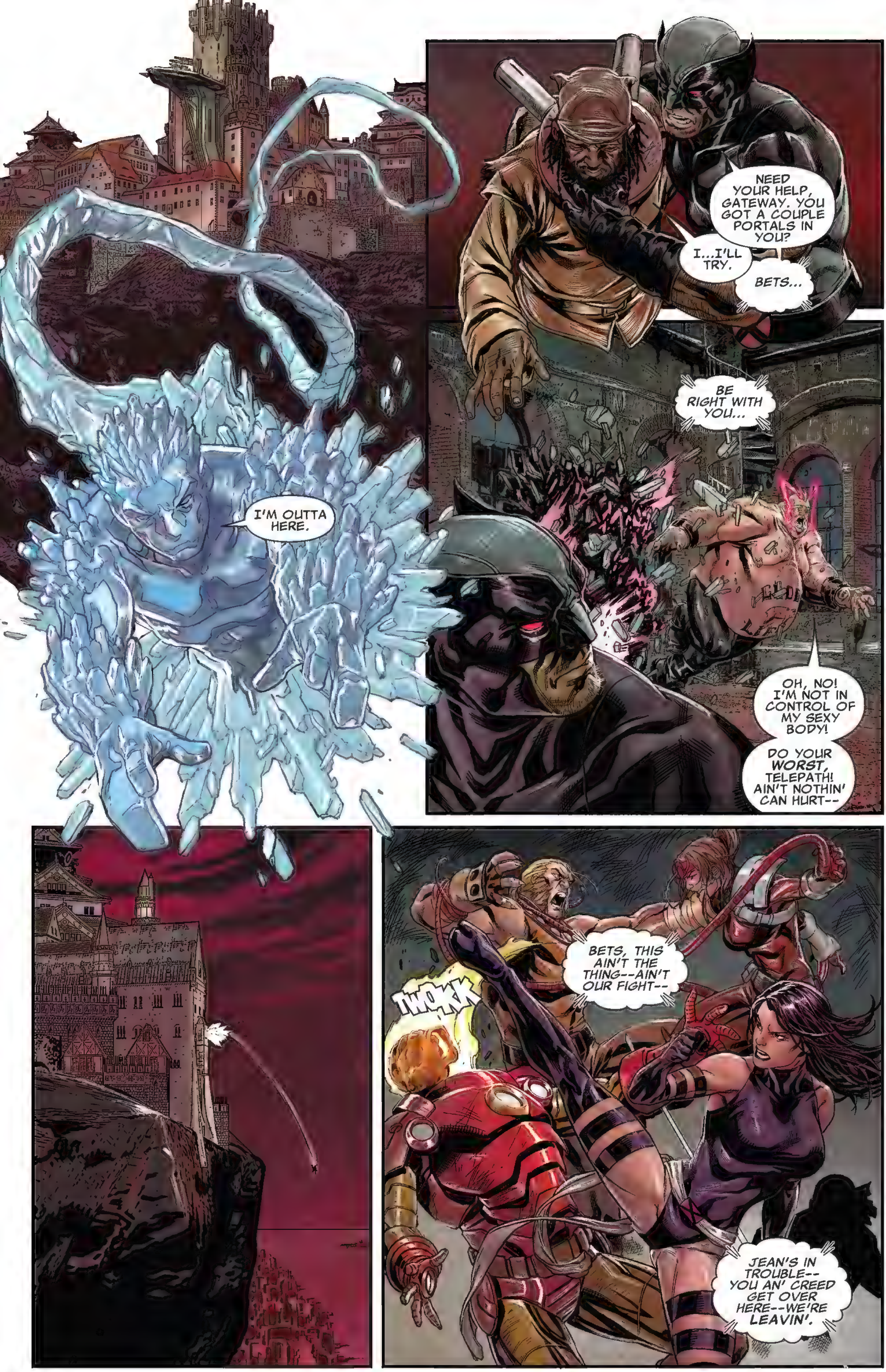

ERIK! THE OTHER SENTINELS ARE TURNING TOWARDS US, THEY'RE AWARE OF OUR PRESENCE!
M-MY GOD! THEY NO LONGER RESPOND TO MY COMMANDS!
WE'VE STUMBLED INTO A TRAP!
GRADOOM
AIN'T NOTHIN' TO BE GAINED FROM KILLIN' YOU AN' YOUR FRIENDS--SUBMIT--GO ON HOME.
THAT'S, LIKE, CRAZY REASONABLE, AND I FOR ONE AM TOTALLY DOWN WITH IT.
BUT YOU JUST KILLED YOUR DAUGHTER, AND SHE'S ALSO THE DAUGHTER OF OUR WOLVERINE, SORT OF, AND HE'S OUR BOSS SO THAT SORT OF CLINCHES--
YOU WEREN'T BORN OF THIS WORLD--BUT I WILL BURY YOU HERE!
OOF--!
STOP!

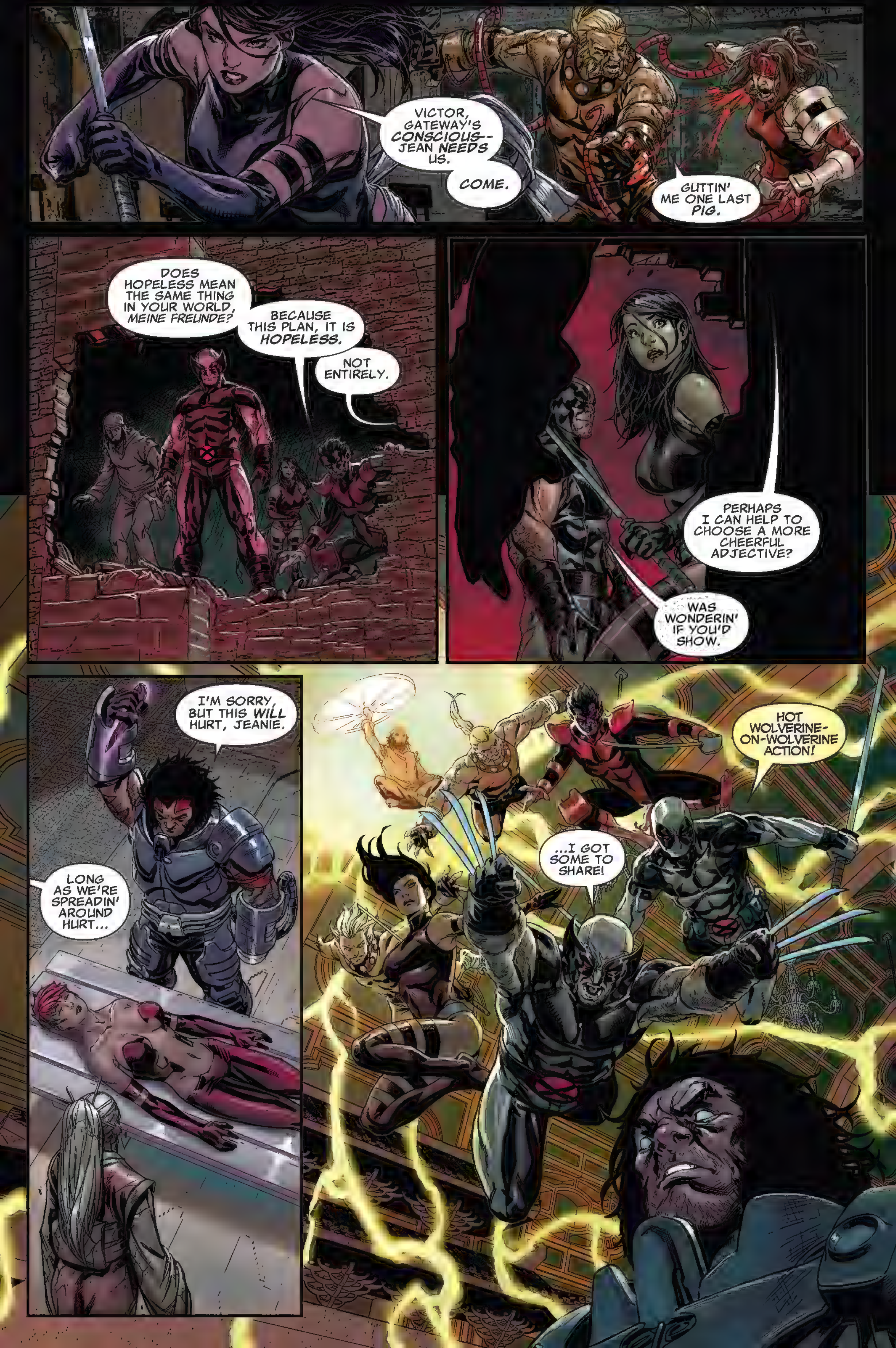

LOOK AT YA. TOOK CONTROL OF ALL OF 'EM. EFFORTLESS TOO, AIN'T IT?
MY GOD, I'VE MISSED YOU.
NOW, RED, I NEED YOU TO LISTEN. JUST GIVE ME A SECOND TO CATCH YOU UP.
LISTEN TO YOU WHO SENT MEN TO SLAUGHTER ROGUE'S SON?
LISTEN TO YOU EXECUTIONER OF BILLIONS OF HUMANS?!
LISTEN TO YOU WHO BRUTALLY MURDERED MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS?!
I HAD NO CHOICE.
IF EVOLUTION DIDN'T MOVE FORWARD, THE CELESTIALS WOULD HAVE DEEMED OUR WORLD A FAILURE--
THEY WOULD HAVE ENDED US. JUST PART OF WHAT THEY DO.
I ASCENDED TO SAVE EVERYTHING-- TO SAVE YOU.
ASCENDED?! INTO WHAT? ANOTHER APOCALYPSE?! ANOTHER MASS MURDERER?
I SERVE A NATURAL COSMIC FORCE FOR EVOLUTION.
THERE IS NO RIGHT, NO WRONG. MANMADE CONCEPTS JUST DON'T APPLY.
I CLEAR THE DEAD BRANCHES TO MAKE ROOM FOR HEALTHIER STOCK.
YOU ARE NOT THE MAN I LOVED!
I'VE TAKEN A FEW STEPS ABOVE HIM.
THE CELESTIALS DIDN'T INTEND FOR HUMANITY TO BE THE FINAL STAGE.
HUMANITY HAS TO GO.

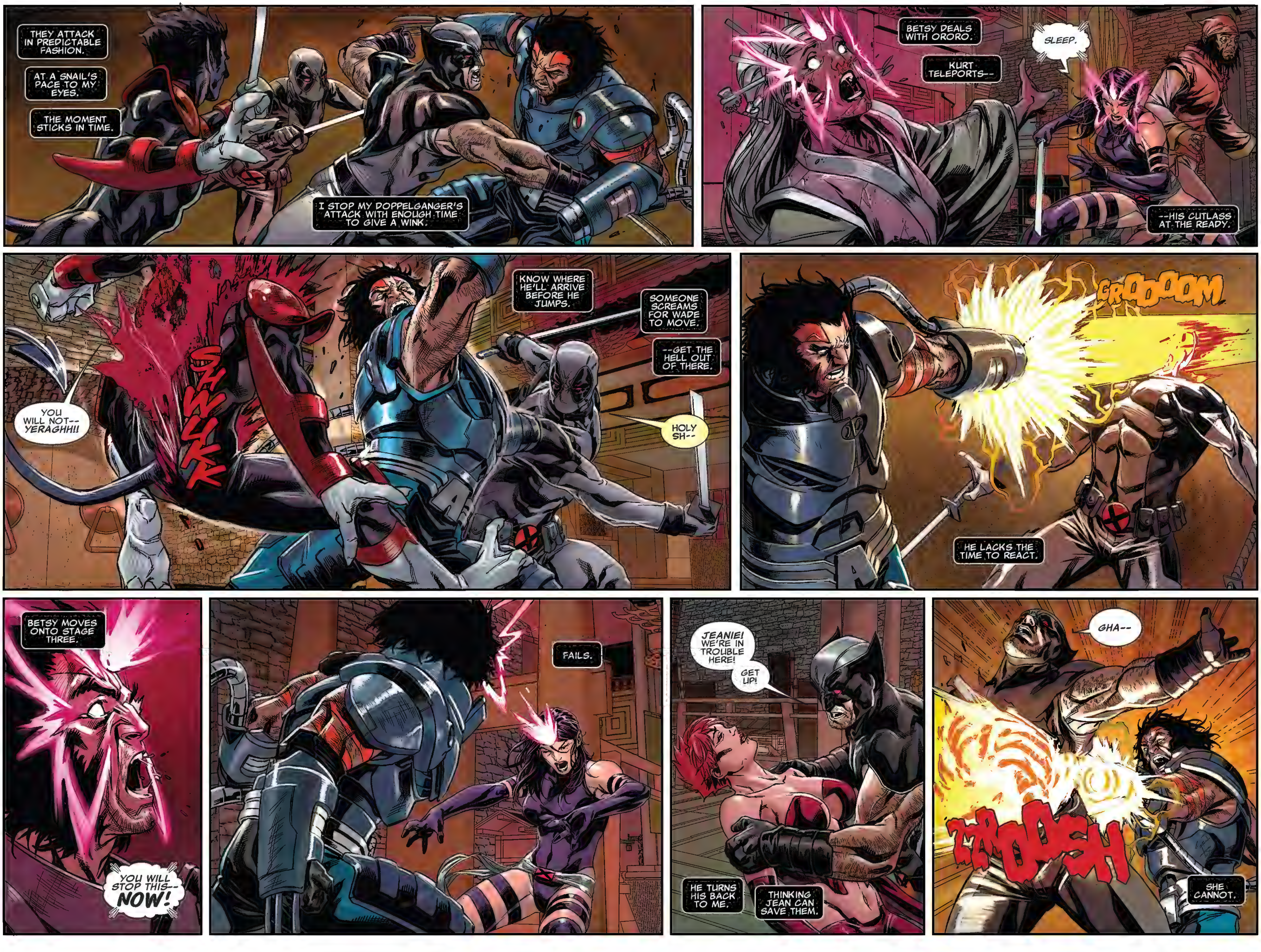

NOW THE CULLING IS ALMOST DONE.
HUMANITY ALL BUT WIPED OUT.
THERE IS NO UNDOING IT.
BUT, WITH YOUR POWER, THE POWER OF THE PHOENIX, OUR WORLD MIGHT BE REBORN.
HELP ME REBUILD.
SAVE YOUR FRIENDS.
END THIS WAR.
WE CAN BE TOGETHER.
NO.

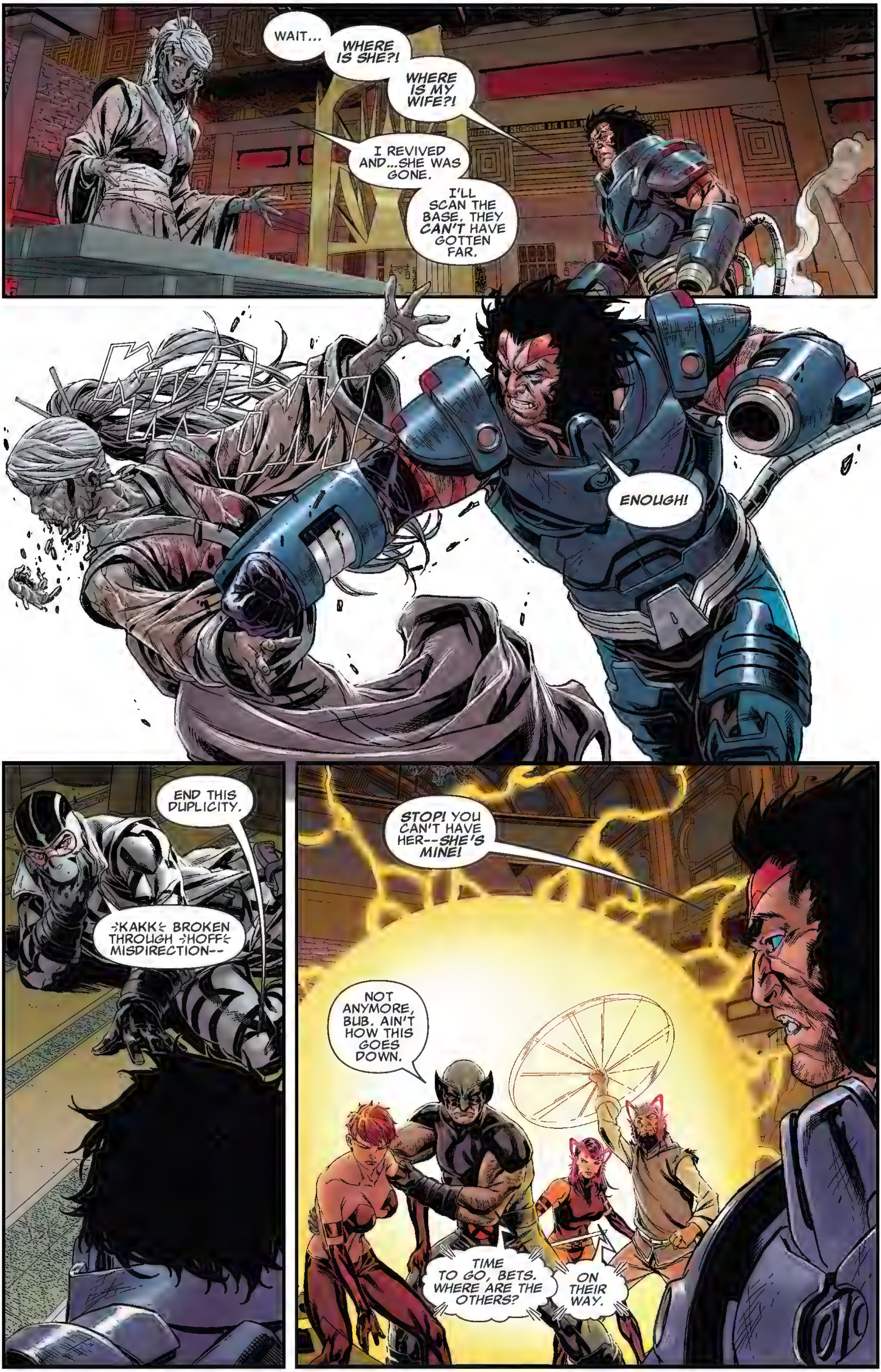

I WILL NOT REBUILD LIFE ATOP A GRAVEYARD OF YOUR MAKING!
YOU WILL CHANGE YOUR MIND.
TRUST ME.
TWUDD
AS FOR THE REST OF YOU-- IT IS TIME TO CHOOSE. EITHER YOU ARE PART OF BUILDING THE NEW WORLD...
...OR YOU WILL BE DEMOLISHED WITH THE OLD.

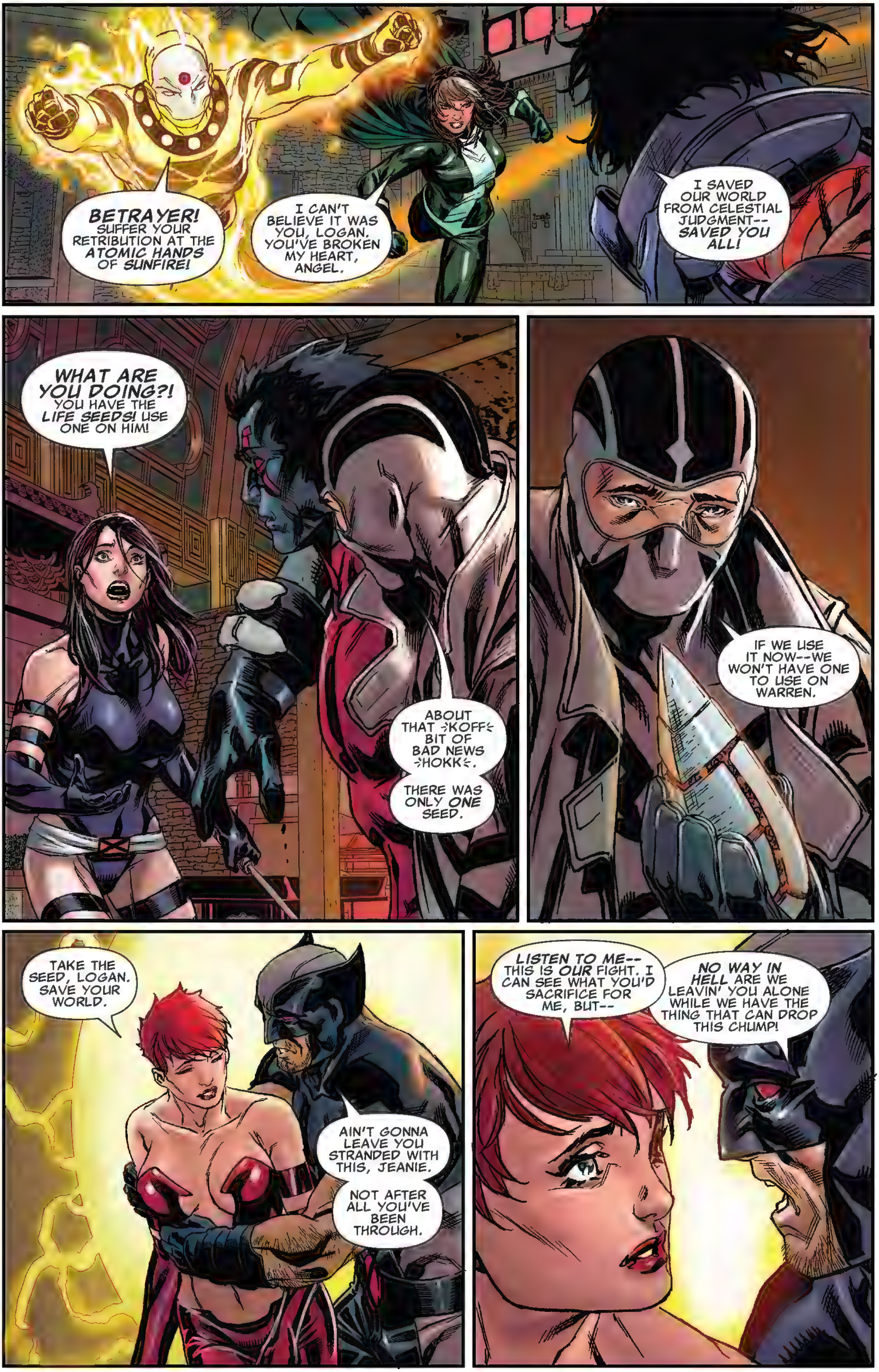

WELCOME HOME. YOUR SPLENDOR GRACES ALL.
YOU KNOW I AIN'T A FAN OF THAT "ROYAL" TALK, ORORDIUS.
READY THE DEATH SEED.
MY BRIDE IS READY TO JOIN US.
WE AIN'T GONNA LEAVE JEANIE WITH THAT SON OF A BITCH.
NEIN. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
SHNKK
FIRST, KILL THESE PEOPLE.
SECOND, WE GO GET JEANIE.
THIRD...
"...YOU'RE ALL COMING BACK HOME WITH US."
THIS WASN'T PART OF THE DEAL.
DEAL IS LOPSIDED ENOUGH-- BUT THIS...

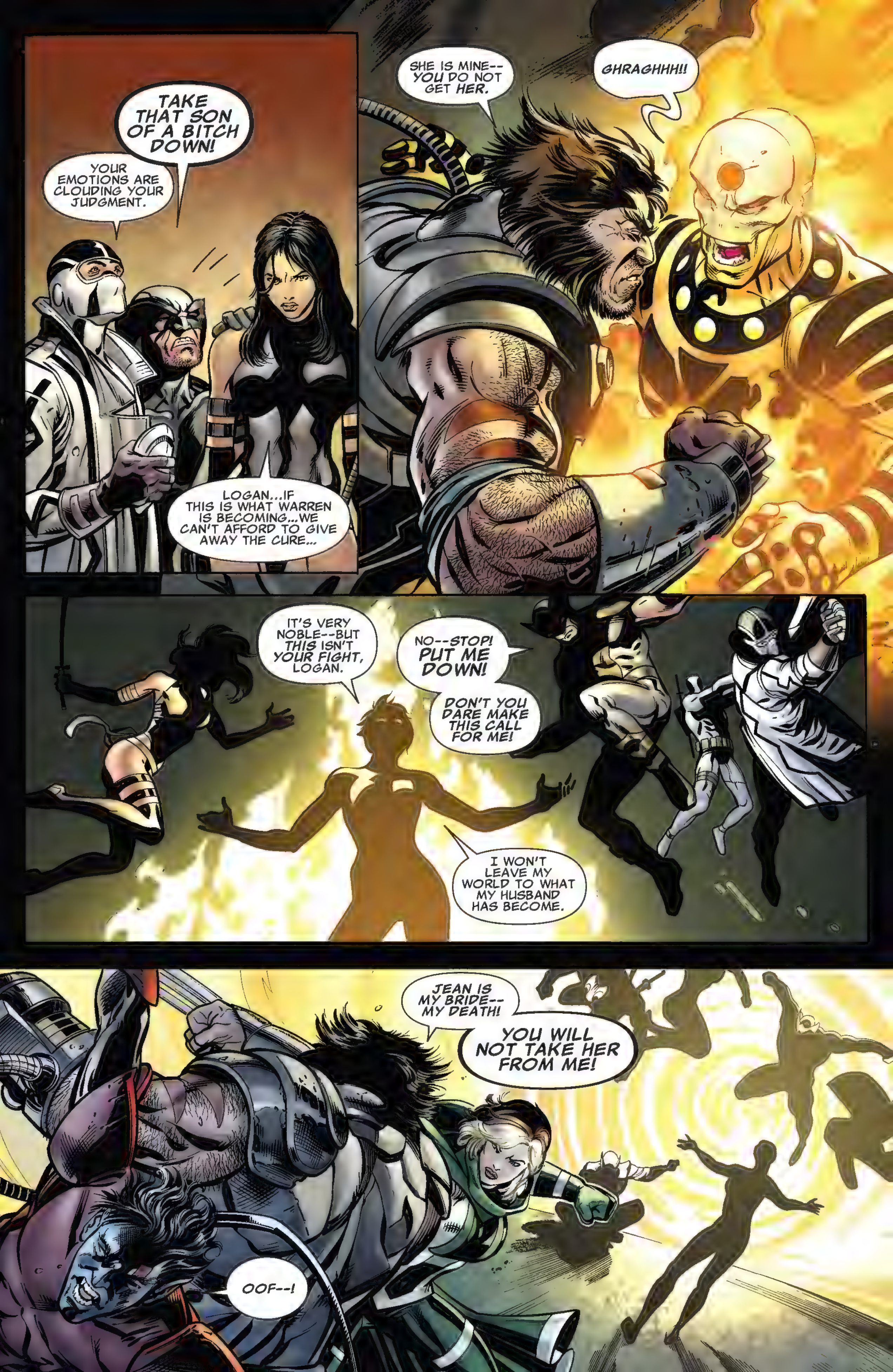

I'M OUTTA HERE.
NEED YOUR HELP, GATEWAY. YOU GOT A COUPLE PORTALS IN YOU?
I...I'LL TRY.
BETS...
BE RIGHT WITH YOU...
OH, NO! I'M NOT IN CONTROL OF MY SEXY BODY!
DO YOUR *WORST*, TELEPATH! AIN'T NOTHIN' CAN HURT--
TWOKK
BETS, THIS AIN'T THE THING--AIN'T OUR FIGHT--
JEAN'S IN TROUBLE-- YOU AN' CREED GET OVER HERE--WE'RE *LEAVIN'*.

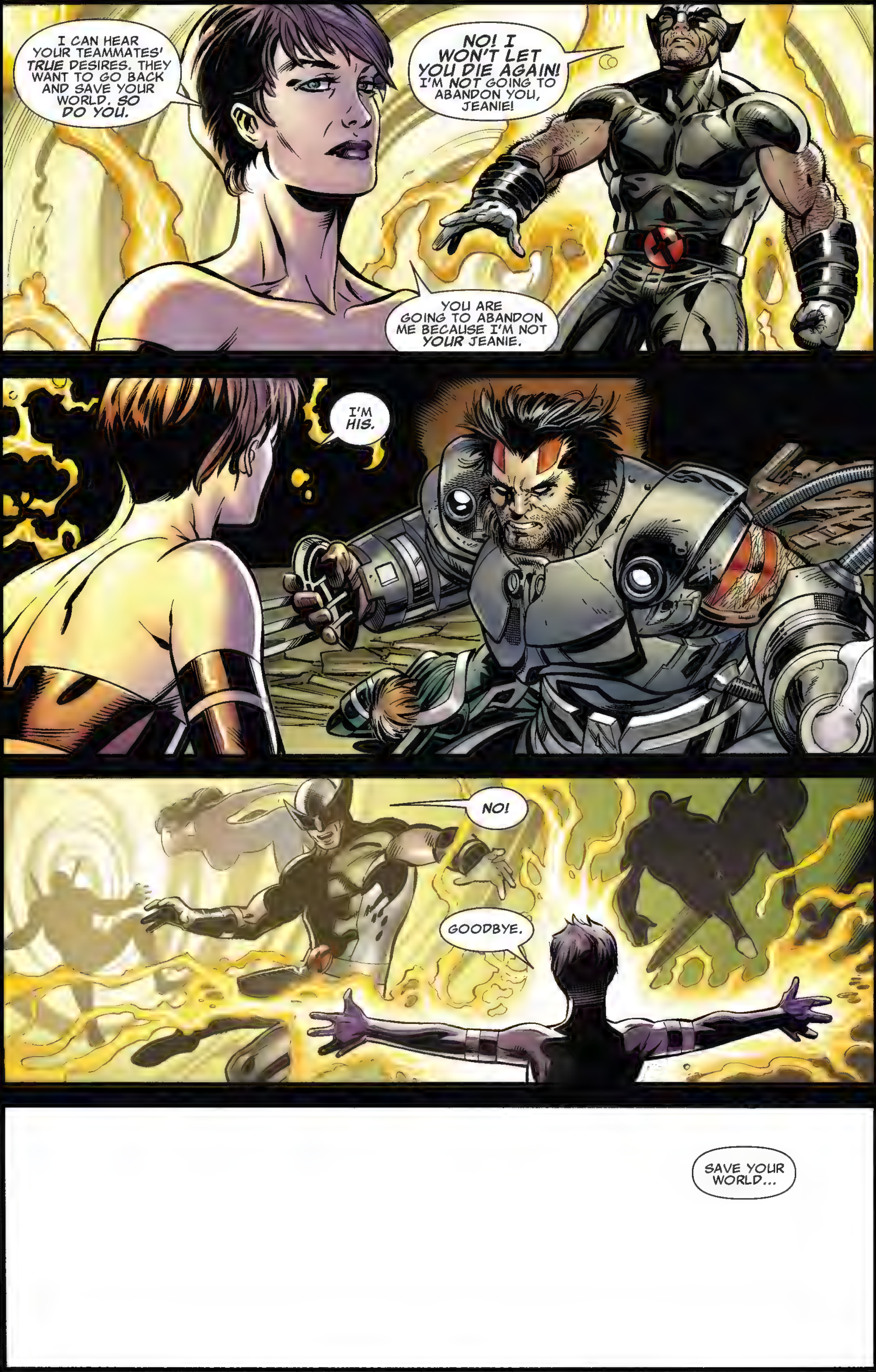

VICTOR, GATEWAY'S *CONSCIOUS*-- JEAN *NEEDS* US.
COME.
GUTTIN' ME ONE LAST *PIG.*
DOES HOPELESS MEAN THE SAME THING IN YOUR WORLD, *MEINE FREUNDE?*
BECAUSE THIS PLAN, IT IS *HOPELESS.*
NOT ENTIRELY.
PERHAPS I CAN HELP TO CHOOSE A MORE CHEERFUL ADJECTIVE?
WAS WONDERIN' IF YOU'D SHOW.
I'M SORRY, BUT THIS *WILL* HURT, JEANIE.
LONG AS WE'RE SPREADIN' AROUND HURT...
...I GOT SOME TO SHARE!
HOT WOLVERINE-ON-WOLVERINE ACTION!

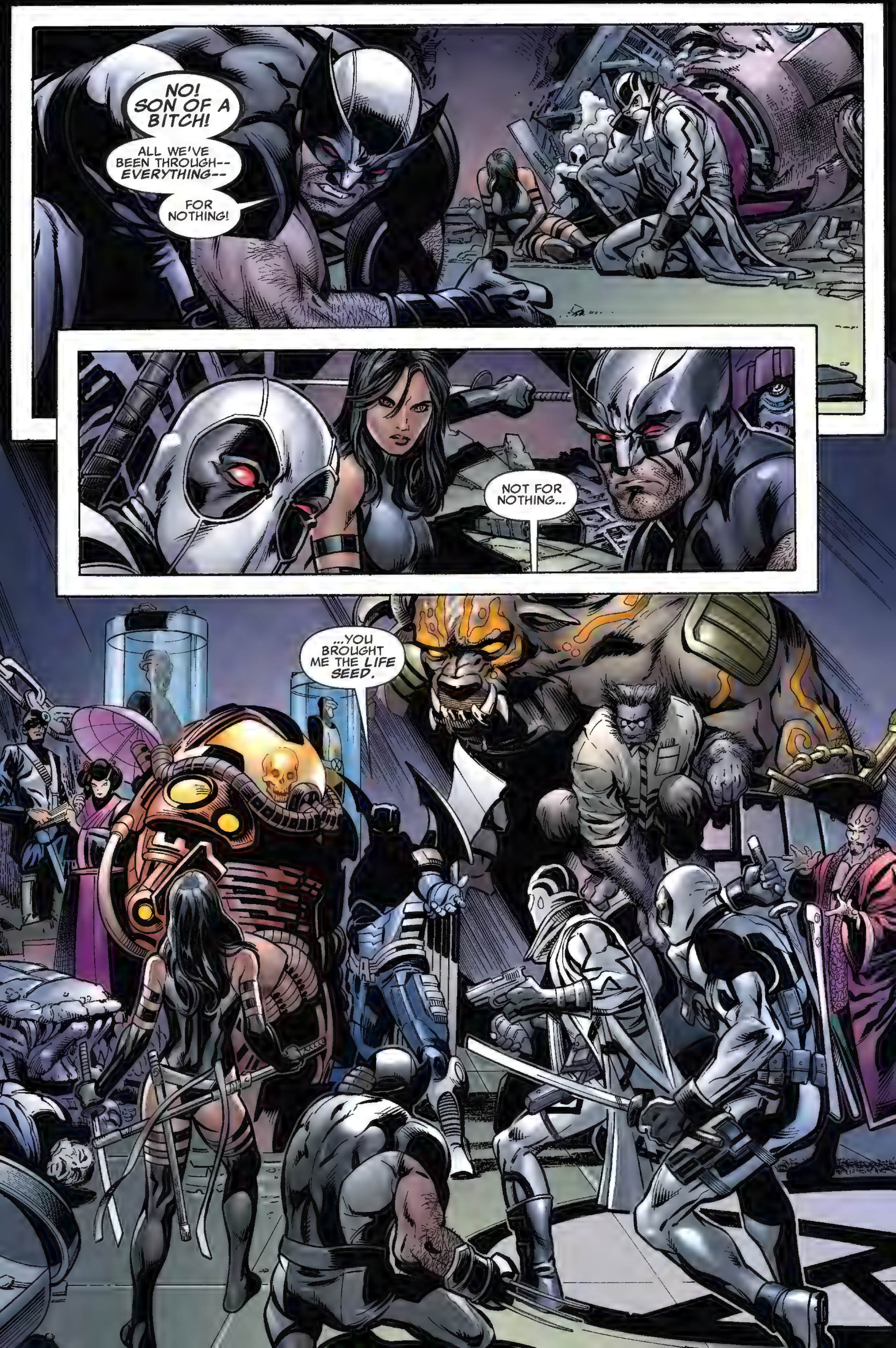

THEY ATTACK IN PREDICTABLE FASHION.
AT A SNAIL'S PACE TO MY EYES.
THE MOMENT STICKS IN TIME.
I STOP MY DOPPELGANGER'S ATTACK WITH ENOUGH TIME TO GIVE A WINK.
BETSY DEALS WITH ORORO.
SLEEP.
KURT TELEPORTS--
--HIS CUTLASS AT THE READY.
KNOW WHERE HE'LL ARRIVE BEFORE HE JUMPS.
SOMEONE SCREAMS FOR WADE TO MOVE.
--GET THE HELL OUT OF THERE.
YOU WILL NOT-- YERAGHH!!
SHWUKK
HOLY SH--
CROOOOM
HE LACKS THE TIME TO REACT.
BETSY MOVES ONTO STAGE THREE.
YOU WILL STOP THIS-- NOW!
FAILS.
JEANIE! WE'RE IN TROUBLE HERE!
GET UP!
HE TURNS HIS BACK TO ME.
THINKING JEAN CAN SAVE THEM.
GHA--
CROOOSH
SHE CANNOT.


WAIT...
WHERE IS SHE?!
WHERE IS MY WIFE?!
I REVIVED AND...SHE WAS GONE.
I'LL SCAN THE BASE. THEY CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR.
KRAKOOM
ENOUGH!
END THIS DUPLICITY.
⊰KAKK⊱ BROKEN THROUGH ⊰HOFF⊱ MISDIRECTION--
STOP! YOU CAN'T HAVE HER--SHE'S MINE!
NOT ANYMORE, BUB. AIN'T HOW THIS GOES DOWN.
TIME TO GO, BETS. WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?
ON THEIR WAY.


BETRAYER! SUFFER YOUR RETRIBUTION AT THE ATOMIC HANDS OF SUNFIRE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT WAS YOU, LOGAN. YOU'VE BROKEN MY HEART, ANGEL.
I SAVED OUR WORLD FROM CELESTIAL JUDGMENT-- SAVED YOU ALL!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! YOU HAVE THE LIFE SEEDS! USE ONE ON HIM!
ABOUT THAT -KOFF- BIT OF BAD NEWS -HOKK-.
THERE WAS ONLY ONE SEED.
IF WE USE IT NOW--WE WON'T HAVE ONE TO USE ON WARREN.
TAKE THE SEED, LOGAN. SAVE YOUR WORLD.
AIN'T GONNA LEAVE YOU STRANDED WITH THIS, JEANIE.
NOT AFTER ALL YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH.
LISTEN TO ME-- THIS IS OUR FIGHT. I CAN SEE WHAT YOU'D SACRIFICE FOR ME, BUT--
NO WAY IN HELL ARE WE LEAVIN' YOU ALONE WHILE WE HAVE THE THING THAT CAN DROP THIS CHUMP!

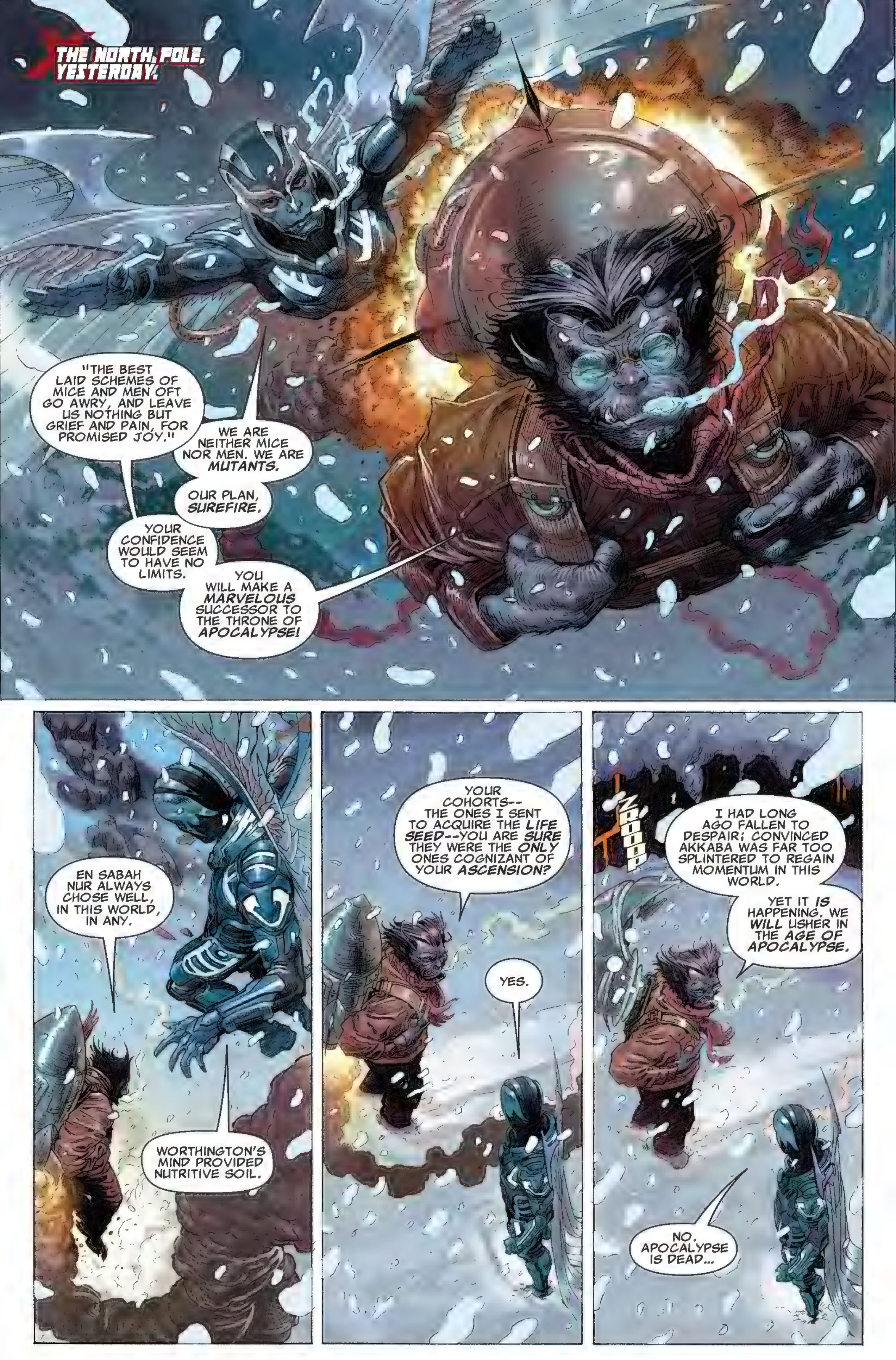

TAKE THAT SON OF A BITCH DOWN!
YOUR EMOTIONS ARE CLOUDING YOUR JUDGMENT.
LOGAN...IF THIS IS WHAT WARREN IS BECOMING...WE CAN'T AFFORD TO GIVE AWAY THE CURE...
SHE IS MINE-- YOU DO NOT GET HER.
GHRAGHHH!!
IT'S VERY NOBLE--BUT THIS ISN'T YOUR FIGHT, LOGAN.
NO--STOP! PUT ME DOWN!
DON'T YOU DARE MAKE THIS CALL FOR ME!
I WON'T LEAVE MY WORLD TO WHAT MY HUSBAND HAS BECOME.
JEAN IS MY BRIDE-- MY DEATH!
YOU WILL NOT TAKE HER FROM ME!
OOF--!

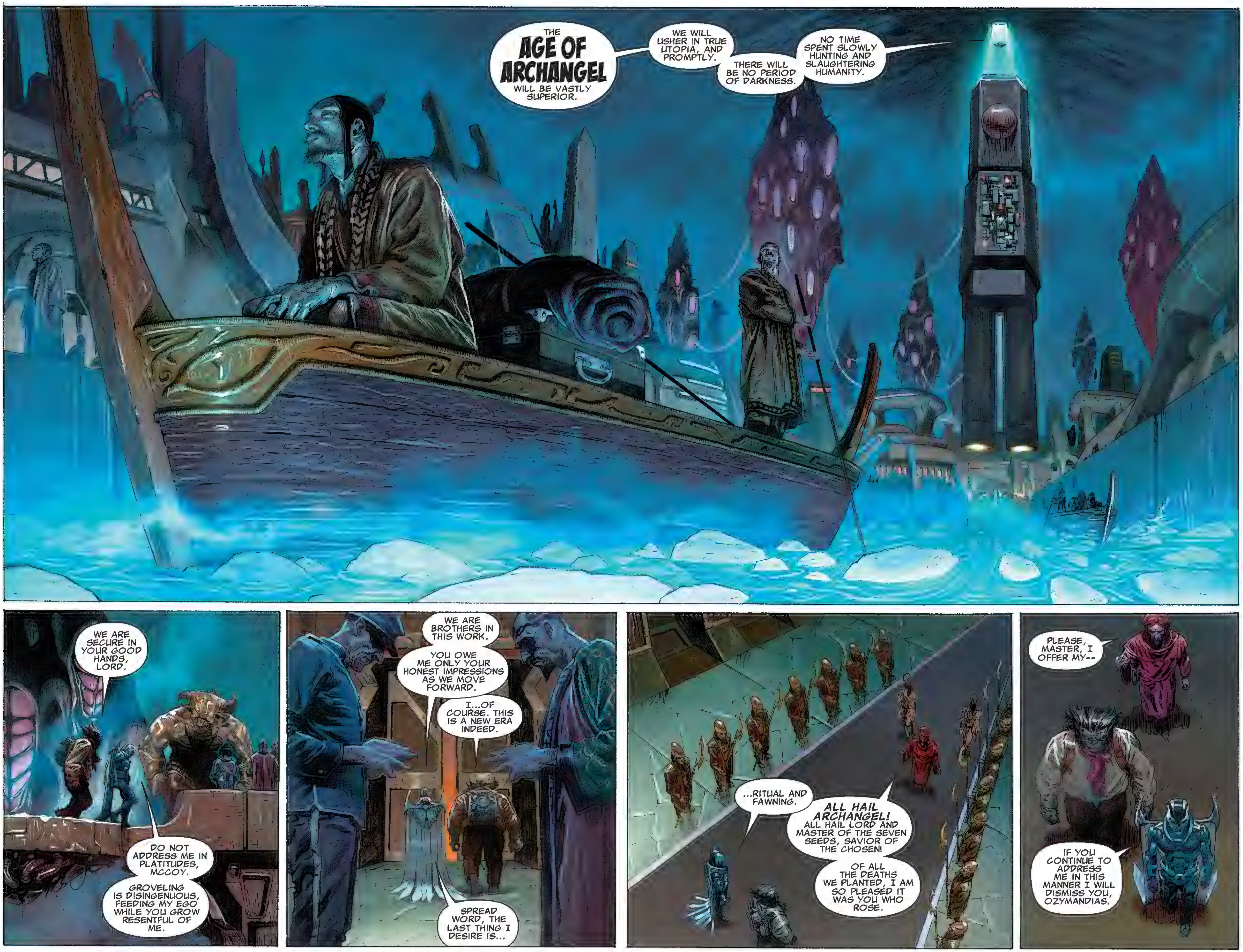

I CAN HEAR YOUR TEAMMATES' **TRUE** DESIRES. THEY WANT TO GO BACK AND SAVE YOUR WORLD. **SO DO YOU.**
NO! I WON'T LET YOU DIE AGAIN! I'M **NOT** GOING TO ABANDON YOU, JEANIE!
YOU ARE GOING TO ABANDON ME BECAUSE I'M NOT **YOUR** JEANIE.
I'M **HIS.**
NO!
GOODBYE.
SAVE YOUR WORLD...

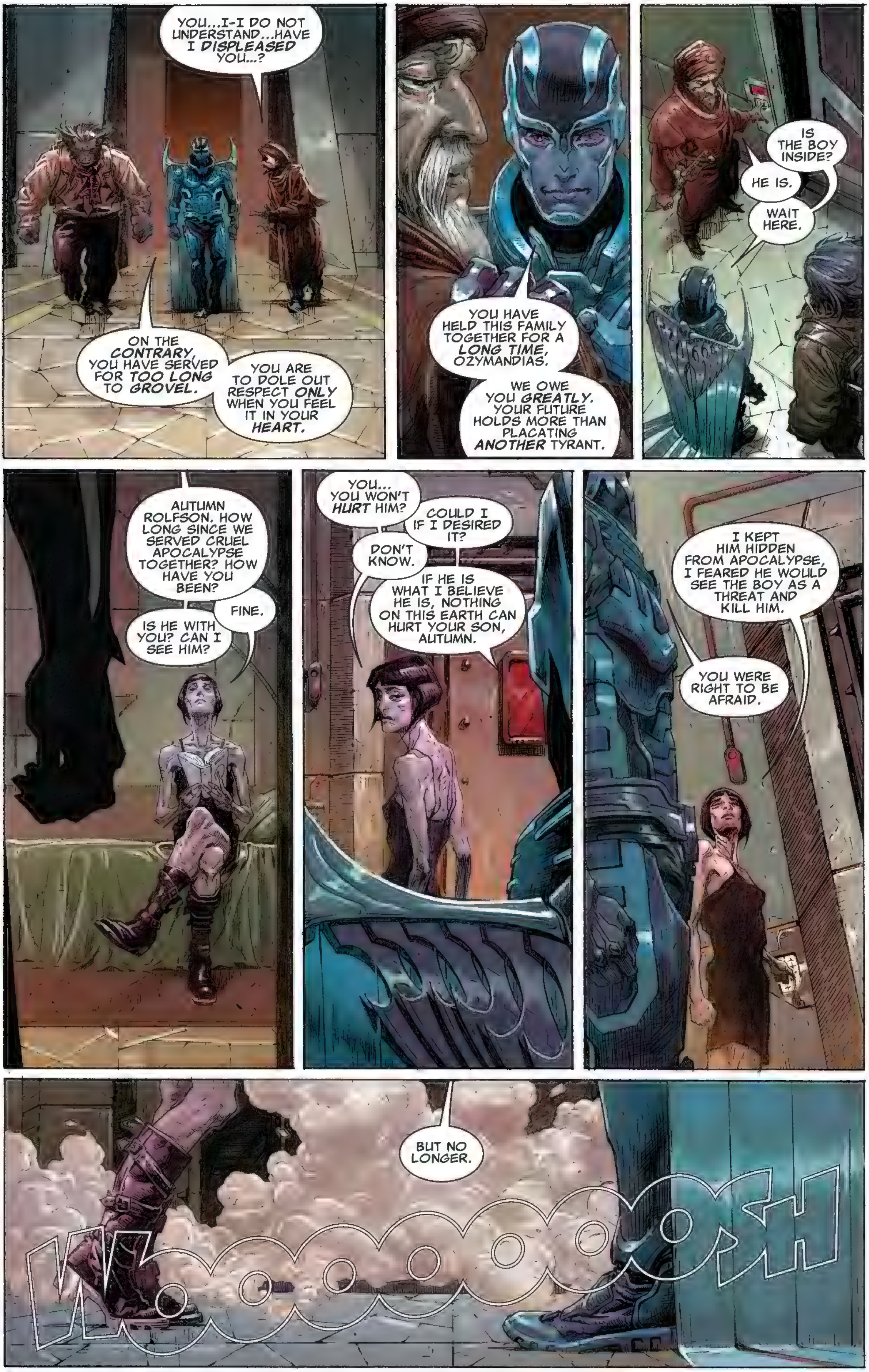

NO! SON OF A BITCH!
ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH-- *EVERYTHING*--
FOR NOTHING!
NOT FOR NOTHING...
...YOU BROUGHT ME THE *LIFE SEED*.

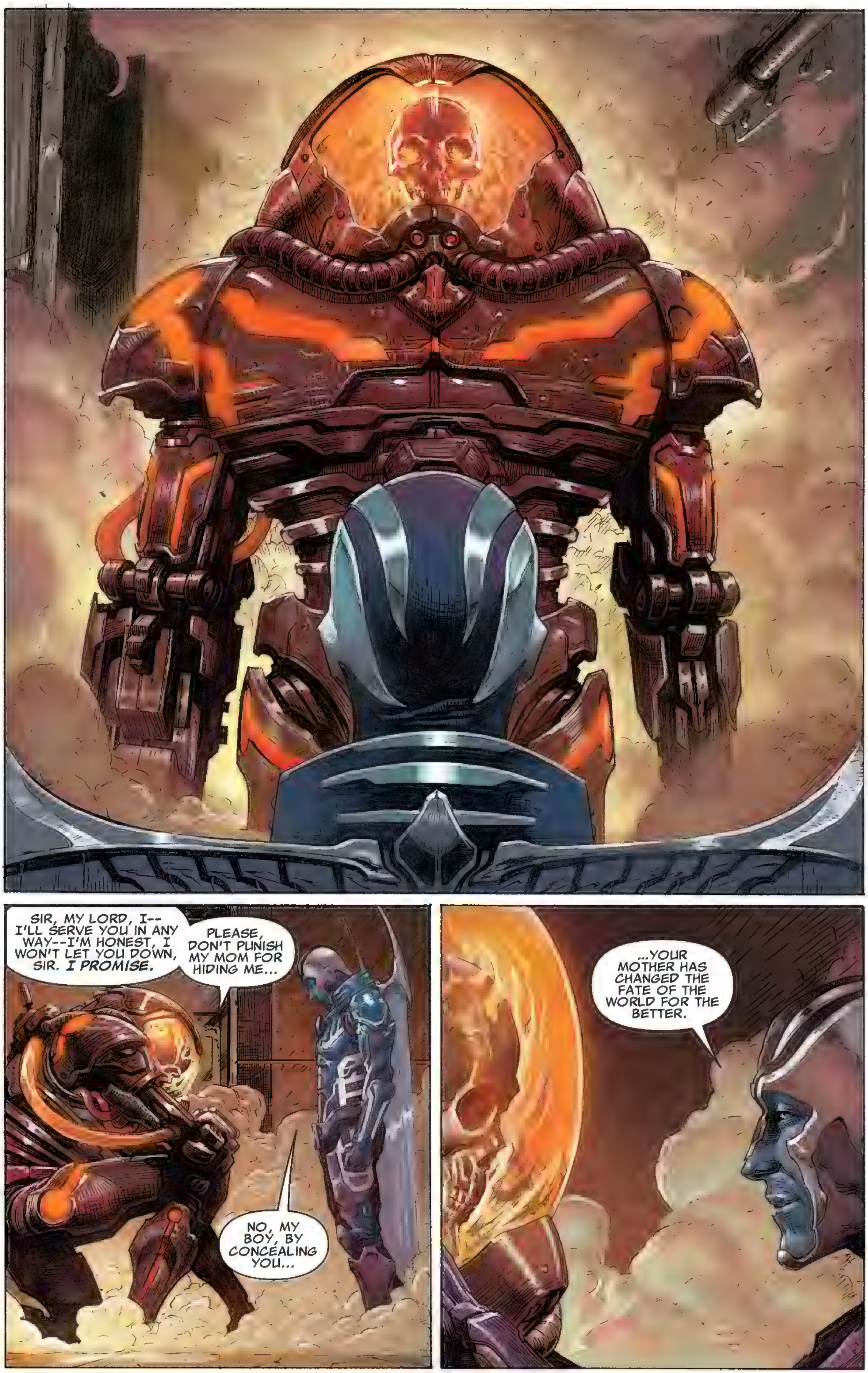
14 THE DARK ANGEL SAGA

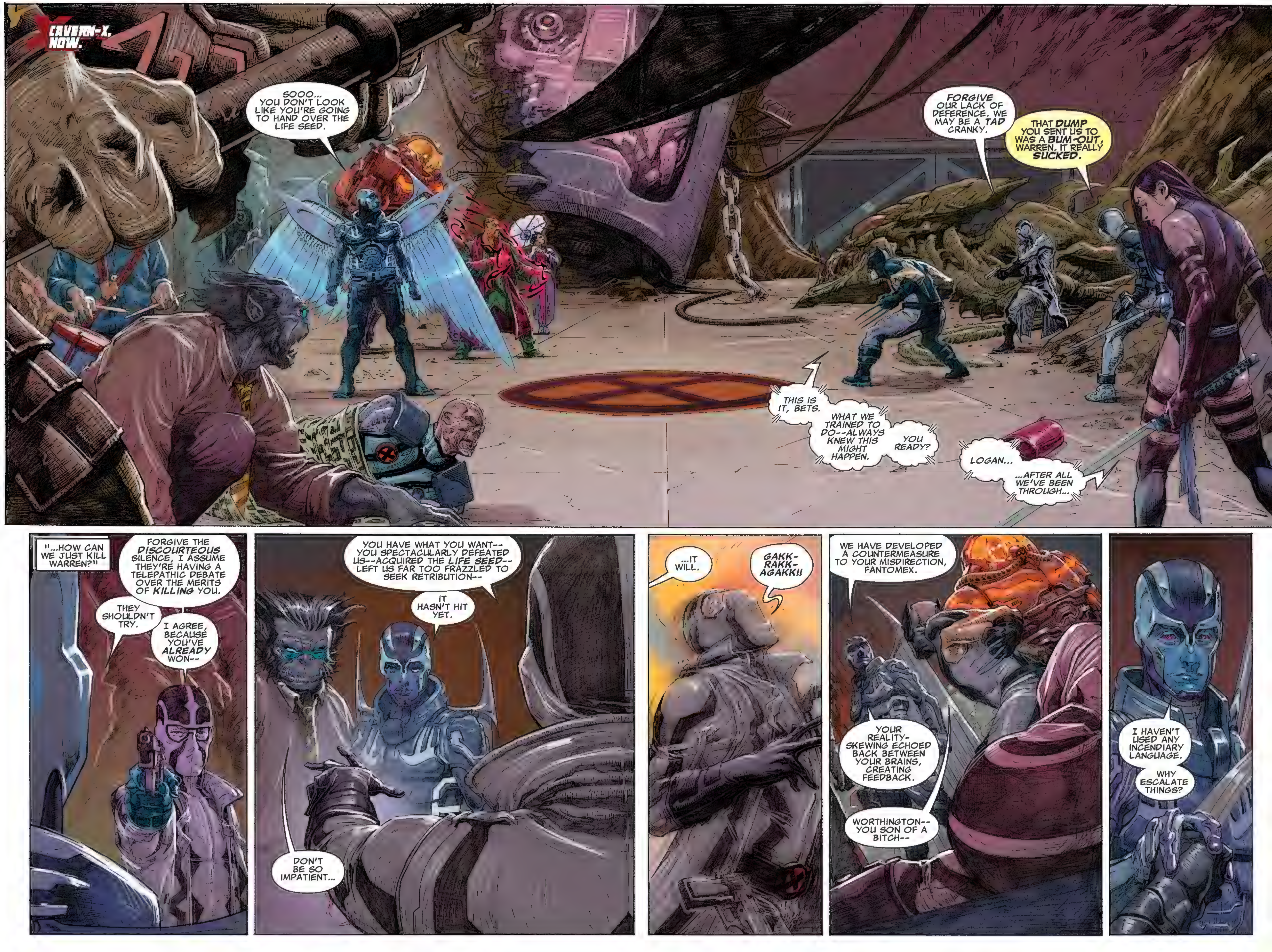
CHAPTER 4: THUNDER FOR THE NEXT WORLD

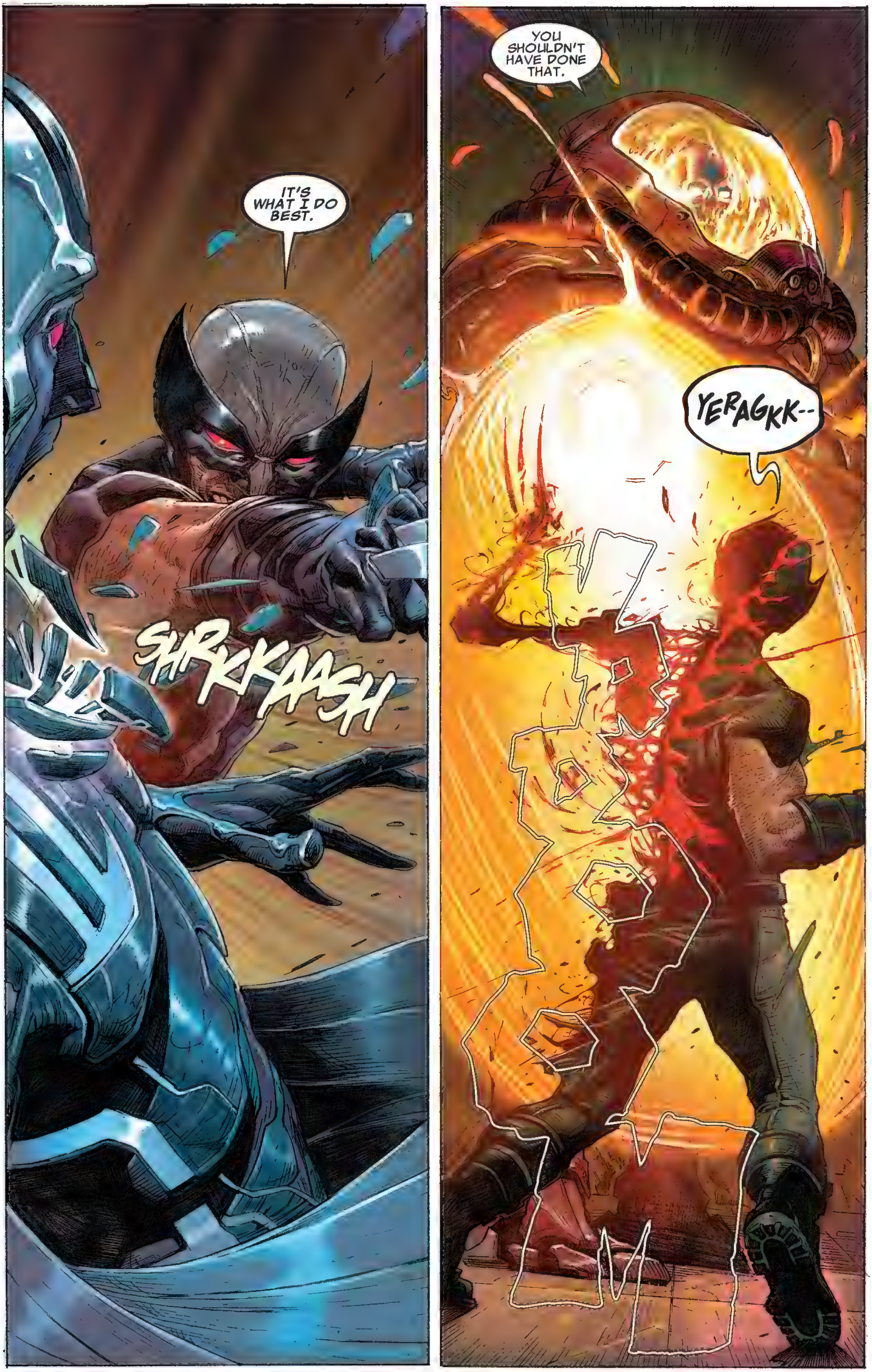

THE NORTH POLE, YESTERDAY.
"THE BEST LAID SCHEMES OF MICE AND MEN OFT GO AWRY, AND LEAVE US NOTHING BUT GRIEF AND PAIN, FOR PROMISED JOY."
WE ARE NEITHER MICE NOR MEN. WE ARE *MUTANTS.*
OUR PLAN, *SUREFIRE.*
YOUR CONFIDENCE WOULD SEEM TO HAVE NO LIMITS.
YOU WILL MAKE A *MARVELOUS* SUCCESSOR TO THE THRONE OF *APOCALYPSE!*
EN SABAH NUR ALWAYS CHOSE WELL, IN THIS WORLD, IN ANY.
WORTHINGTON'S MIND PROVIDED NUTRITIVE SOIL.
YOUR COHORTS-- THE ONES I SENT TO ACQUIRE THE *LIFE SEED*--YOU ARE *SURE* THEY WERE THE *ONLY* ONES COGNIZANT OF YOUR *ASCENSION?*
YES.
ZOOOOP
I HAD LONG AGO FALLEN TO DESPAIR; CONVINCED AKKABA WAS FAR TOO SPLINTERED TO REGAIN MOMENTUM IN THIS WORLD.
YET IT *IS* HAPPENING. WE *WILL* USHER IN THE *AGE OF APOCALYPSE.*
NO. APOCALYPSE IS DEAD...

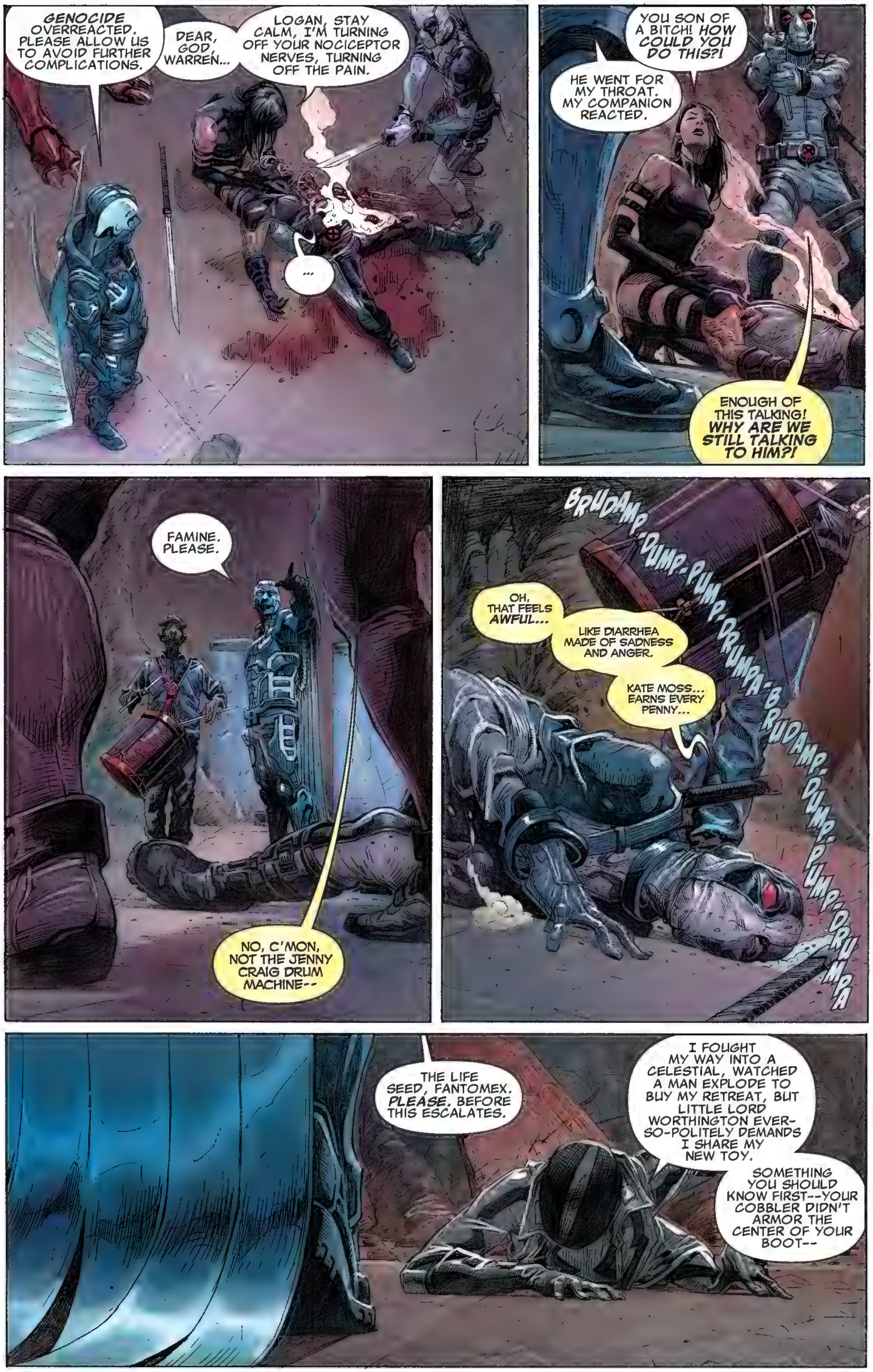

THE AGE OF ARCHANGEL WILL BE VASTLY SUPERIOR.
WE WILL USHER IN TRUE UTOPIA, AND PROMPTLY.
THERE WILL BE NO PERIOD OF DARKNESS.
NO TIME SPENT SLOWLY HUNTING AND SLAUGHTERING HUMANITY.
WE ARE SECURE IN YOUR GOOD HANDS, LORD.
DO NOT ADDRESS ME IN PLATITUDES, MCCOY.
GROVELING IS DISINGENUOUS, FEEDING MY EGO WHILE YOU GROW RESENTFUL OF ME.
WE ARE BROTHERS IN THIS WORK.
YOU OWE ME ONLY YOUR HONEST IMPRESSIONS AS WE MOVE FORWARD.
I...OF COURSE. THIS IS A NEW ERA INDEED.
SPREAD WORD, THE LAST THING I DESIRE IS...
...RITUAL AND FAWNING.
ALL HAIL ARCHANGEL! ALL HAIL LORD AND MASTER OF THE SEVEN SEEDS, SAVIOR OF THE CHOSEN!
OF ALL THE DEATHS WE PLANTED, I AM SO PLEASED IT WAS YOU WHO ROSE.
PLEASE, MASTER, I OFFER MY--
IF YOU CONTINUE TO ADDRESS ME IN THIS MANNER I WILL DISMISS YOU, OZYMANDIAS.

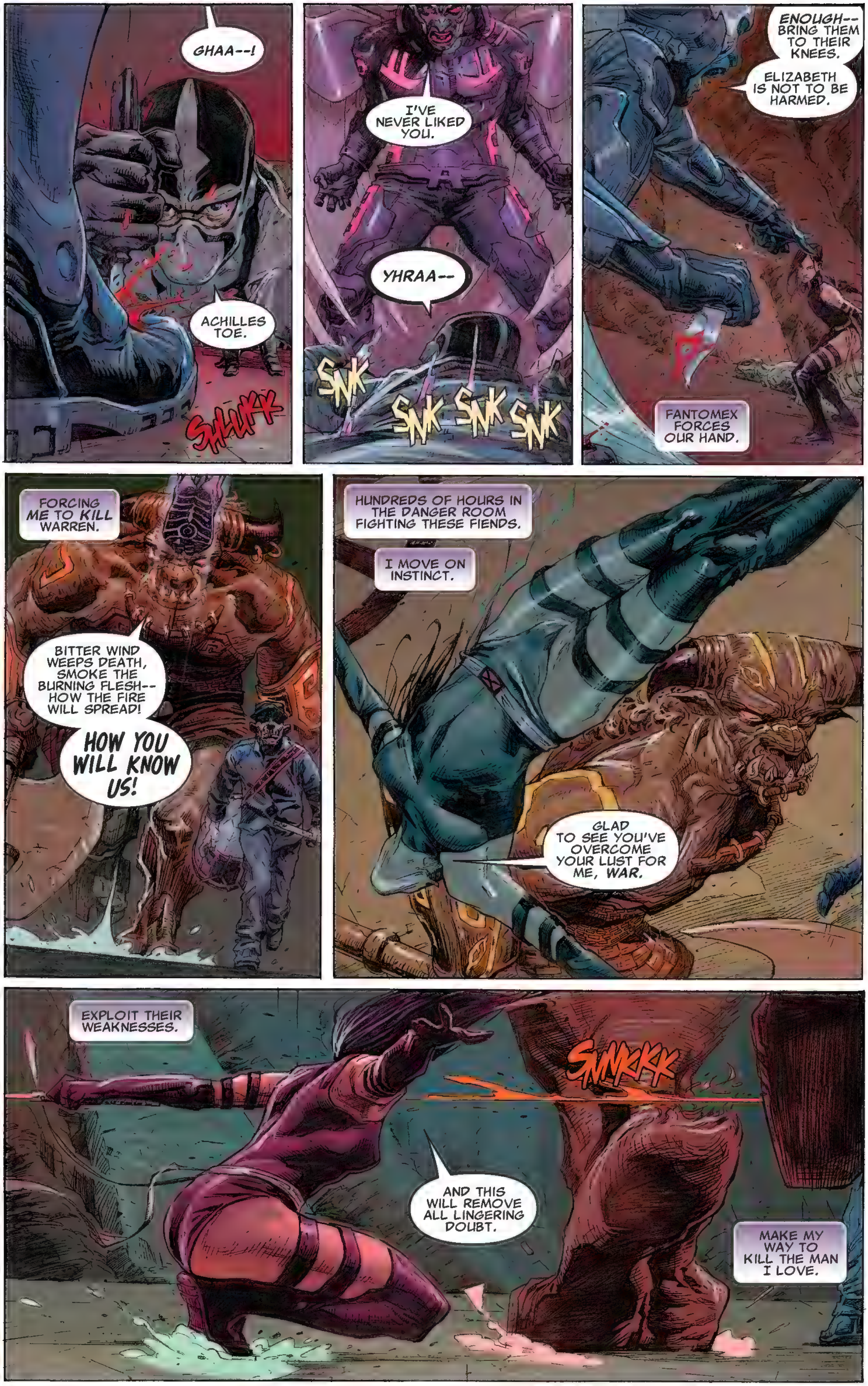

YOU...I-I DO NOT UNDERSTAND...HAVE I DISPLEASED YOU...?
ON THE CONTRARY, YOU HAVE SERVED FOR TOO LONG TO GROVEL.
YOU ARE TO DOLE OUT RESPECT ONLY WHEN YOU FEEL IT IN YOUR HEART.
YOU HAVE HELD THIS FAMILY TOGETHER FOR A LONG TIME, OZYMANDIAS.
WE OWE YOU GREATLY. YOUR FUTURE HOLDS MORE THAN PLACATING ANOTHER TYRANT.
IS THE BOY INSIDE?
HE IS.
WAIT HERE.
AUTUMN ROLFSON. HOW LONG SINCE WE SERVED CRUEL APOCALYPSE TOGETHER? HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?
FINE.
IS HE WITH YOU? CAN I SEE HIM?
YOU... YOU WON'T HURT HIM?
COULD I IF I DESIRED IT?
DON'T KNOW.
IF HE IS WHAT I BELIEVE HE IS, NOTHING ON THIS EARTH CAN HURT YOUR SON, AUTUMN.
I KEPT HIM HIDDEN FROM APOCALYPSE, I FEARED HE WOULD SEE THE BOY AS A THREAT AND KILL HIM.
YOU WERE RIGHT TO BE AFRAID.
BUT NO LONGER.
WHOOOOOOOSH

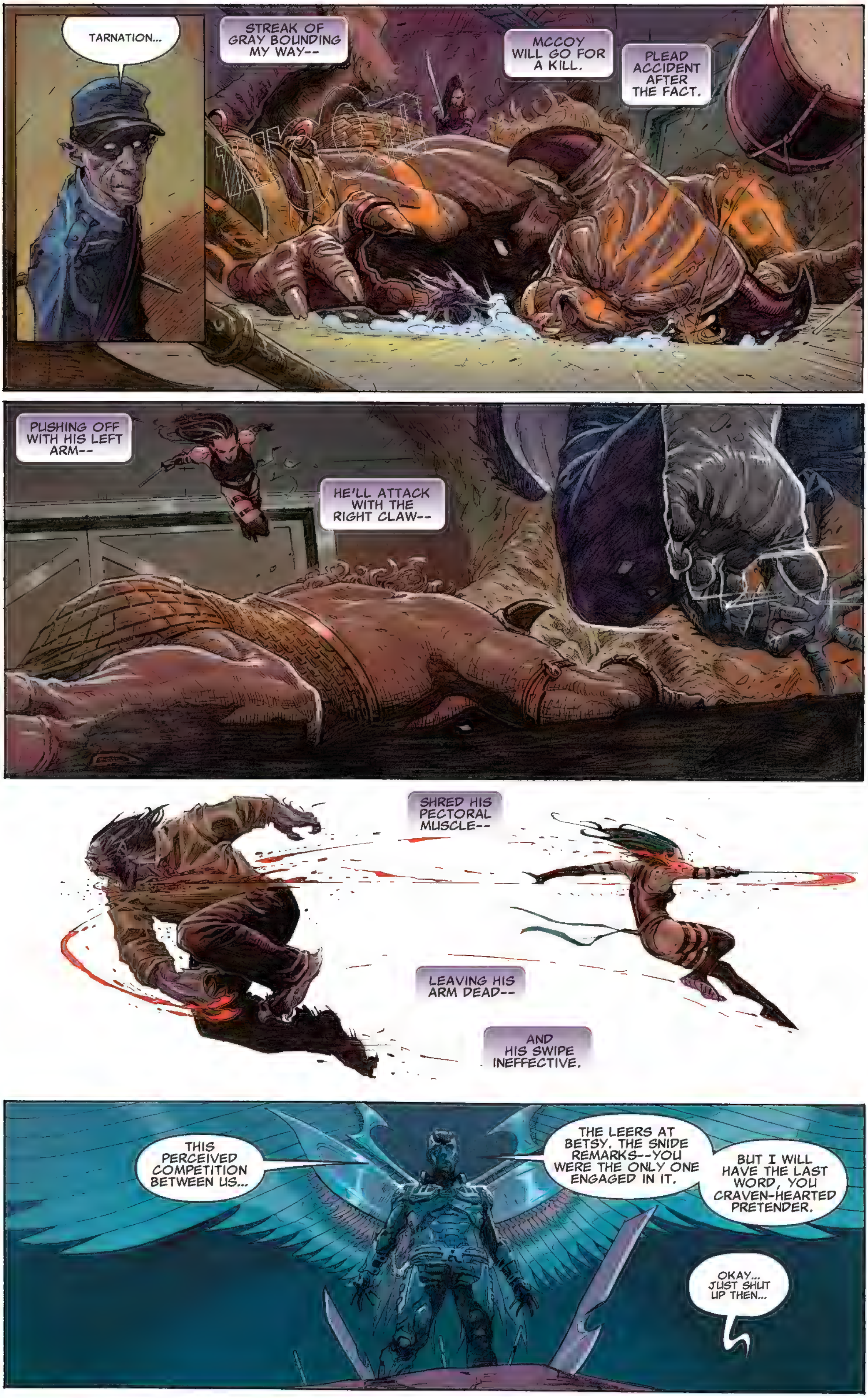

SIR, MY LORD, I-- I'LL SERVE YOU IN ANY WAY--I'M HONEST, I WON'T LET YOU DOWN, SIR. *I PROMISE.*
PLEASE, DON'T PUNISH MY MOM FOR HIDING ME...
NO, MY BOY, BY CONCEALING YOU...
...YOUR MOTHER HAS CHANGED THE FATE OF THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER.

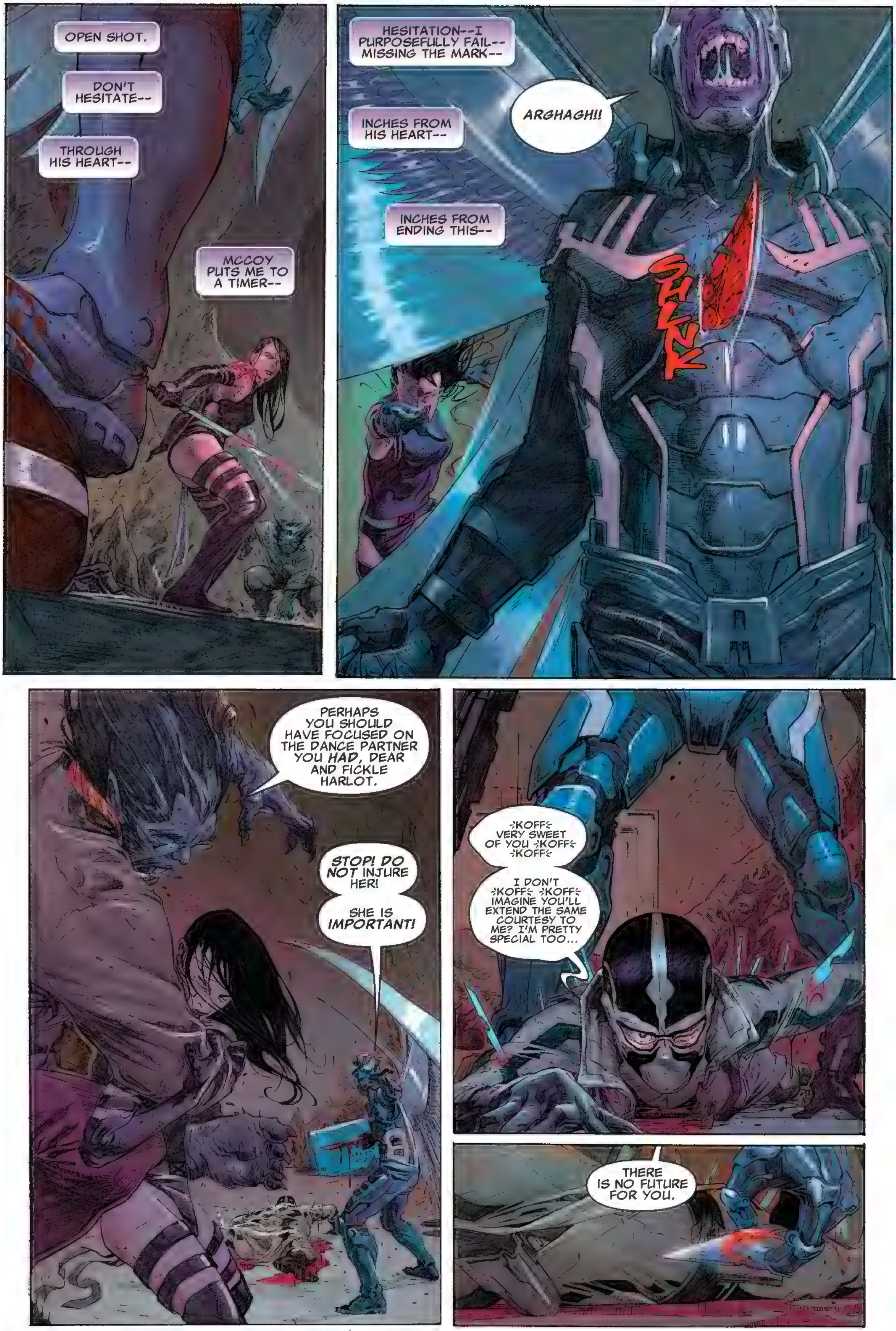

CAVERN-X, NOW.
SOOO... YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO HAND OVER THE LIFE SEED.
FORGIVE OUR LACK OF DEFERENCE. WE MAY BE A TAD CRANKY.
THAT DUMP YOU SENT US TO WAS A BUM-OUT, WARREN. IT REALLY SUCKED.
THIS IS IT, BETS.
WHAT WE TRAINED TO DO--ALWAYS KNEW THIS MIGHT HAPPEN.
YOU READY?
LOGAN...
...AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH...
"...HOW CAN WE JUST KILL WARREN?"
FORGIVE THE DISCOURTEOUS SILENCE, I ASSUME THEY'RE HAVING A TELEPATHIC DEBATE OVER THE MERITS OF KILLING YOU.
THEY SHOULDN'T TRY.
I AGREE, BECAUSE YOU'VE ALREADY WON--
YOU HAVE WHAT YOU WANT-- YOU SPECTACULARLY DEFEATED US--ACQUIRED THE LIFE SEED-- LEFT US FAR TOO FRAZZLED TO SEEK RETRIBUTION--
IT HASN'T HIT YET.
DON'T BE SO IMPATIENT...
...IT WILL.
GAKK-RAKK-AGAKK!!
WE HAVE DEVELOPED A COUNTERMEASURE TO YOUR MISDIRECTION, FANTOMEX.
YOUR REALITY-SKEWING ECHOED BACK BETWEEN YOUR BRAINS, CREATING FEEDBACK.
WORTHINGTON-- YOU SON OF A BITCH--
I HAVEN'T USED ANY INCENDIARY LANGUAGE.
WHY ESCALATE THINGS?

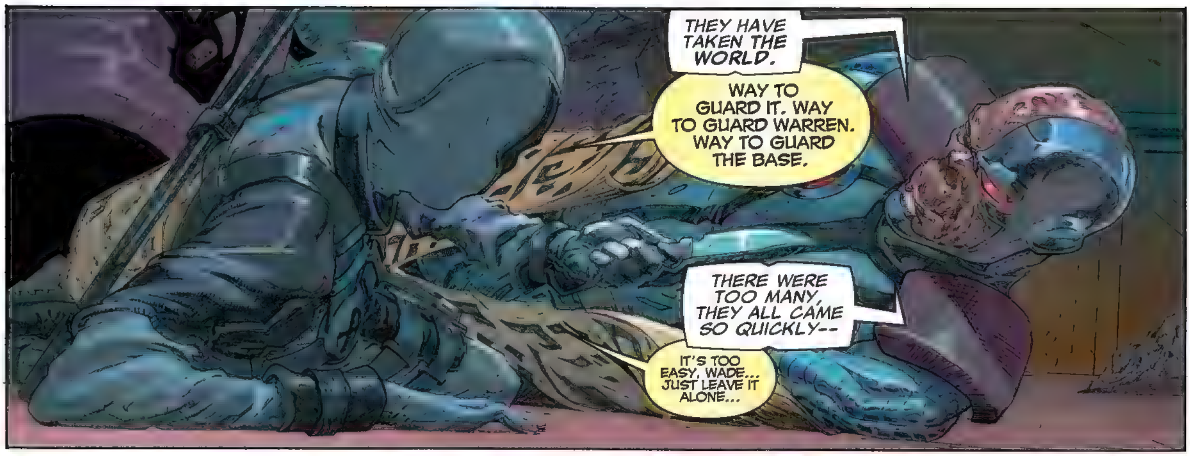

IT'S WHAT I DO BEST.
SHRKKAASH
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT.
YERAGKK--
ZROOOM

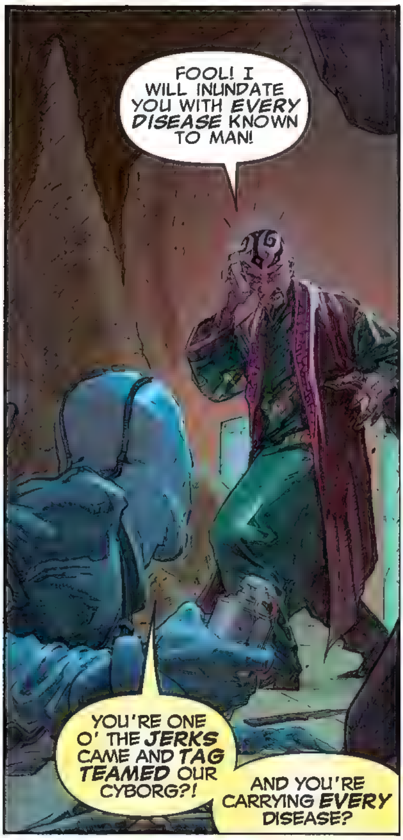

GENOCIDE OVERREACTED. PLEASE ALLOW US TO AVOID FURTHER COMPLICATIONS.
DEAR, GOD, WARREN...
LOGAN, STAY CALM, I'M TURNING OFF YOUR NOCICEPTOR NERVES, TURNING OFF THE PAIN.
...
YOU SON OF A BITCH! HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?!
HE WENT FOR MY THROAT. MY COMPANION REACTED.
ENOUGH OF THIS TALKING! WHY ARE WE STILL TALKING TO HIM?!
FAMINE. PLEASE.
NO, C'MON, NOT THE JENNY CRAIG DRUM MACHINE--
BRUDAMP-DUMP-PUMP-DRUMPA-BRUDAMP-DUMP-PUMP-DRUMPA
OH, THAT FEELS AWFUL...
LIKE DIARRHEA MADE OF SADNESS AND ANGER.
KATE MOSS... EARNS EVERY PENNY...
THE LIFE SEED, FANTOMEX. PLEASE. BEFORE THIS ESCALATES.
I FOUGHT MY WAY INTO A CELESTIAL, WATCHED A MAN EXPLODE TO BUY MY RETREAT, BUT LITTLE LORD WORTHINGTON EVER-SO-POLITELY DEMANDS I SHARE MY NEW TOY.
SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW FIRST--YOUR COBBLER DIDN'T ARMOR THE CENTER OF YOUR BOOT--

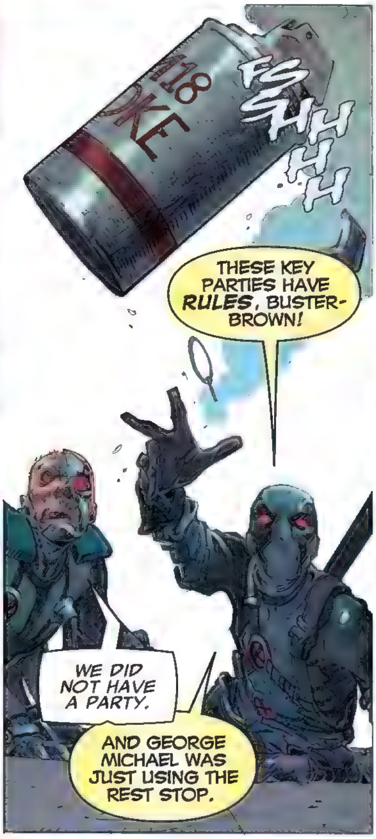

GHAA--!
ACHILLES TOE.
SHLUKK
I'VE NEVER LIKED YOU.
YHRAA--
SNK
SNK SNK SNK
ENOUGH-- BRING THEM TO THEIR KNEES.
ELIZABETH IS NOT TO BE HARMED.
FANTOMEX FORCES OUR HAND.
FORCING ME TO KILL WARREN.
BITTER WIND WEEPS DEATH, SMOKE THE BURNING FLESH-- HOW THE FIRE WILL SPREAD!
HOW YOU WILL KNOW US!
HUNDREDS OF HOURS IN THE DANGER ROOM FIGHTING THESE FIENDS.
I MOVE ON INSTINCT.
GLAD TO SEE YOU'VE OVERCOME YOUR LUST FOR ME, WAR.
EXPLOIT THEIR WEAKNESSES.
SNIKKK
AND THIS WILL REMOVE ALL LINGERING DOUBT.
MAKE MY WAY TO KILL THE MAN I LOVE.

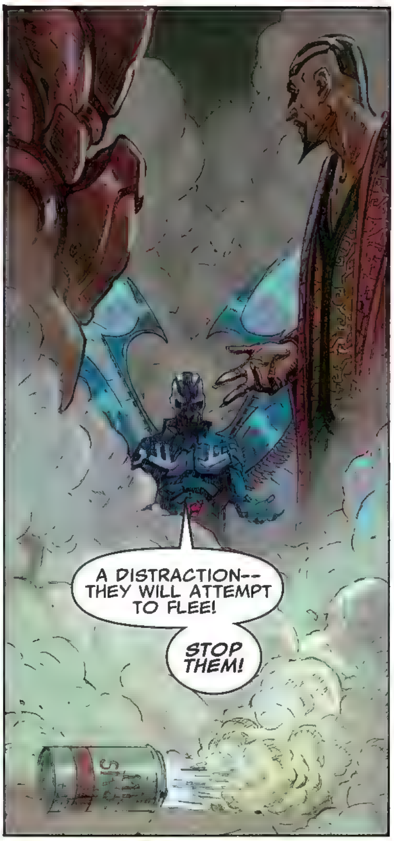

TARNATION...
STREAK OF GRAY BOUNDING MY WAY--
MCCOY WILL GO FOR A KILL.
PLEAD ACCIDENT AFTER THE FACT.
PUSHING OFF WITH HIS LEFT ARM--
HE'LL ATTACK WITH THE RIGHT CLAW--
SHRED HIS PECTORAL MUSCLE--
LEAVING HIS ARM DEAD--
AND HIS SWIPE INEFFECTIVE.
THIS PERCEIVED COMPETITION BETWEEN US...
THE LEERS AT BETSY. THE SNIDE REMARKS--YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE ENGAGED IN IT.
BUT I WILL HAVE THE LAST WORD, YOU CRAVEN-HEARTED PRETENDER.
OKAY... JUST SHUT UP THEN...

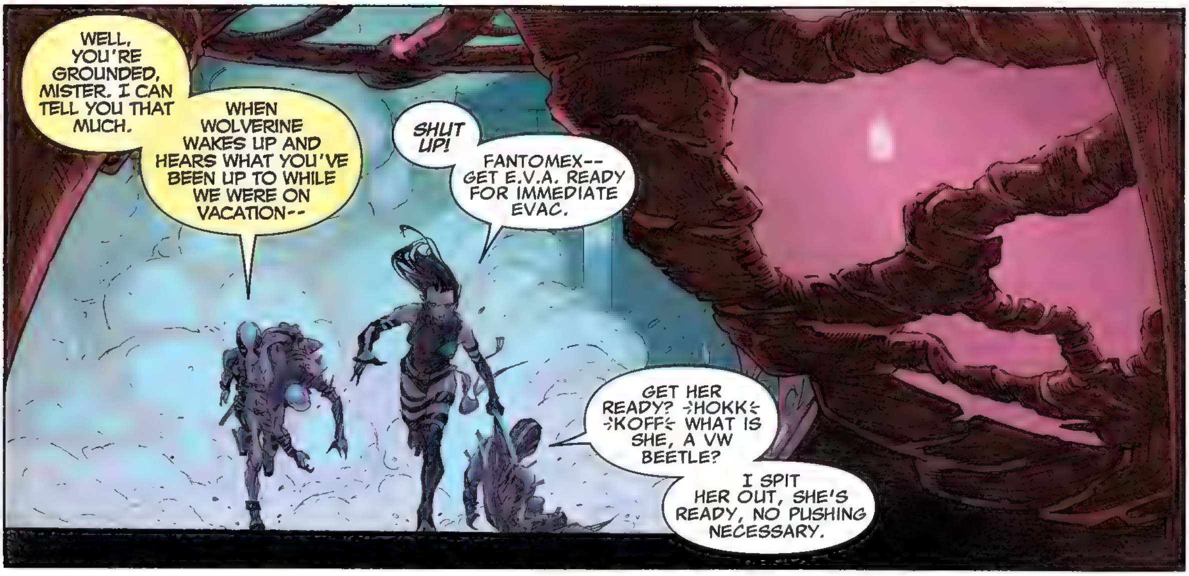

OPEN SHOT.
DON'T HESITATE--
THROUGH HIS HEART--
MCCOY PUTS ME TO A TIMER--
HESITATION--I PURPOSEFULLY FAIL-- MISSING THE MARK--
INCHES FROM HIS HEART--
INCHES FROM ENDING THIS--
ARGHAGH!!
SHLNK
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD HAVE FOCUSED ON THE DANCE PARTNER YOU *HAD*, DEAR AND FICKLE HARLOT.
STOP! DO NOT INJURE HER!
SHE IS *IMPORTANT!*
KOFF VERY SWEET OF YOU KOFF KOFF
I DON'T KOFF KOFF IMAGINE YOU'LL EXTEND THE SAME COURTESY TO ME? I'M PRETTY SPECIAL TOO...
THERE IS NO FUTURE FOR YOU.

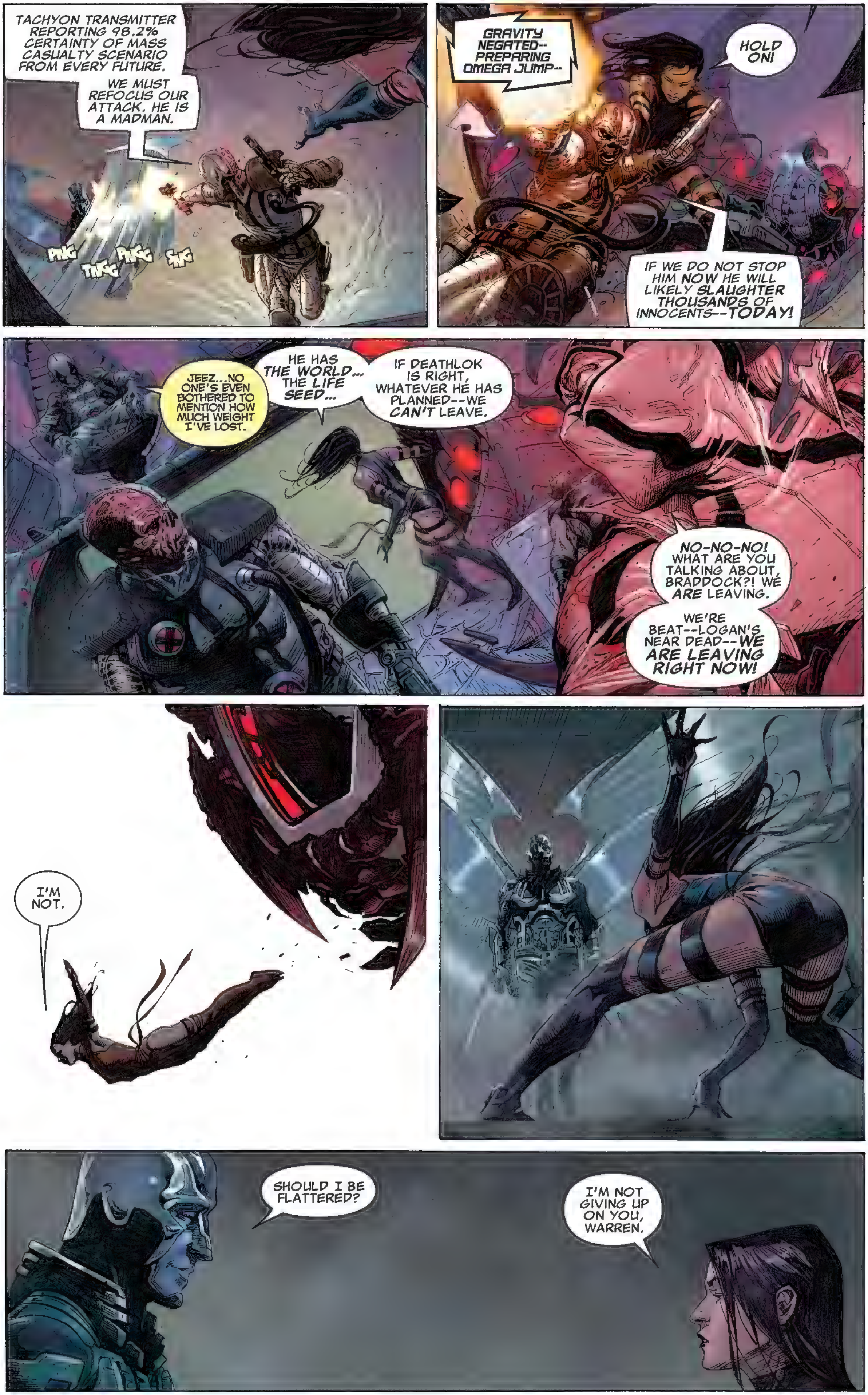

THEY HAVE TAKEN THE WORLD.
WAY TO GUARD IT. WAY TO GUARD WARREN. WAY TO GUARD THE BASE.
THERE WERE TOO MANY, THEY ALL CAME SO QUICKLY--
IT'S TOO EASY, WADE... JUST LEAVE IT ALONE...

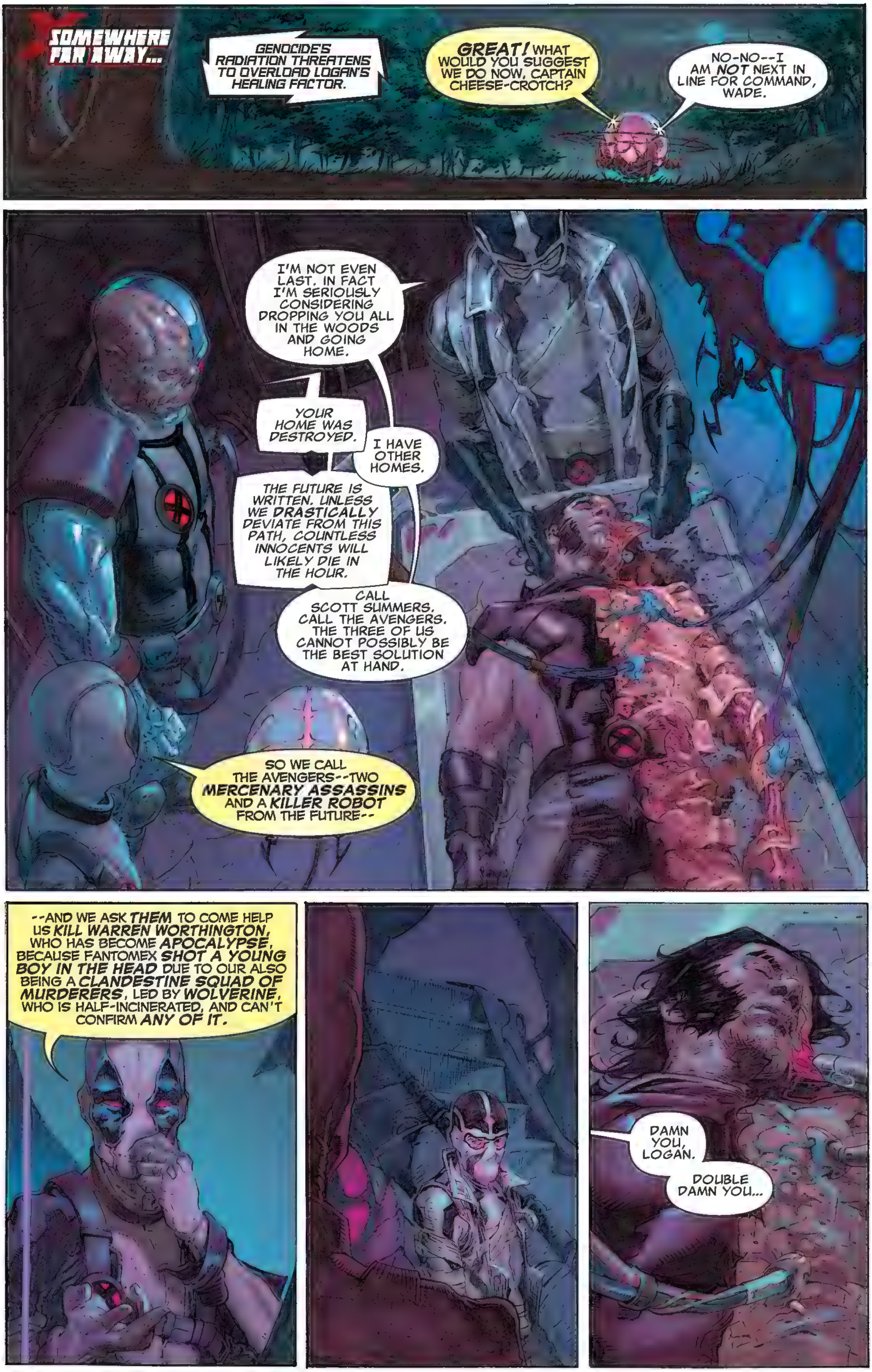

FOOL! I WILL INUNDATE YOU WITH EVERY DISEASE KNOWN TO MAN!
YOU'RE ONE O' THE JERKS CAME AND TAG TEAMED OUR CYBORG?!
AND YOU'RE CARRYING EVERY DISEASE?

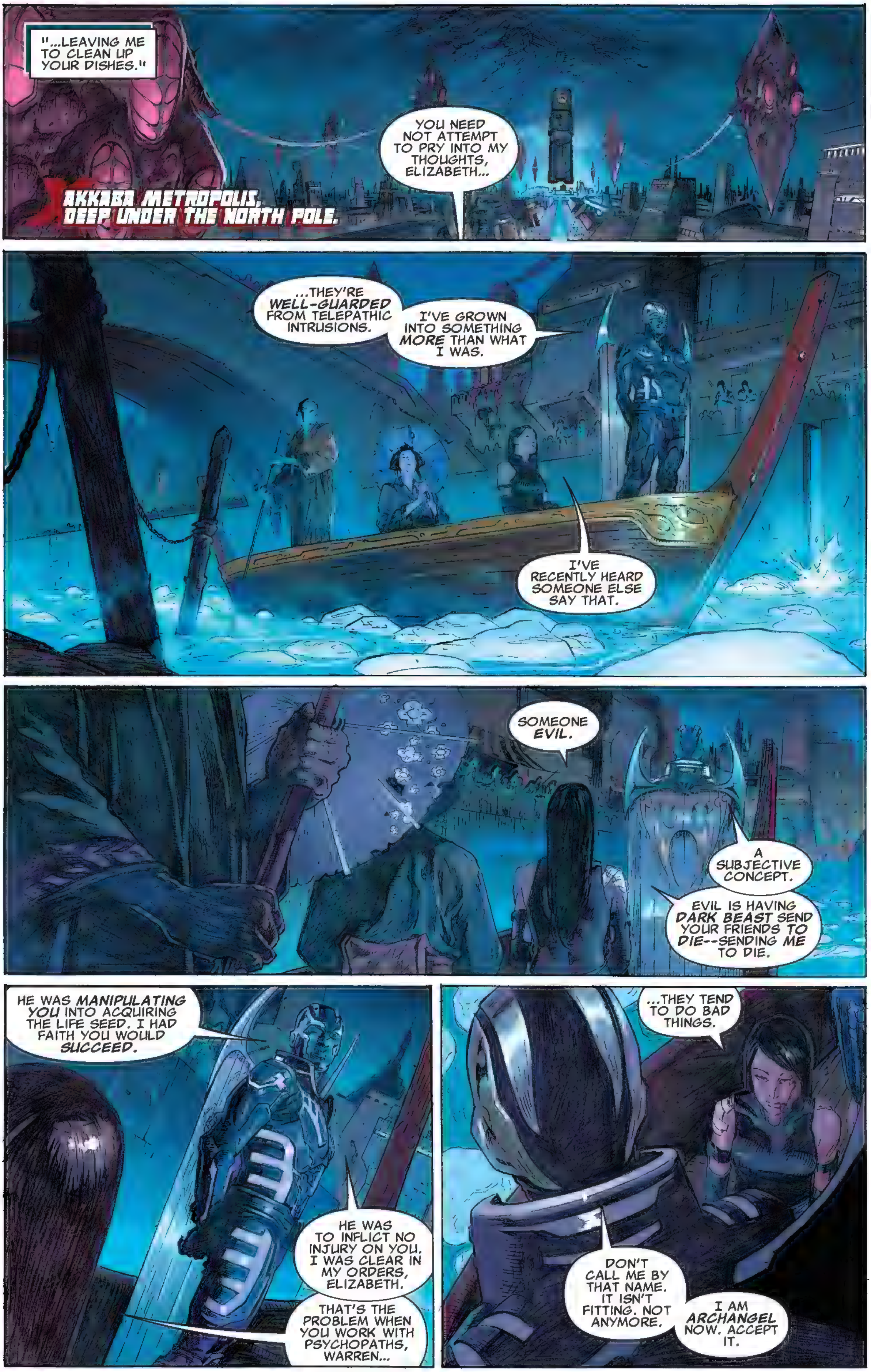

#18
OKE
FSHHHHH
THESE KEY PARTIES HAVE RULES, BUSTER-BROWN!
WE DID NOT HAVE A PARTY.
AND GEORGE MICHAEL WAS JUST USING THE REST STOP.

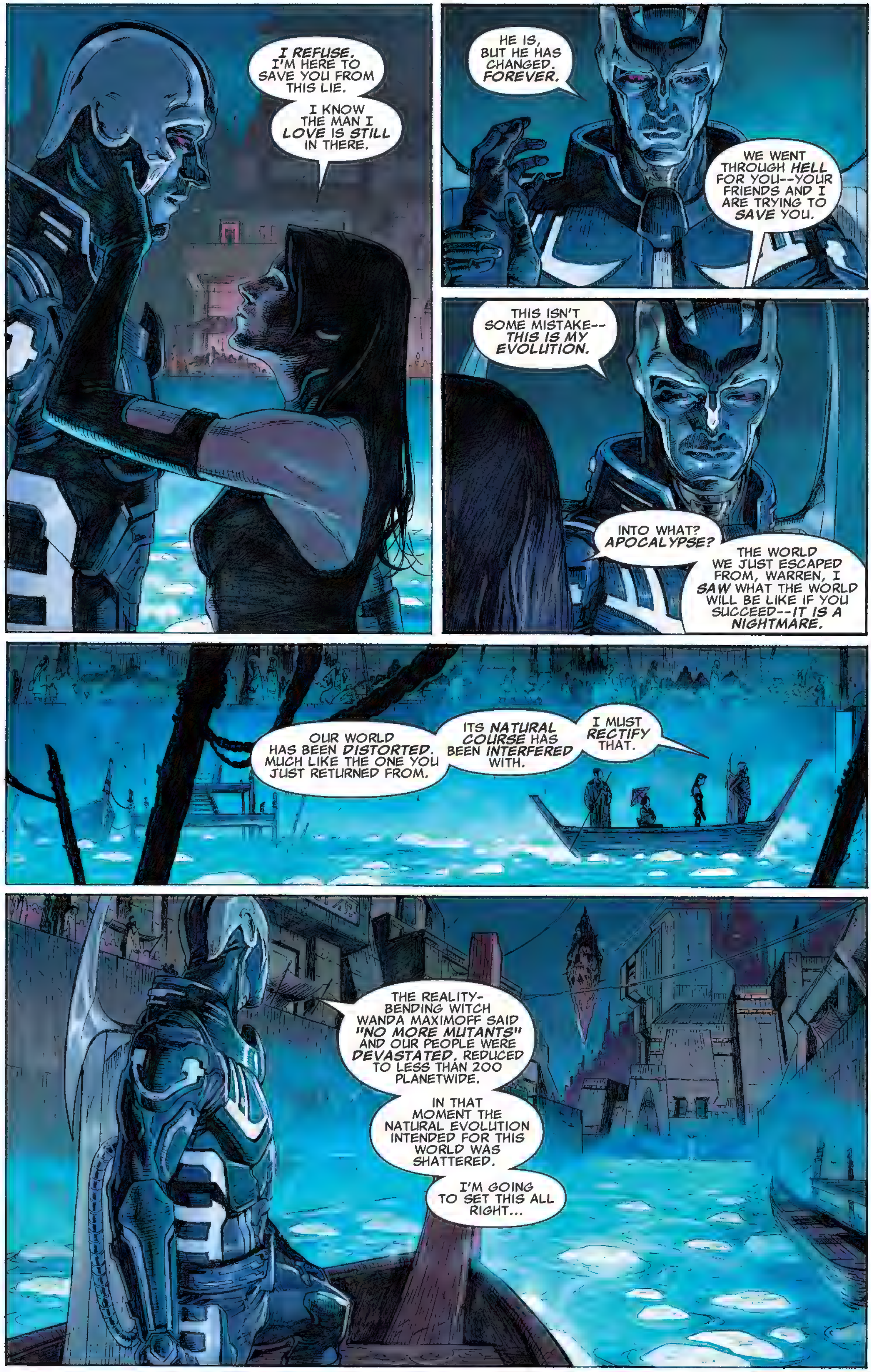

A DISTRACTION-- THEY WILL ATTEMPT TO FLEE!
STOP THEM!

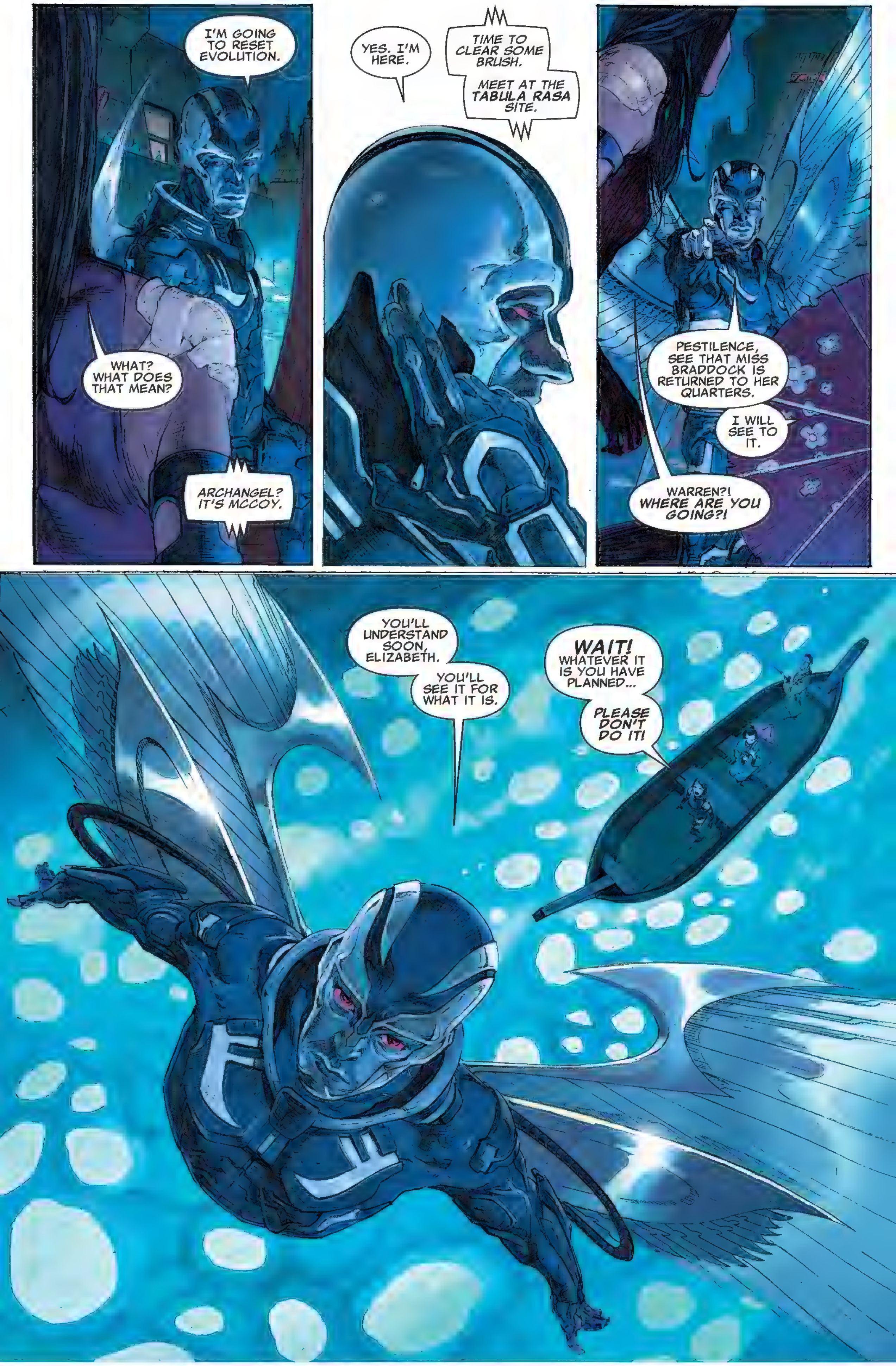

WELL, YOU'RE GROUNDED, MISTER. I CAN TELL YOU THAT MUCH.
WHEN WOLVERINE WAKES UP AND HEARS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO WHILE WE WERE ON VACATION--
SHUT UP!
FANTOMEX-- GET E.V.A. READY FOR IMMEDIATE EVAC.
GET HER READY? HOKK KOFF WHAT IS SHE, A VW BEETLE?
I SPIT HER OUT, SHE'S READY, NO PUSHING NECESSARY.

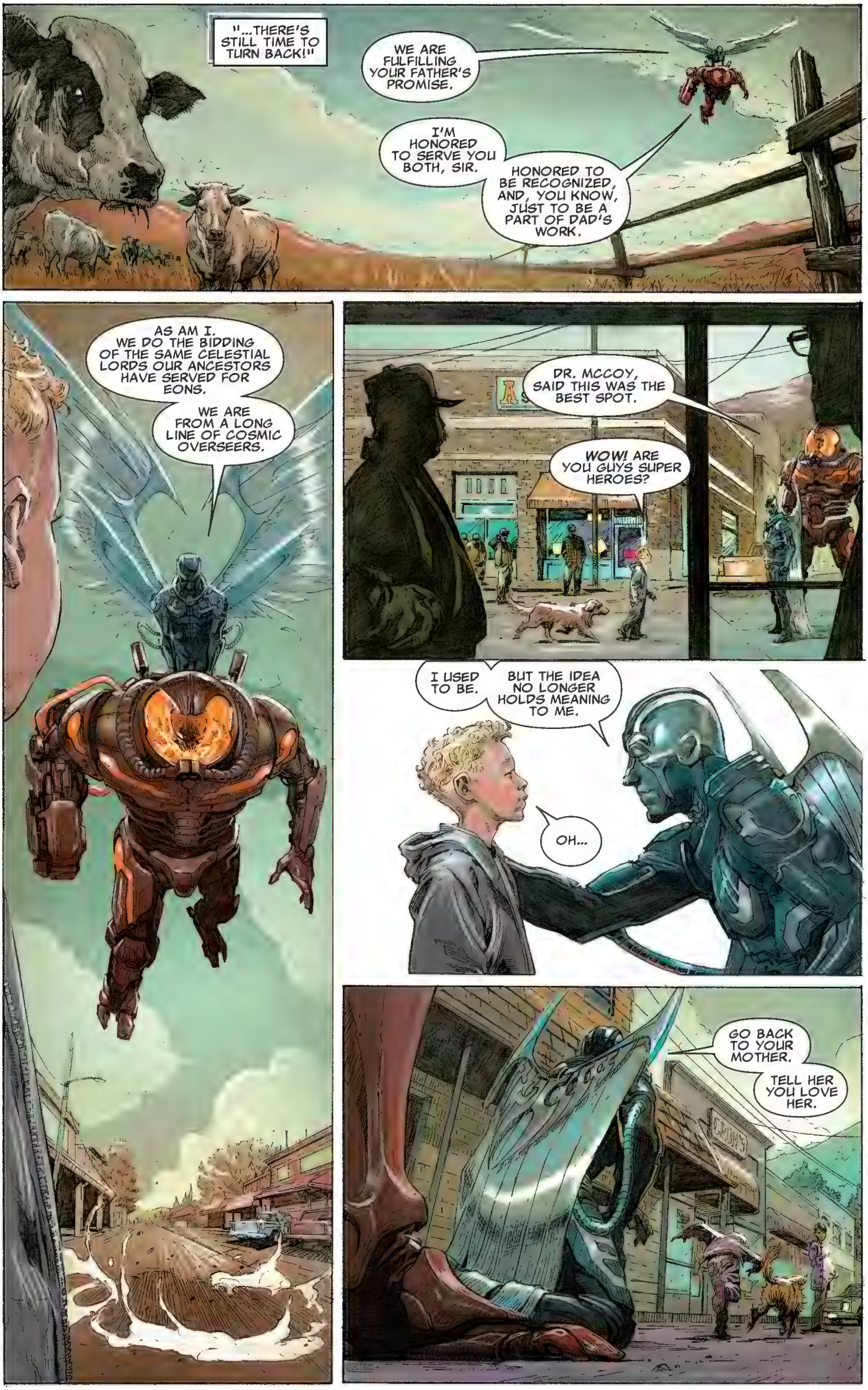

TACHYON TRANSMITTER REPORTING 98.2% CERTAINTY OF MASS CASUALTY SCENARIO FROM EVERY FUTURE.
WE MUST REFOCUS OUR ATTACK. HE IS A MADMAN.
PING
THGG
PHGG
SNG
GRAVITY NEGATED-- PREPARING OMEGA JUMP--
HOLD ON!
IF WE DO NOT STOP HIM NOW HE WILL LIKELY SLAUGHTER THOUSANDS OF INNOCENTS--TODAY!
JEEZ...NO ONE'S EVEN BOTHERED TO MENTION HOW MUCH WEIGHT I'VE LOST.
HE HAS THE WORLD... THE LIFE SEED...
IF DEATHLOK IS RIGHT, WHATEVER HE HAS PLANNED--WE CAN'T LEAVE.
NO-NO-NO! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, BRADDOCK?! WE ARE LEAVING.
WE'RE BEAT--LOGAN'S NEAR DEAD--WE ARE LEAVING RIGHT NOW!
I'M NOT.
SHOULD I BE FLATTERED?
I'M NOT GIVING UP ON YOU, WARREN.

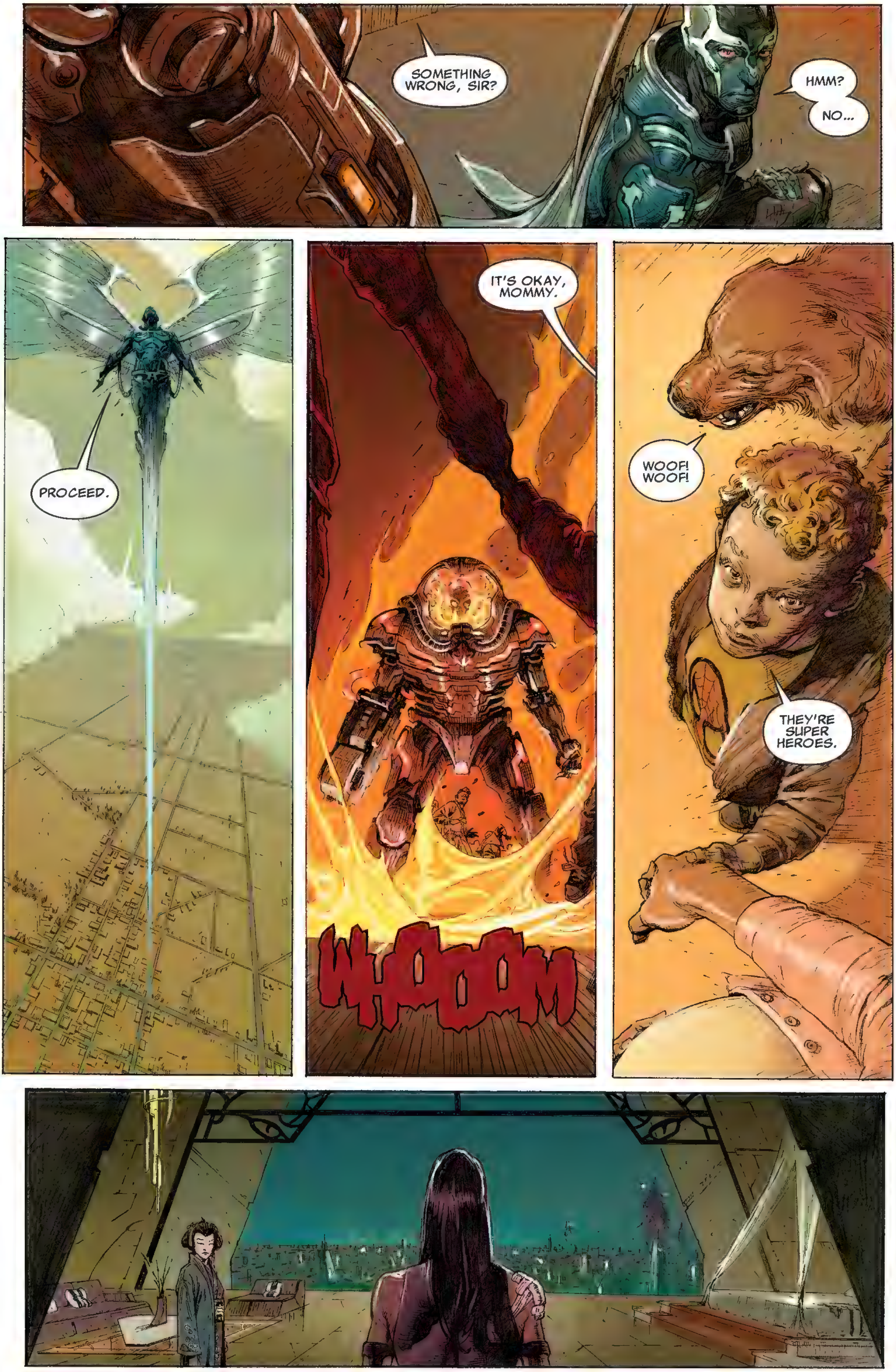

SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY...
GENOCIDE'S RADIATION THREATENS TO OVERLOAD LOGAN'S HEALING FACTOR.
GREAT! WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST WE DO NOW, CAPTAIN CHEESE-CROTCH?
NO-NO--I AM NOT NEXT IN LINE FOR COMMAND, WADE.
I'M NOT EVEN LAST. IN FACT I'M SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING DROPPING YOU ALL IN THE WOODS AND GOING HOME.
YOUR HOME WAS DESTROYED.
I HAVE OTHER HOMES.
THE FUTURE IS WRITTEN. UNLESS WE DRASTICALLY DEVIATE FROM THIS PATH, COUNTLESS INNOCENTS WILL LIKELY DIE IN THE HOUR.
CALL SCOTT SUMMERS. CALL THE AVENGERS. THE THREE OF US CANNOT POSSIBLY BE THE BEST SOLUTION AT HAND.
SO WE CALL THE AVENGERS--TWO MERCENARY ASSASSINS AND A KILLER ROBOT FROM THE FUTURE--
--AND WE ASK THEM TO COME HELP US KILL WARREN WORTHINGTON, WHO HAS BECOME APOCALYPSE, BECAUSE FANTOMEX SHOT A YOUNG BOY IN THE HEAD DUE TO OUR ALSO BEING A CLANDESTINE SQUAD OF MURDERERS, LED BY WOLVERINE, WHO IS HALF-INCINERATED, AND CAN'T CONFIRM ANY OF IT.
DAMN YOU, LOGAN.
DOUBLE DAMN YOU...

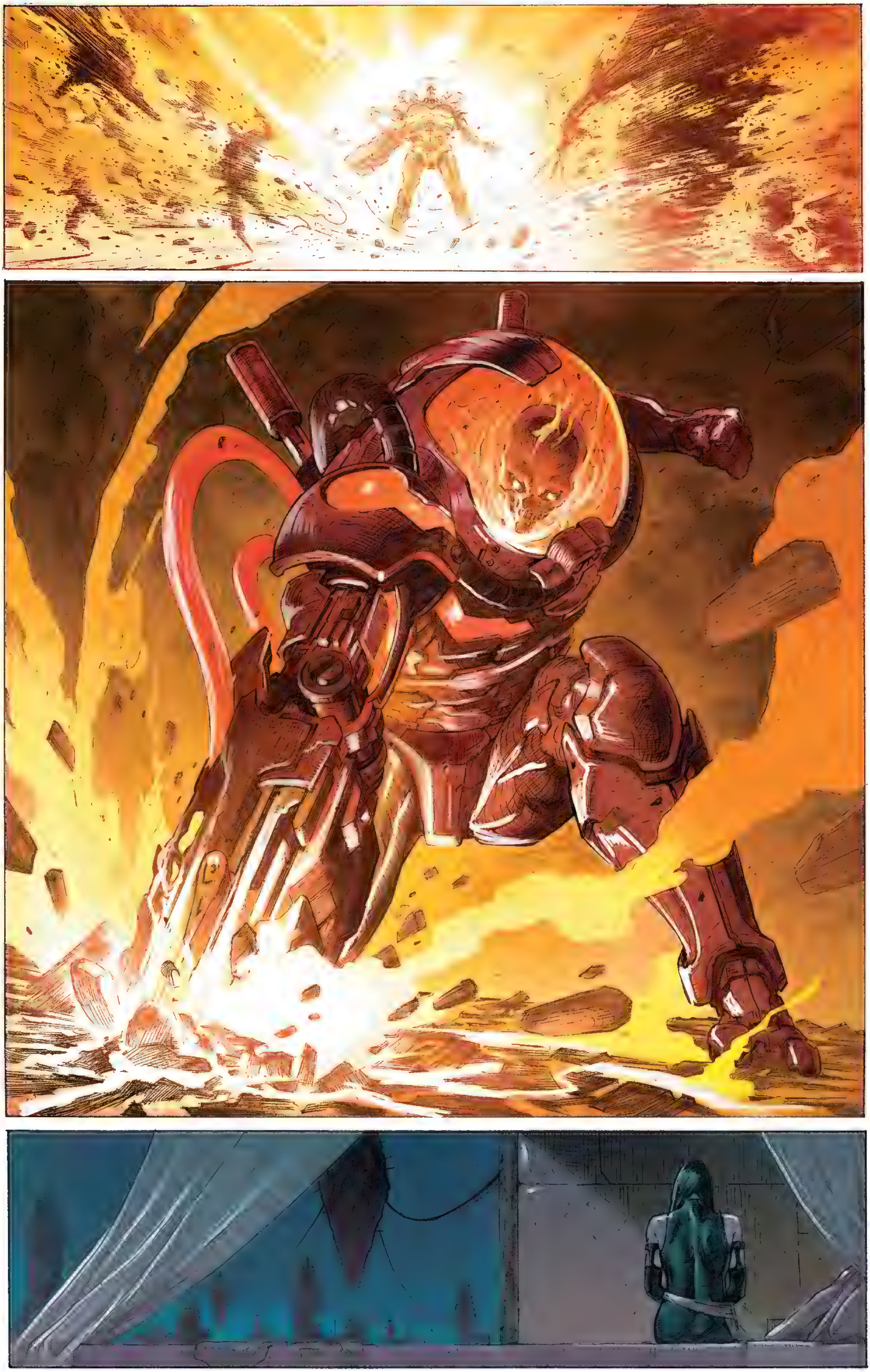

"...LEAVING ME TO CLEAN UP YOUR DISHES."
AKKABA METROPOLIS, DEEP UNDER THE NORTH POLE.
YOU NEED NOT ATTEMPT TO PRY INTO MY THOUGHTS, ELIZABETH...
...THEY'RE *WELL-GUARDED* FROM TELEPATHIC INTRUSIONS.
I'VE GROWN INTO SOMETHING *MORE* THAN WHAT I WAS.
I'VE RECENTLY HEARD SOMEONE ELSE SAY THAT.
SOMEONE *EVIL.*
A SUBJECTIVE CONCEPT.
EVIL IS HAVING *DARK BEAST* SEND YOUR FRIENDS *TO DIE*--SENDING *ME* TO DIE.
HE WAS *MANIPULATING YOU* INTO ACQUIRING THE LIFE SEED. I HAD FAITH YOU WOULD *SUCCEED.*
HE WAS TO INFLICT NO INJURY ON YOU. I WAS CLEAR IN MY ORDERS, ELIZABETH.
THAT'S THE PROBLEM WHEN YOU WORK WITH PSYCHOPATHS, WARREN...
...THEY TEND TO DO BAD THINGS.
DON'T CALL ME BY THAT NAME. IT ISN'T FITTING. NOT ANYMORE.
I AM *ARCHANGEL* NOW. ACCEPT IT.

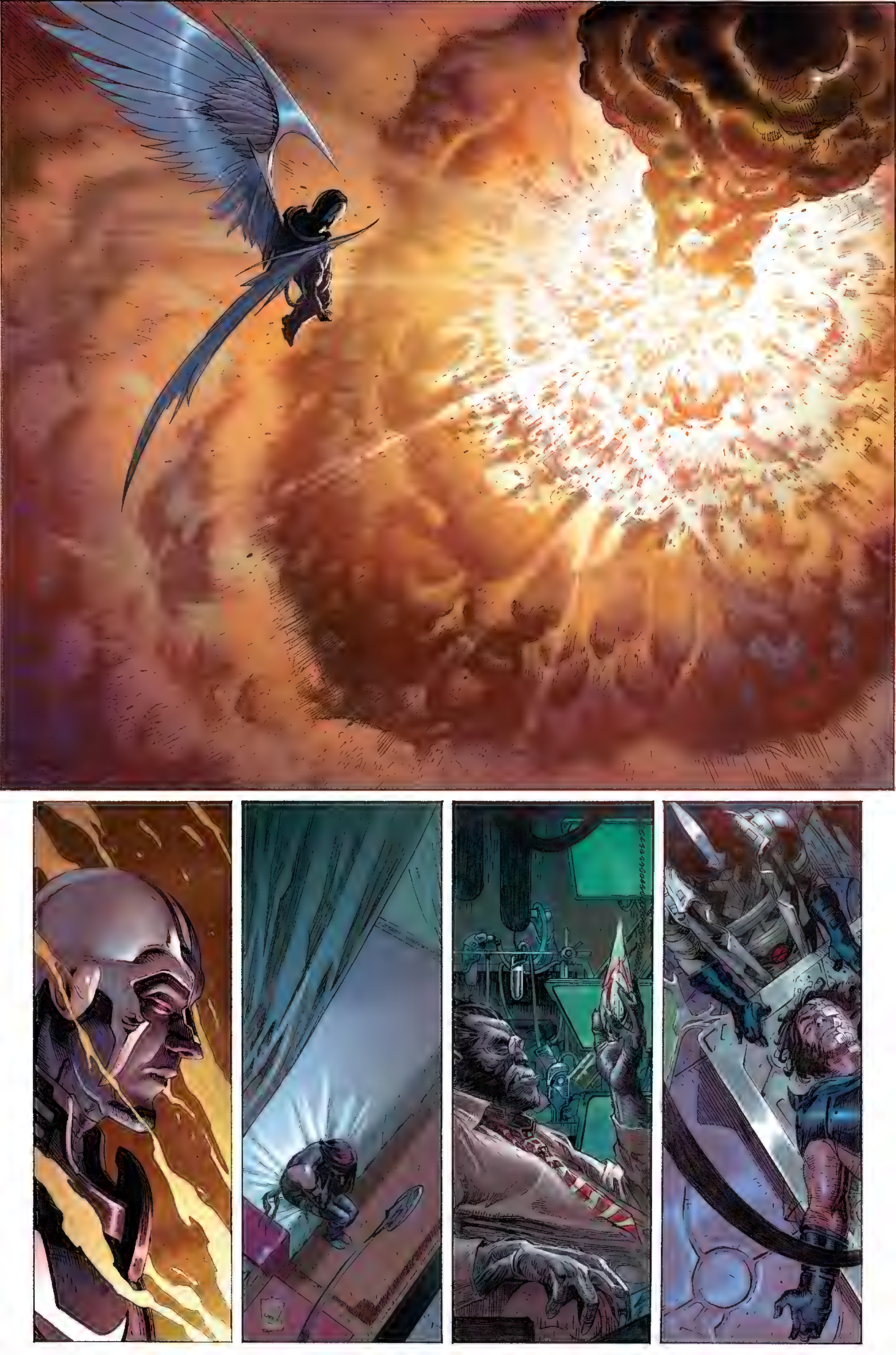

I REFUSE. I'M HERE TO SAVE YOU FROM THIS LIE.
I KNOW THE MAN I LOVE IS STILL IN THERE.
HE IS, BUT HE HAS CHANGED. FOREVER.
WE WENT THROUGH HELL FOR YOU--YOUR FRIENDS AND I ARE TRYING TO SAVE YOU.
THIS ISN'T SOME MISTAKE--THIS IS MY EVOLUTION.
INTO WHAT? APOCALYPSE?
THE WORLD WE JUST ESCAPED FROM, WARREN, I SAW WHAT THE WORLD WILL BE LIKE IF YOU SUCCEED--IT IS A NIGHTMARE.
OUR WORLD HAS BEEN DISTORTED. MUCH LIKE THE ONE YOU JUST RETURNED FROM.
ITS NATURAL COURSE HAS BEEN INTERFERED WITH.
I MUST RECTIFY THAT.
THE REALITY-BENDING WITCH WANDA MAXIMOFF SAID "NO MORE MUTANTS" AND OUR PEOPLE WERE DEVASTATED, REDUCED TO LESS THAN 200 PLANETWIDE.
IN THAT MOMENT THE NATURAL EVOLUTION INTENDED FOR THIS WORLD WAS SHATTERED.
I'M GOING TO SET THIS ALL RIGHT...


I'M GOING TO RESET EVOLUTION.
WHAT? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
ARCHANGEL? IT'S MCCOY.
YES. I'M HERE.
TIME TO CLEAR SOME BRUSH.
MEET AT THE TABULA RASA SITE.
PESTILENCE, SEE THAT MISS BRADDOCK IS RETURNED TO HER QUARTERS.
I WILL SEE TO IT.
WARREN?! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND SOON, ELIZABETH.
YOU'LL SEE IT FOR WHAT IT IS.
WAIT! WHATEVER IT IS YOU HAVE PLANNED...
PLEASE DON'T DO IT!


"...THERE'S STILL TIME TO TURN BACK!"
WE ARE FULFILLING YOUR FATHER'S PROMISE.
I'M HONORED TO SERVE YOU BOTH, SIR.
HONORED TO BE RECOGNIZED, AND, YOU KNOW, JUST TO BE A PART OF DAD'S WORK.
AS AM I. WE DO THE BIDDING OF THE SAME CELESTIAL LORDS OUR ANCESTORS HAVE SERVED FOR EONS.
WE ARE FROM A LONG LINE OF COSMIC OVERSEERS.
DR. MCCOY, SAID THIS WAS THE BEST SPOT.
WOW! ARE YOU GUYS SUPER HEROES?
I USED TO BE.
BUT THE IDEA NO LONGER HOLDS MEANING TO ME.
OH...
GO BACK TO YOUR MOTHER.
TELL HER YOU LOVE HER.

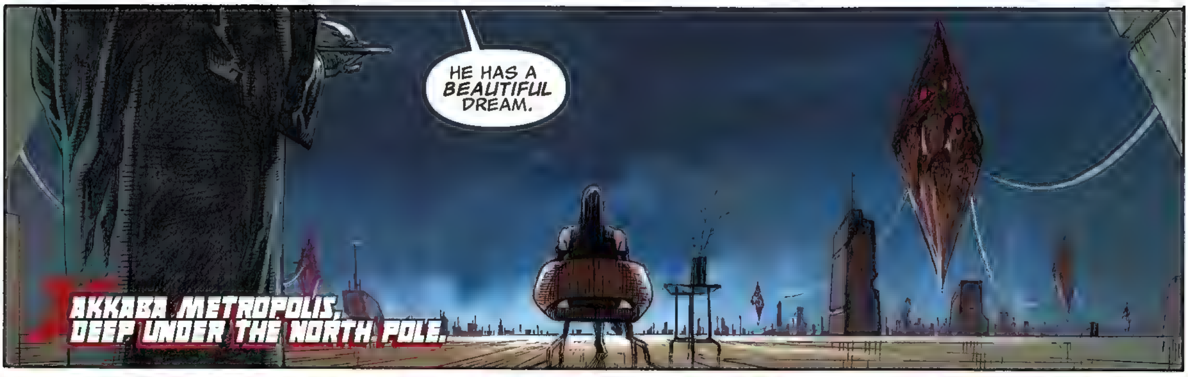

SOMETHING WRONG, SIR?
HMM?
NO...
PROCEED.
IT'S OKAY, MOMMY.
WHOOM
WOOF! WOOF!
THEY'RE SUPER HEROES.

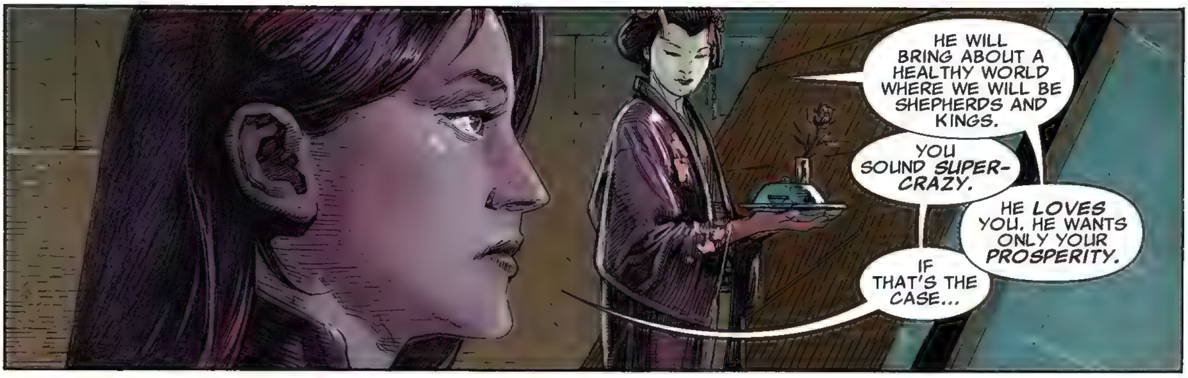


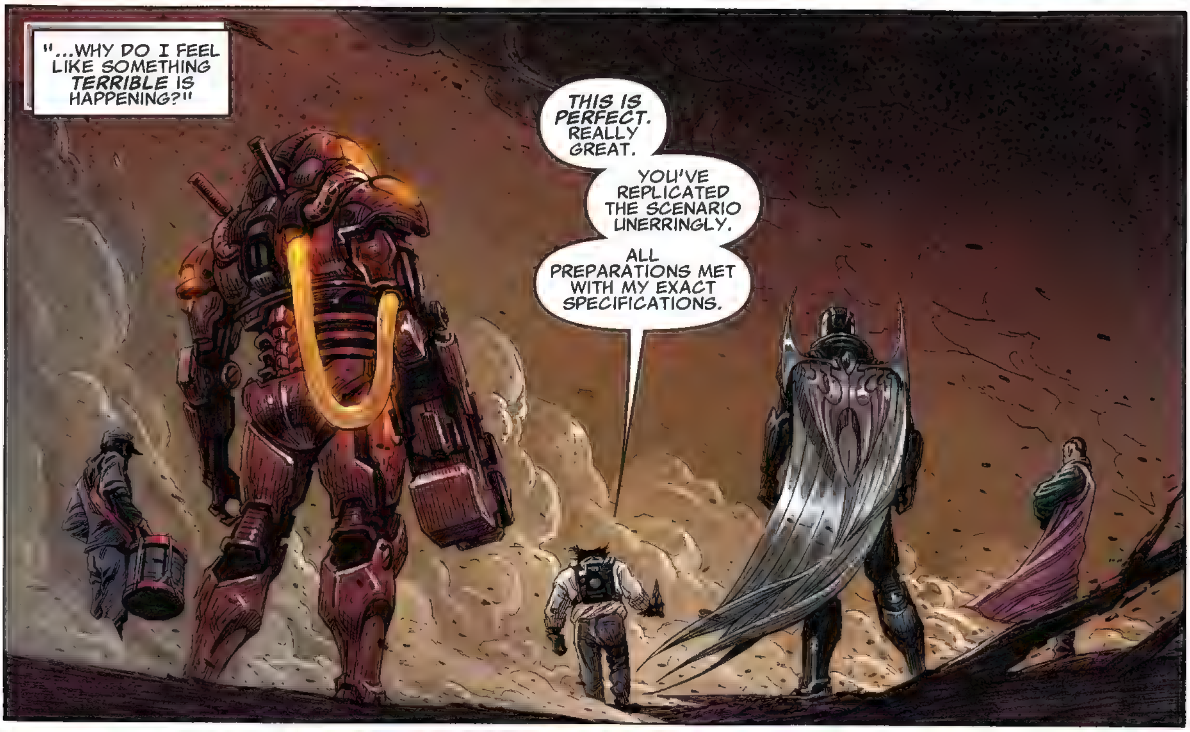


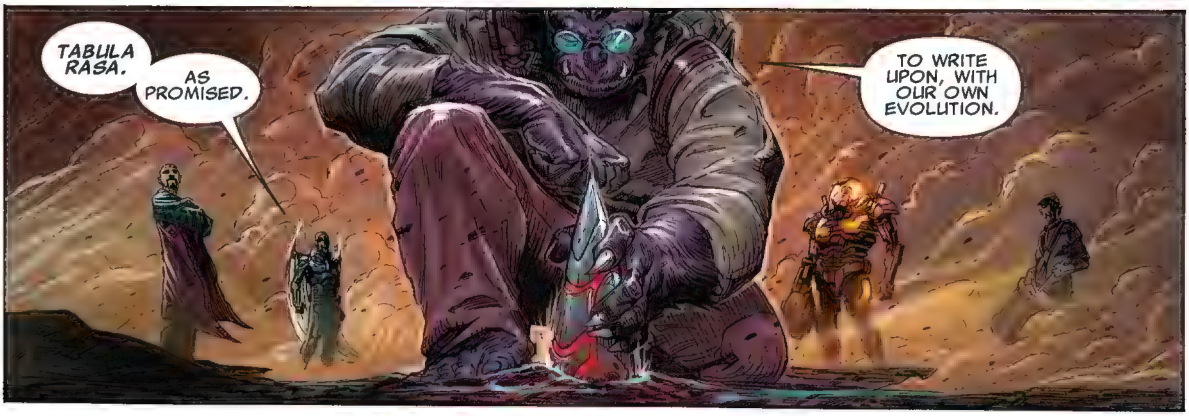
15 THE DARK ANGEL SAGA

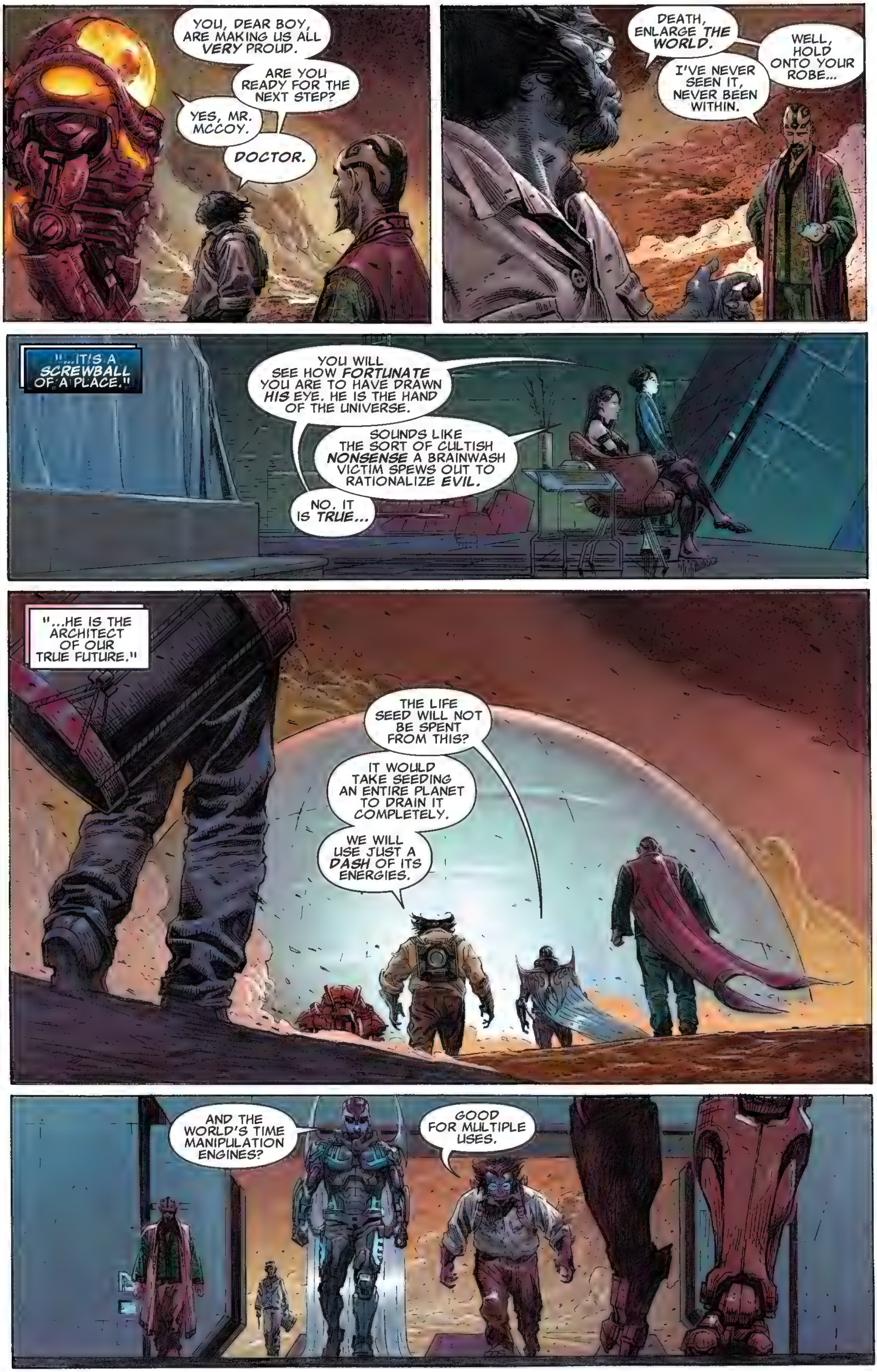
CHAPTER 5: TABULA RASA

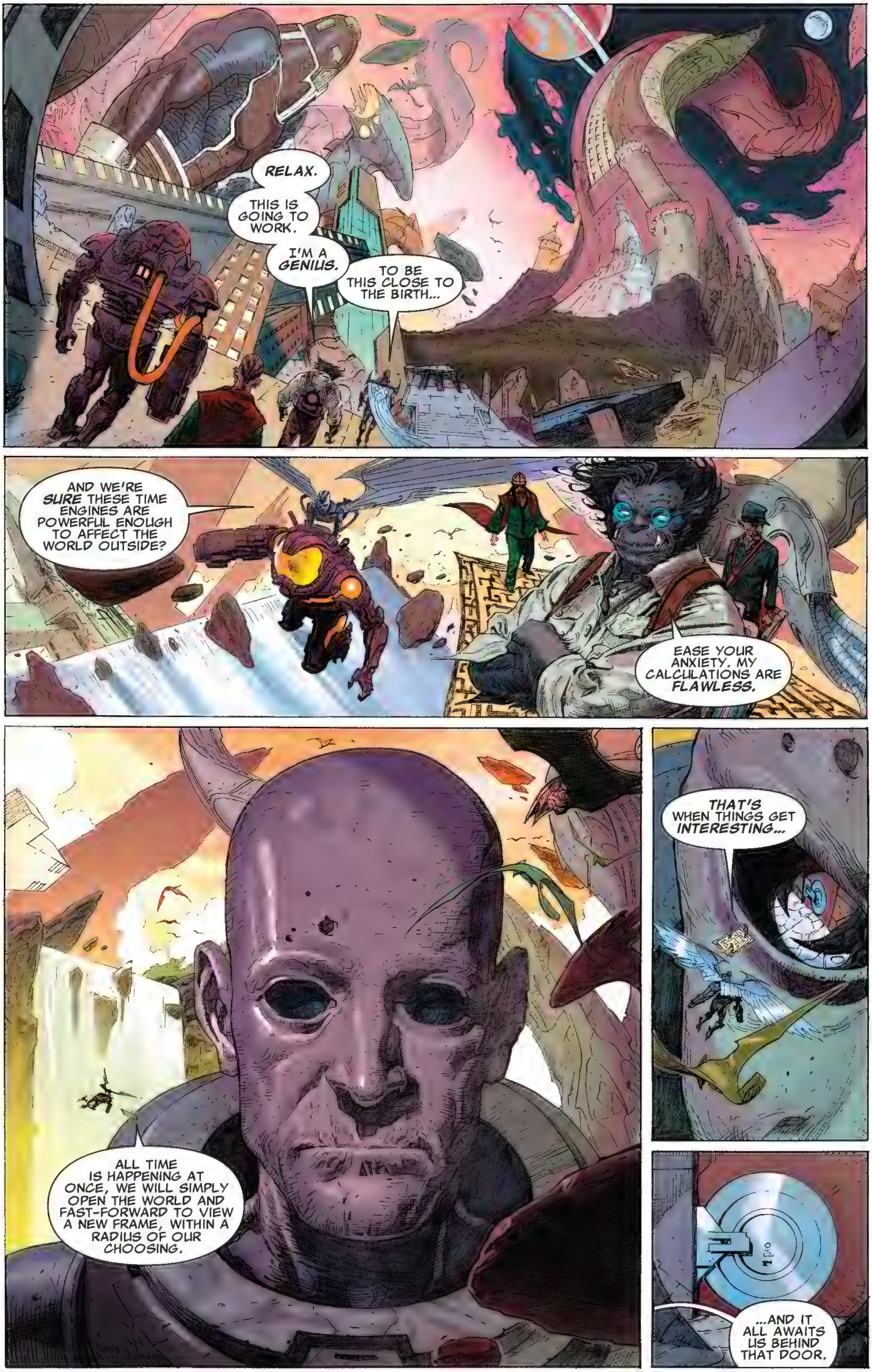

HE HAS A *BEAUTIFUL* DREAM.
AKKABA METROPOLIS, DEEP UNDER THE NORTH POLE.

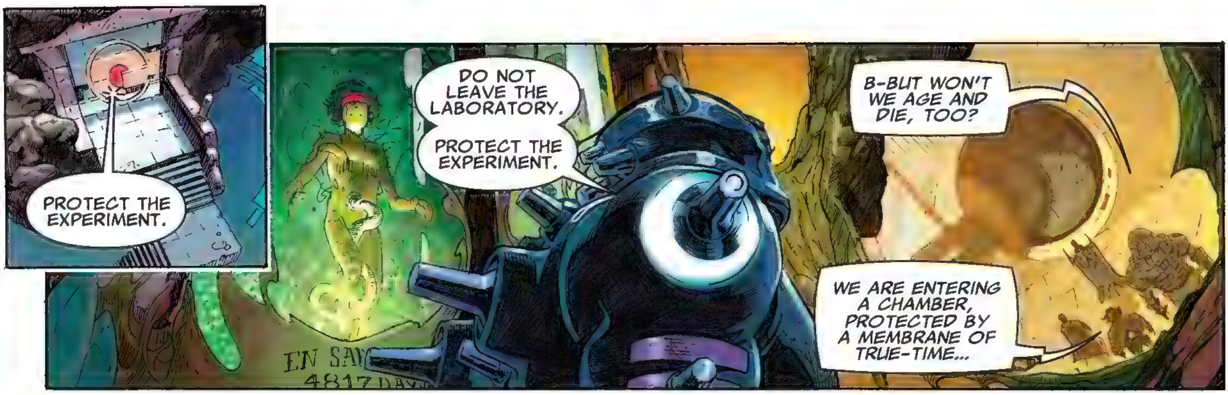

HE WILL BRING ABOUT A HEALTHY WORLD WHERE WE WILL BE SHEPHERDS AND KINGS.
YOU SOUND *SUPER-CRAZY.*
HE *LOVES* YOU. HE WANTS ONLY YOUR *PROSPERITY.*
IF THAT'S THE CASE...

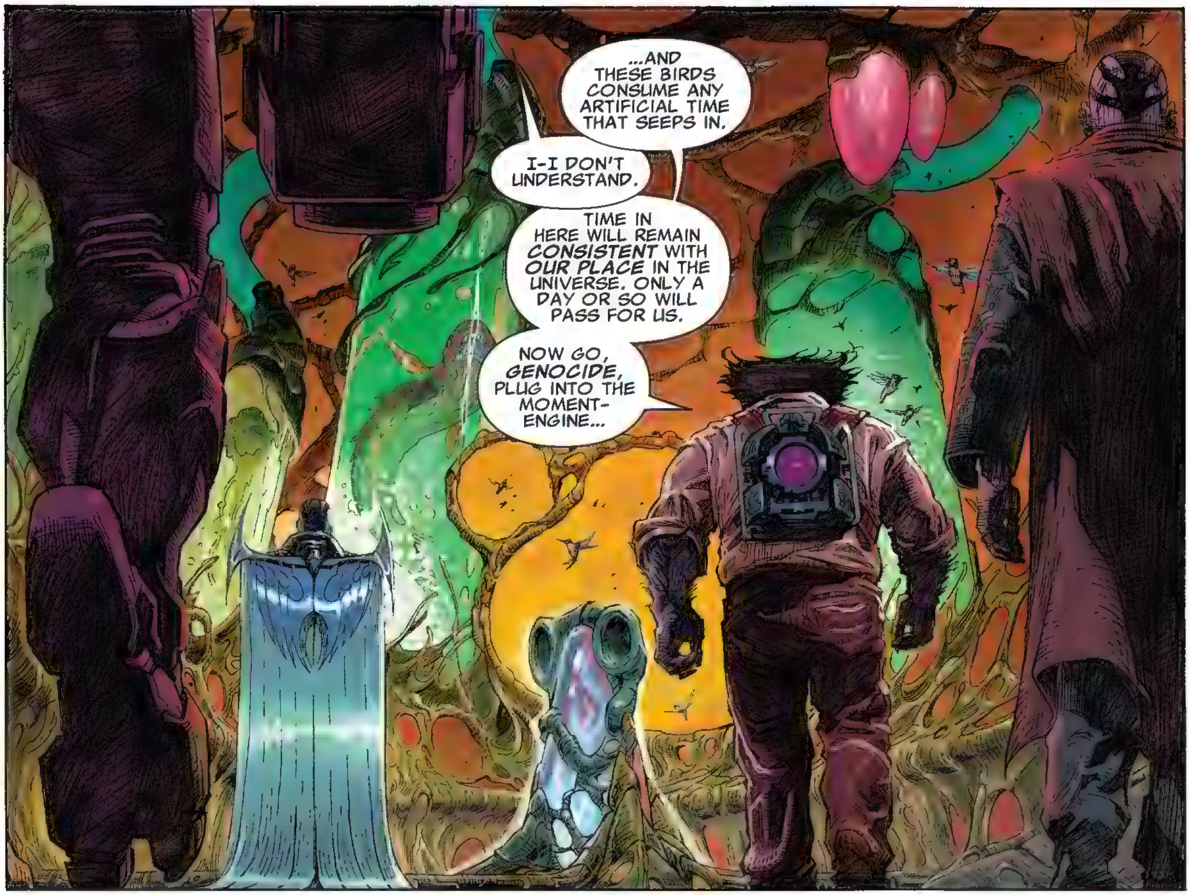

"...WHY DO I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING *TERRIBLE* IS HAPPENING?"
THIS IS PERFECT. REALLY GREAT.
YOU'VE REPLICATED THE SCENARIO UNERRINGLY.
ALL PREPARATIONS MET WITH MY EXACT SPECIFICATIONS.

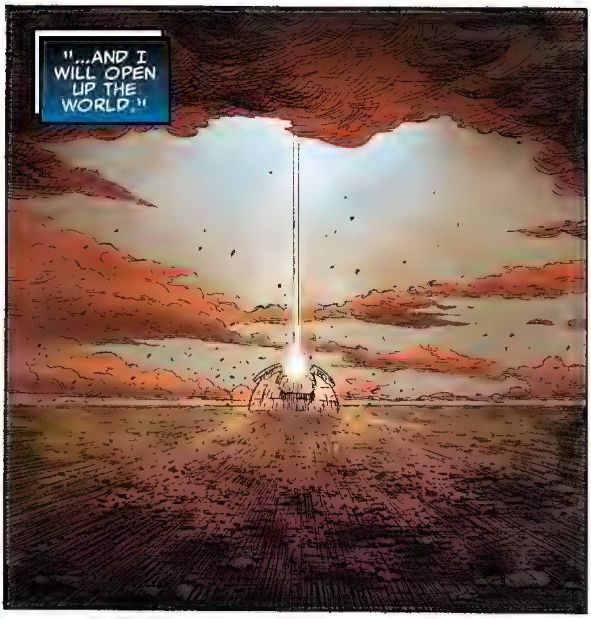

TABULA RASA.
AS PROMISED.
TO WRITE UPON, WITH OUR OWN EVOLUTION.

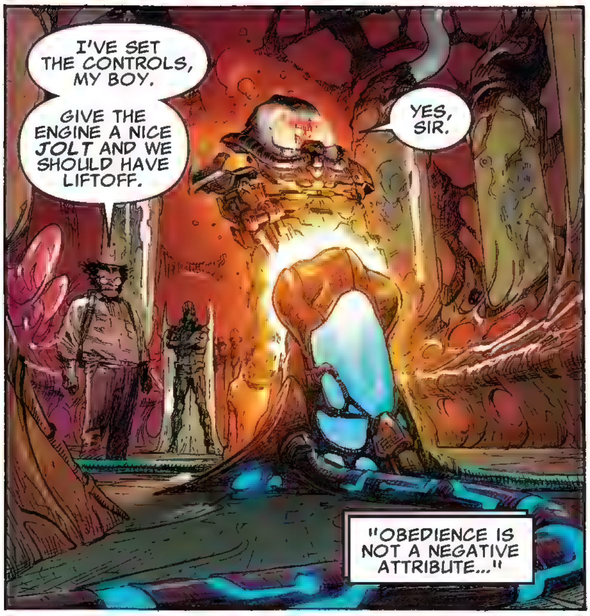

YOU, DEAR BOY, ARE MAKING US ALL VERY PROUD.
YES, MR. MCCOY.
ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT STEP?
DOCTOR.
DEATH, ENLARGE THE WORLD.
I'VE NEVER SEEN IT, NEVER BEEN WITHIN.
WELL, HOLD ONTO YOUR ROBE...
"...IT'S A SCREWBALL OF A PLACE."
YOU WILL SEE HOW FORTUNATE YOU ARE TO HAVE DRAWN HIS EYE. HE IS THE HAND OF THE UNIVERSE.
SOUNDS LIKE THE SORT OF CULTISH NONSENSE A BRAINWASH VICTIM SPEWS OUT TO RATIONALIZE EVIL.
NO. IT IS TRUE...
"...HE IS THE ARCHITECT OF OUR TRUE FUTURE."
THE LIFE SEED WILL NOT BE SPENT FROM THIS?
IT WOULD TAKE SEEDING AN ENTIRE PLANET TO DRAIN IT COMPLETELY.
WE WILL USE JUST A DASH OF ITS ENERGIES.
AND THE WORLD'S TIME MANIPULATION ENGINES?
GOOD FOR MULTIPLE USES.

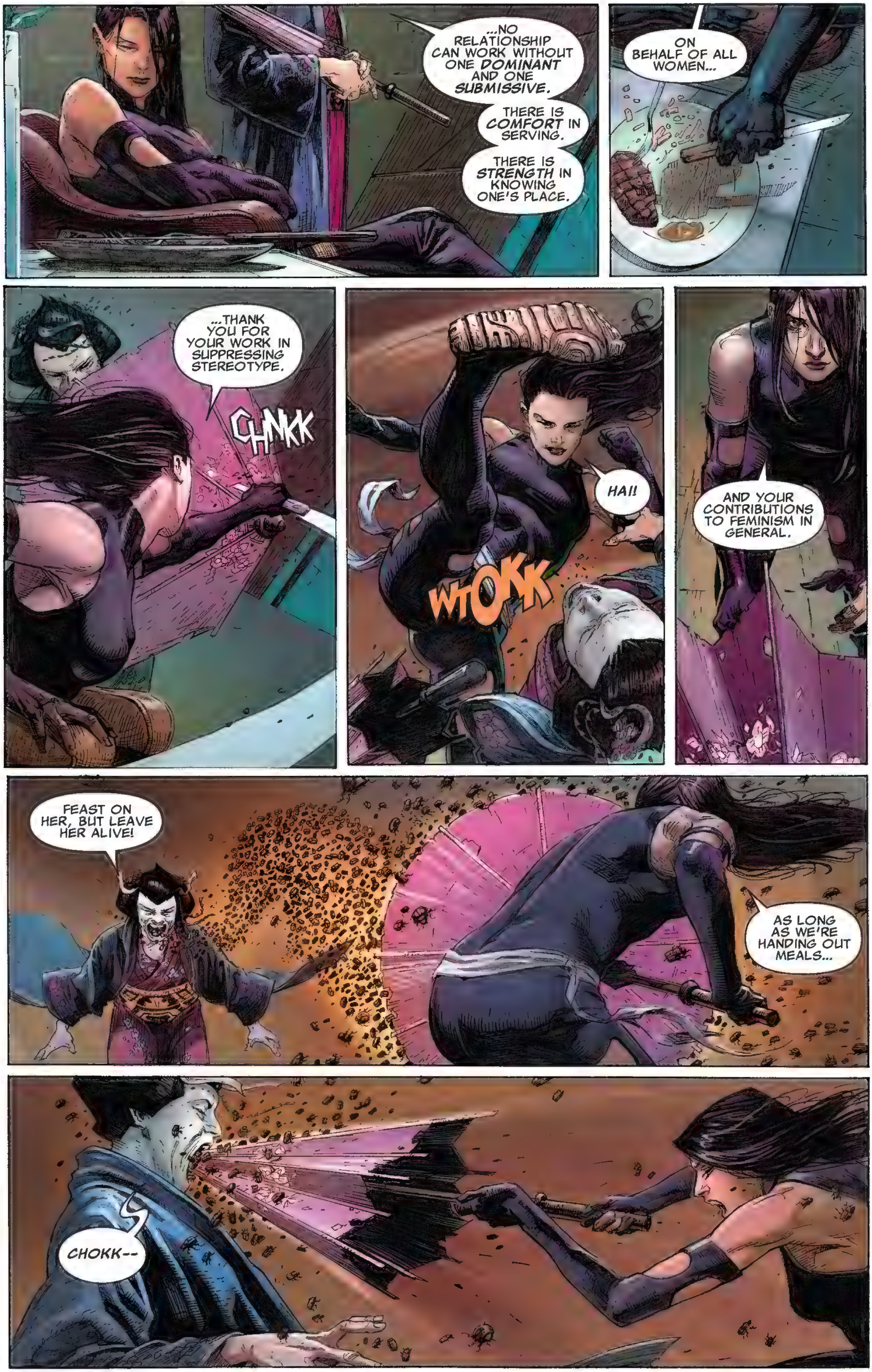

RELAX.
THIS IS GOING TO WORK.
I'M A *GENIUS.*
TO BE THIS CLOSE TO THE BIRTH...
AND WE'RE *SURE* THESE TIME ENGINES ARE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO AFFECT THE WORLD OUTSIDE?
EASE YOUR ANXIETY. MY CALCULATIONS ARE *FLAWLESS.*
ALL TIME IS HAPPENING AT ONCE, WE WILL SIMPLY OPEN THE WORLD AND FAST-FORWARD TO VIEW A NEW FRAME, WITHIN A RADIUS OF OUR CHOOSING.
THAT'S WHEN THINGS GET *INTERESTING...*
...AND IT ALL AWAITS US BEHIND THAT DOOR.

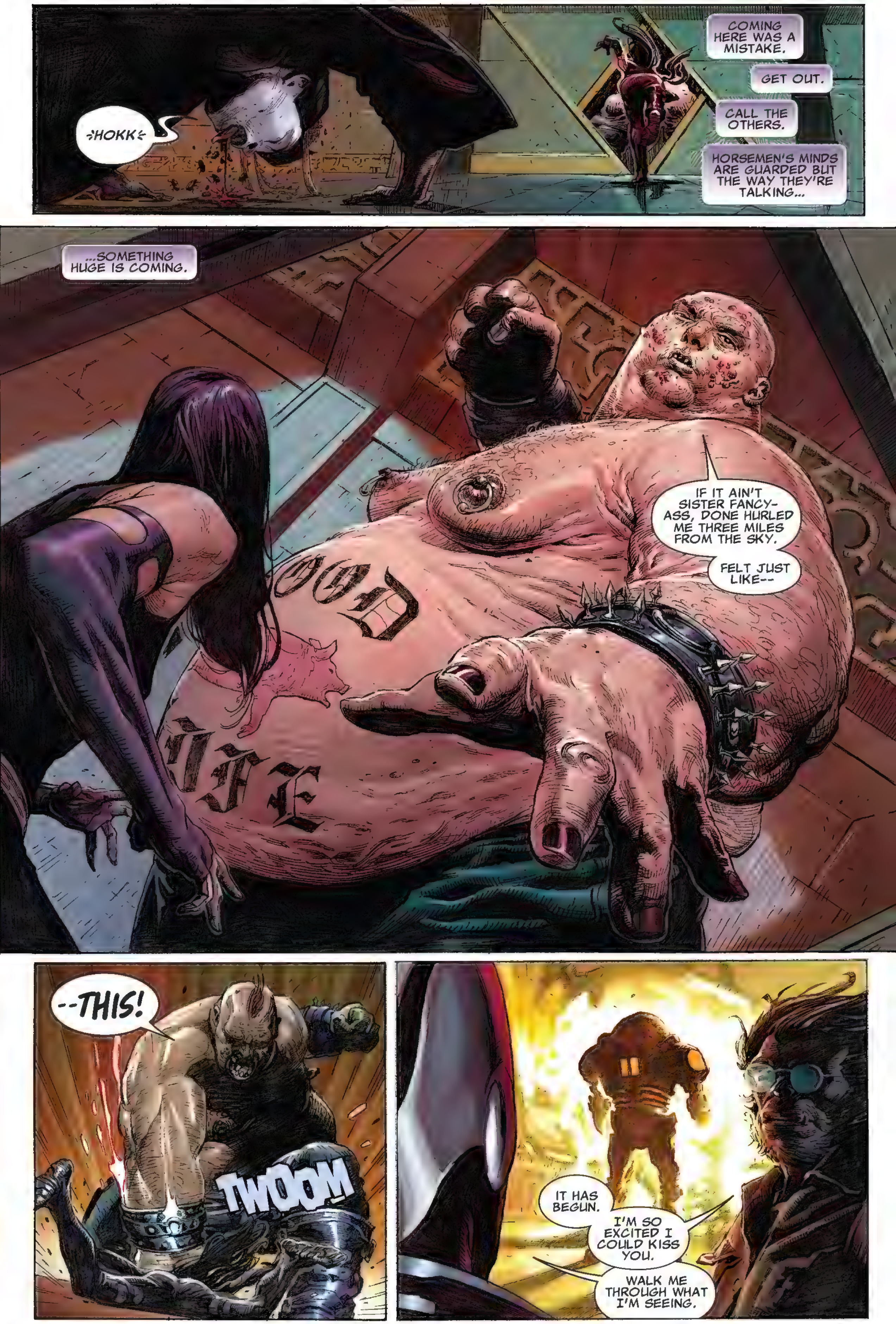

PROTECT THE EXPERIMENT.
EN SA
4817 DA
DO NOT LEAVE THE LABORATORY.
PROTECT THE EXPERIMENT.
B-BUT WON'T WE AGE AND DIE, TOO?
WE ARE ENTERING A CHAMBER, PROTECTED BY A MEMBRANE OF TRUE-TIME...


...AND THESE BIRDS CONSUME ANY ARTIFICIAL TIME THAT SEEPS IN.
I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
TIME IN HERE WILL REMAIN CONSISTENT WITH OUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE. ONLY A DAY OR SO WILL PASS FOR US.
NOW GO, GENOCIDE, PLUG INTO THE MOMENT-ENGINE...

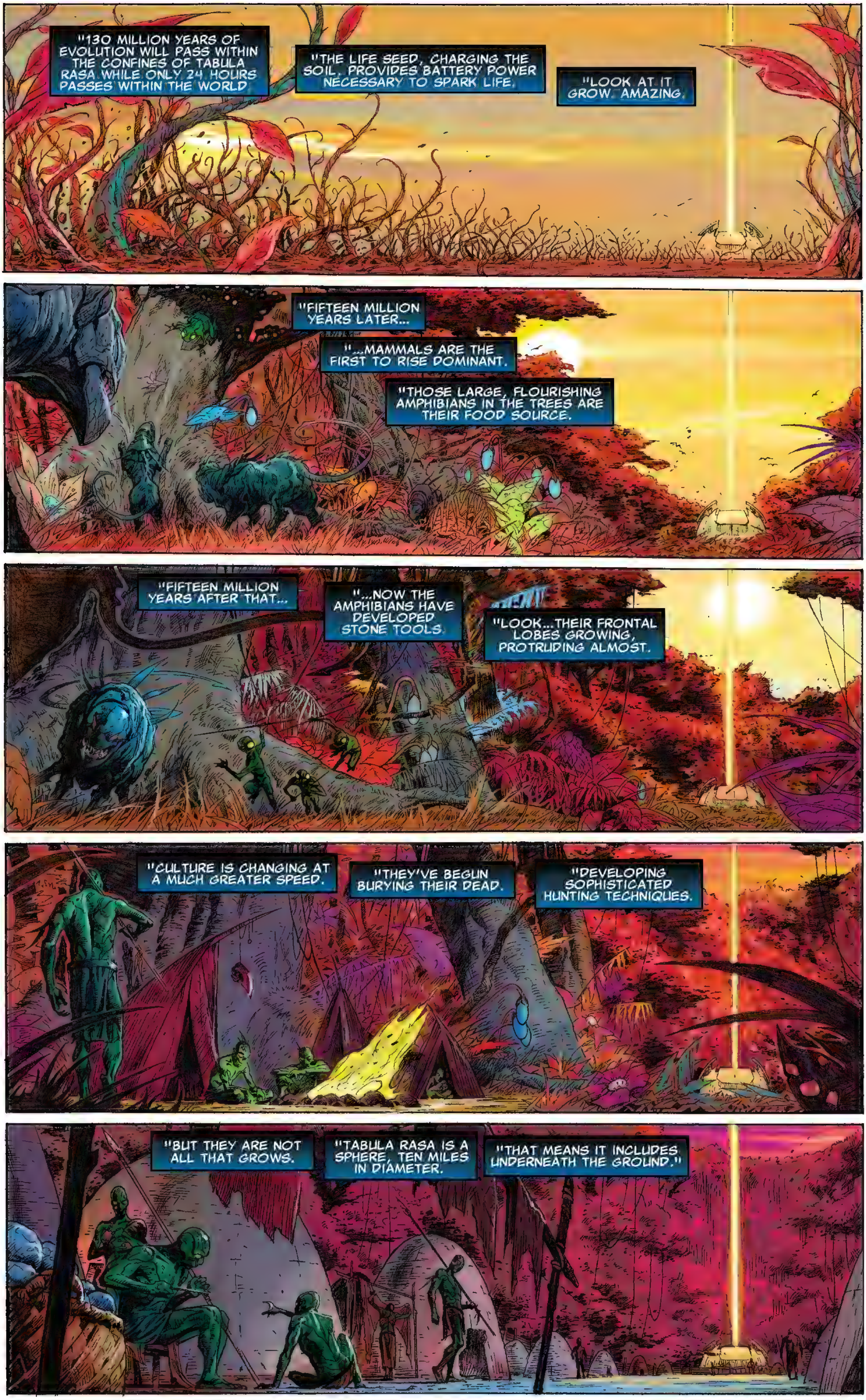

"...AND I WILL OPEN UP THE WORLD."

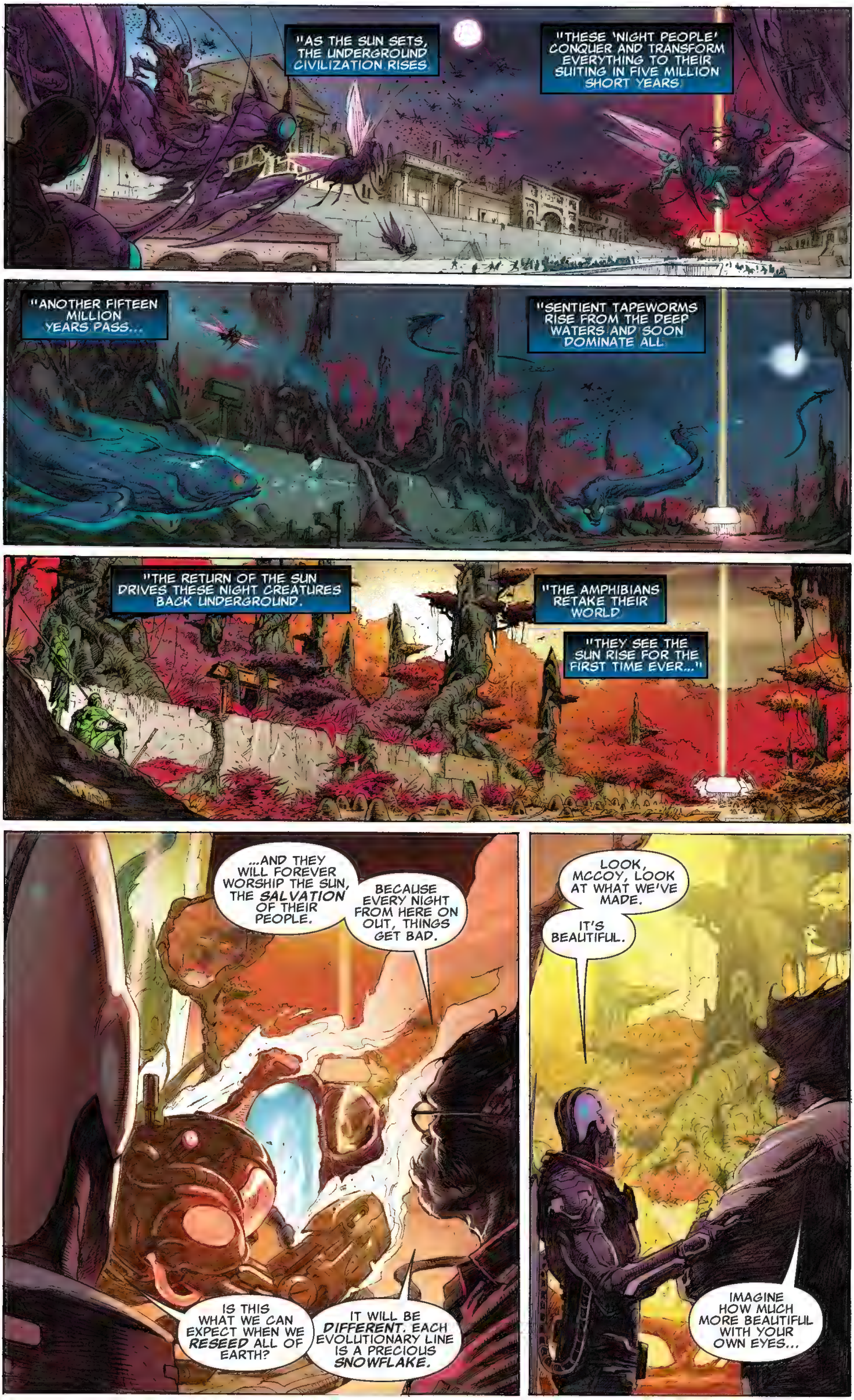

I'VE SET THE CONTROLS, MY BOY.
GIVE THE ENGINE A NICE JOLT AND WE SHOULD HAVE LIFTOFF.
YES, SIR.
"OBEDIENCE IS NOT A NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTE..."

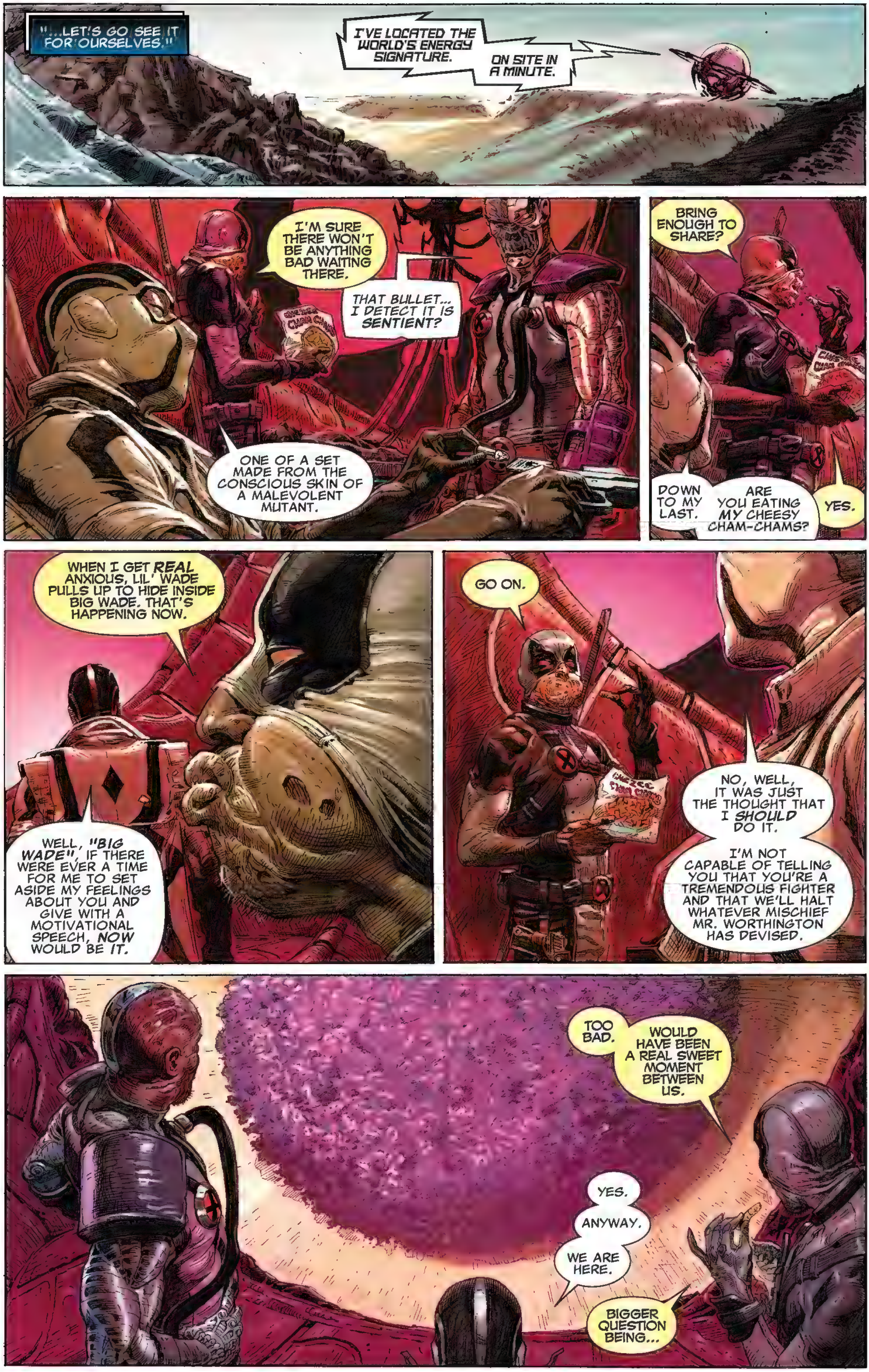

...NO RELATIONSHIP CAN WORK WITHOUT ONE DOMINANT AND ONE SUBMISSIVE.
THERE IS COMFORT IN SERVING.
THERE IS STRENGTH IN KNOWING ONE'S PLACE.
ON BEHALF OF ALL WOMEN...
...THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK IN SUPPRESSING STEREOTYPE.
CHNKK
HAI!
WTOKK
AND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FEMINISM IN GENERAL.
FEAST ON HER, BUT LEAVE HER ALIVE!
AS LONG AS WE'RE HANDING OUT MEALS...
CHOKK--

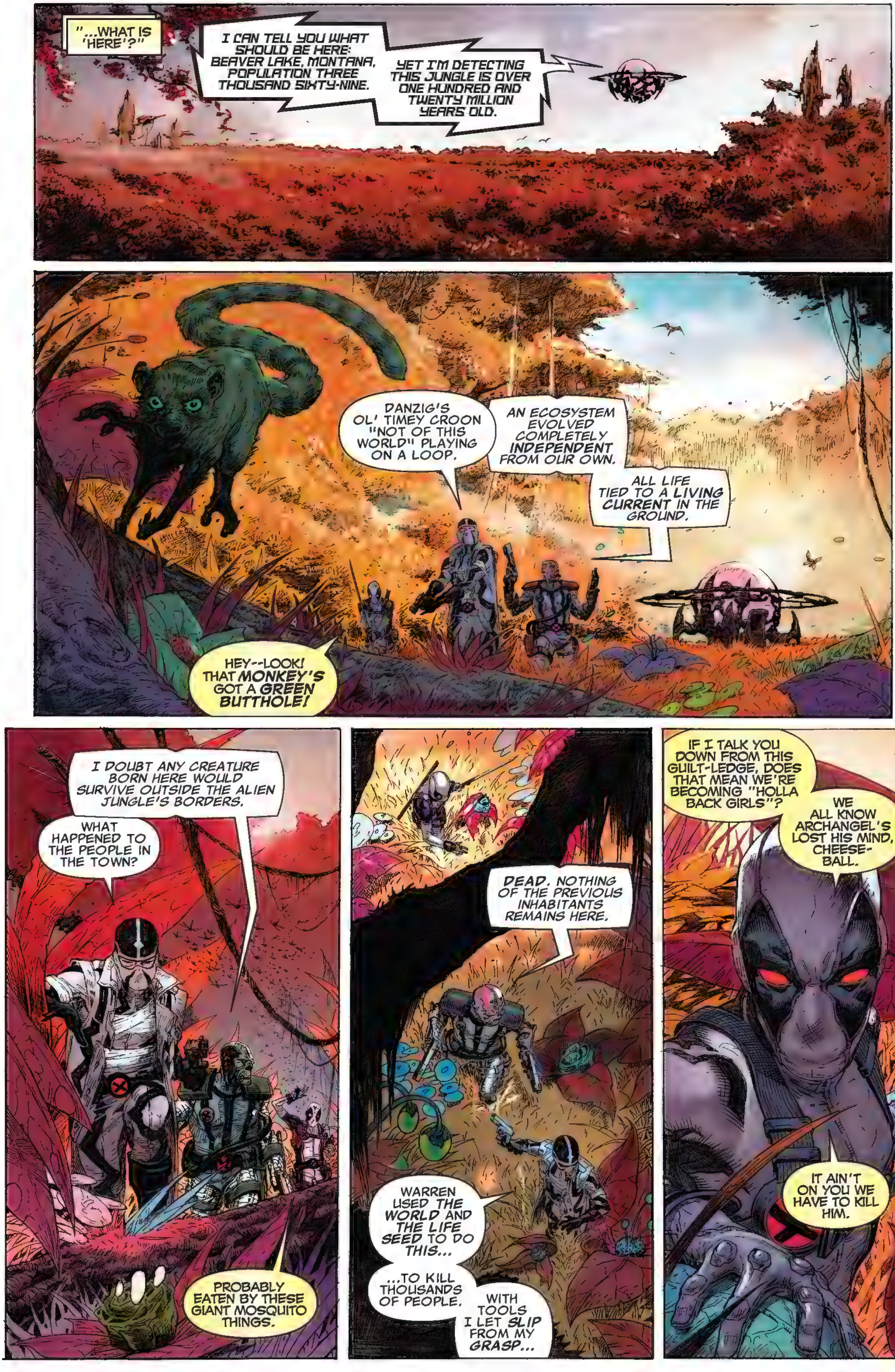


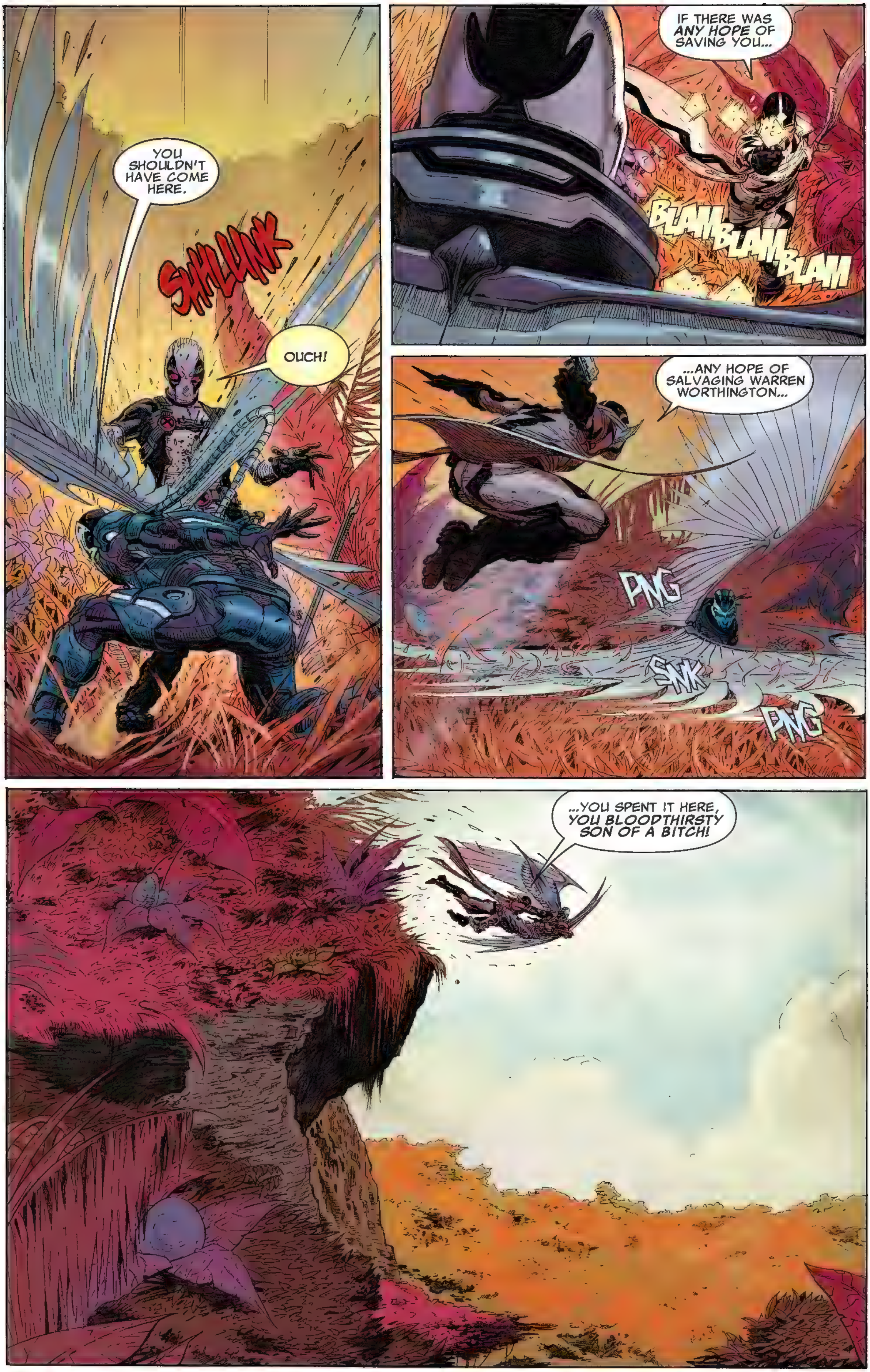
·HOKK·
COMING HERE WAS A MISTAKE.
GET OUT.
CALL THE OTHERS.
HORSEMEN'S MINDS ARE GUARDED BUT THE WAY THEY'RE TALKING...
...SOMETHING HUGE IS COMING.
IF IT AIN'T SISTER FANCY-ASS, DONE HURLED ME THREE MILES FROM THE SKY.
FELT JUST LIKE--
OOD
IFE
--THIS!
TWOOM
IT HAS BEGUN.
I'M SO EXCITED I COULD KISS YOU.
WALK ME THROUGH WHAT I'M SEEING.

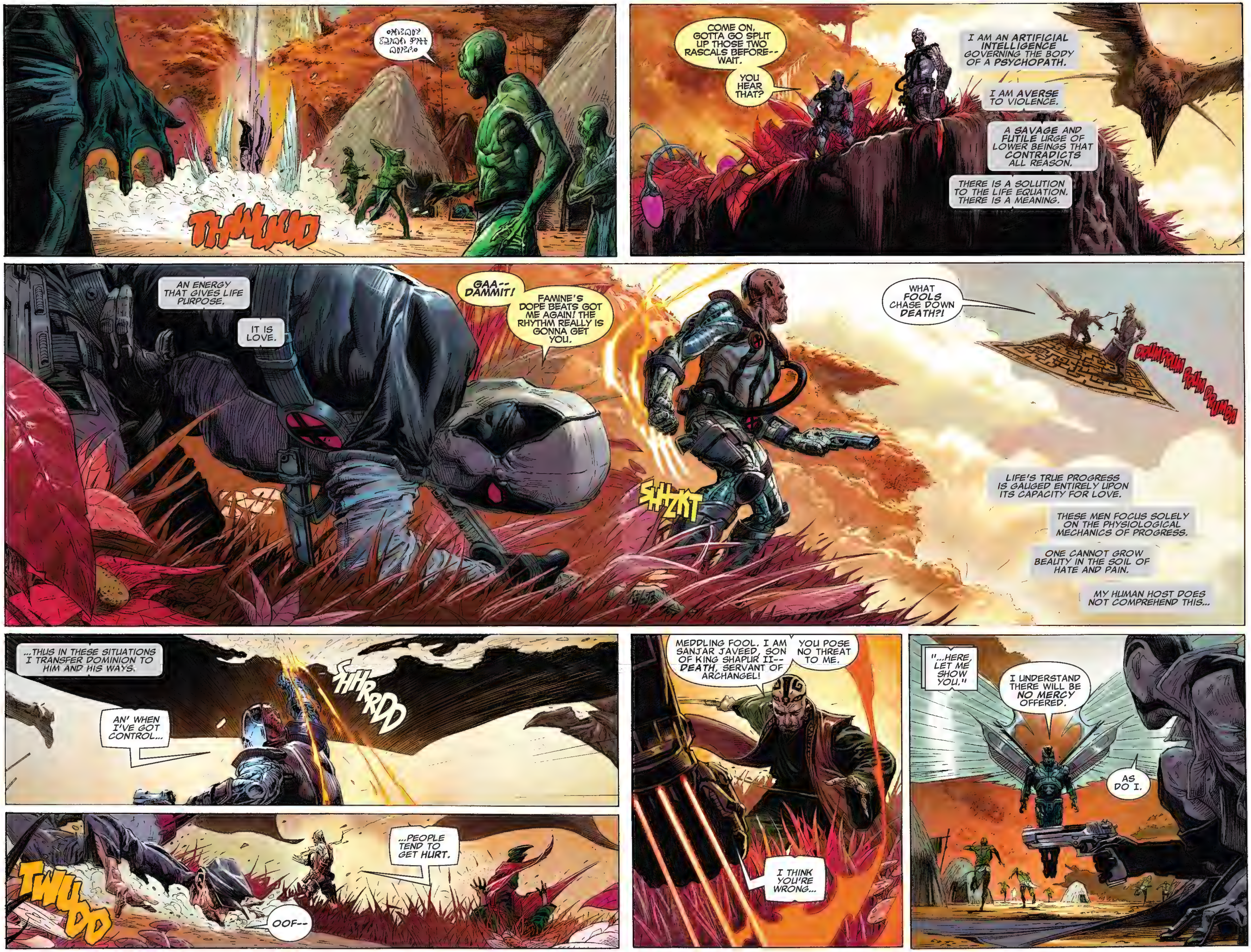

"130 MILLION YEARS OF EVOLUTION WILL PASS WITHIN THE CONFINES OF TABULA RASA WHILE ONLY 24 HOURS PASSES WITHIN THE WORLD.
"THE LIFE SEED, CHARGING THE SOIL, PROVIDES BATTERY POWER NECESSARY TO SPARK LIFE.
"LOOK AT IT GROW. AMAZING.
"FIFTEEN MILLION YEARS LATER...
"...MAMMALS ARE THE FIRST TO RISE DOMINANT.
"THOSE LARGE, FLOURISHING AMPHIBIANS IN THE TREES ARE THEIR FOOD SOURCE.
"FIFTEEN MILLION YEARS AFTER THAT...
"...NOW THE AMPHIBIANS HAVE DEVELOPED STONE TOOLS.
"LOOK...THEIR FRONTAL LOBES GROWING, PROTRUDING ALMOST.
"CULTURE IS CHANGING AT A MUCH GREATER SPEED.
"THEY'VE BEGUN BURYING THEIR DEAD.
"DEVELOPING SOPHISTICATED HUNTING TECHNIQUES.
"BUT THEY ARE NOT ALL THAT GROWS.
"TABULA RASA IS A SPHERE, TEN MILES IN DIAMETER.
"THAT MEANS IT INCLUDES UNDERNEATH THE GROUND."

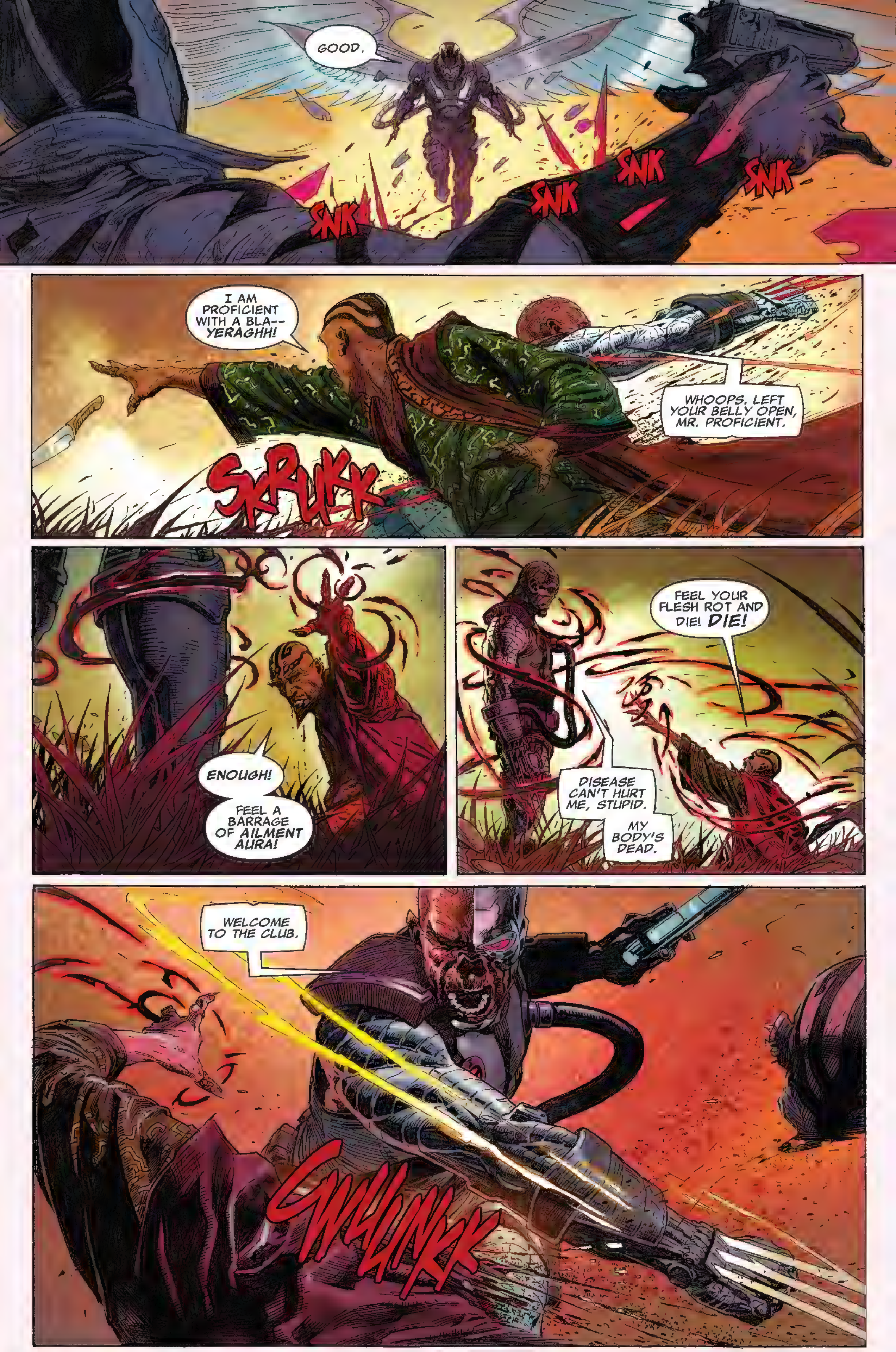

"AS THE SUN SETS, THE UNDERGROUND CIVILIZATION RISES.
"THESE 'NIGHT PEOPLE' CONQUER AND TRANSFORM EVERYTHING TO THEIR SUITING IN FIVE MILLION SHORT YEARS.
"ANOTHER FIFTEEN MILLION YEARS PASS...
"SENTIENT TAPEWORMS RISE FROM THE DEEP WATERS AND SOON DOMINATE ALL.
"THE RETURN OF THE SUN DRIVES THESE NIGHT CREATURES BACK UNDERGROUND.
"THE AMPHIBIANS RETAKE THEIR WORLD.
"THEY SEE THE SUN RISE FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER..."
...AND THEY WILL FOREVER WORSHIP THE SUN, THE *SALVATION* OF THEIR PEOPLE.
BECAUSE EVERY NIGHT FROM HERE ON OUT, THINGS GET BAD.
IS THIS WHAT WE CAN EXPECT WHEN WE *RESEED* ALL OF EARTH?
IT WILL BE *DIFFERENT*. EACH EVOLUTIONARY LINE IS A PRECIOUS *SNOWFLAKE*.
LOOK, MCCOY, LOOK AT WHAT WE'VE MADE.
IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
IMAGINE HOW MUCH MORE BEAUTIFUL WITH YOUR OWN EYES...

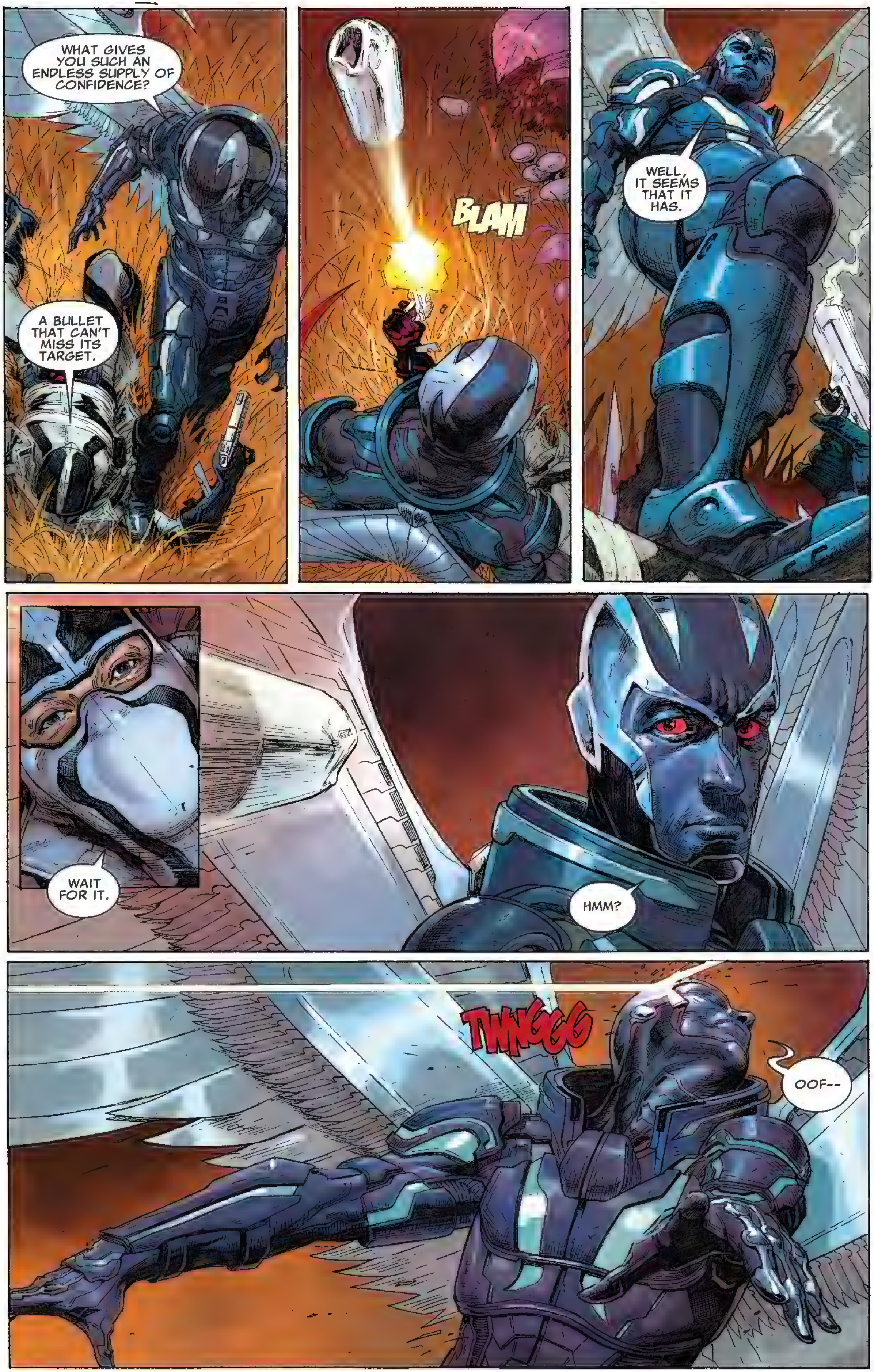

"...LET'S GO SEE IT FOR OURSELVES."
I'VE LOCATED THE WORLD'S ENERGY SIGNATURE.
ON SITE IN A MINUTE.
I'M SURE THERE WON'T BE ANYTHING BAD WAITING THERE.
THAT BULLET... I DETECT IT IS *SENTIENT?*
ONE OF A SET MADE FROM THE CONSCIOUS SKIN OF A MALEVOLENT MUTANT.
BRING ENOUGH TO SHARE?
DOWN TO MY LAST.
ARE YOU EATING *MY* CHEESY CHAM-CHAMS?
YES.
WHEN I GET ***REAL*** ANXIOUS, LIL' WADE PULLS UP TO HIDE INSIDE BIG WADE. THAT'S HAPPENING NOW.
WELL, ***"BIG WADE"***, IF THERE WERE EVER A TIME FOR ME TO SET ASIDE MY FEELINGS ABOUT YOU AND GIVE WITH A MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH, ***NOW*** WOULD BE ***IT.***
GO ON.
NO, WELL, IT WAS JUST THE THOUGHT THAT I ***SHOULD*** DO IT.
I'M NOT CAPABLE OF TELLING YOU THAT YOU'RE A TREMENDOUS FIGHTER AND THAT WE'LL HALT WHATEVER MISCHIEF MR. WORTHINGTON HAS DEVISED.
TOO BAD.
WOULD HAVE BEEN A REAL SWEET MOMENT BETWEEN US.
YES.
ANYWAY.
WE ARE HERE.
BIGGER QUESTION BEING...

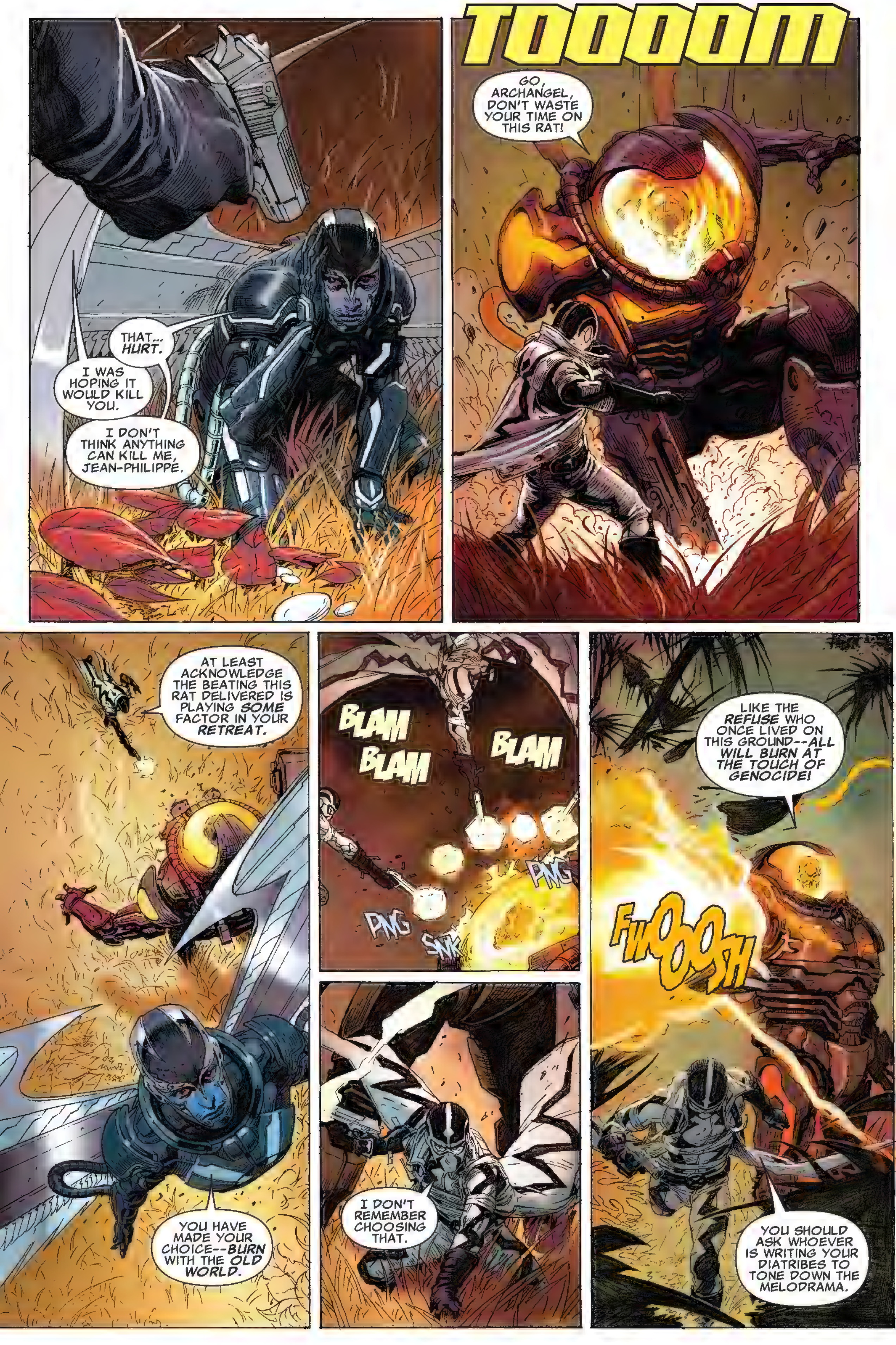

"...WHAT IS 'HERE'?"
I CAN TELL YOU WHAT SHOULD BE HERE: BEAVER LAKE, MONTANA, POPULATION THREE THOUSAND SIXTY-NINE.
YET I'M DETECTING THIS JUNGLE IS OVER ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY MILLION YEARS OLD.
DANZIG'S OL' TIMEY CROON "NOT OF THIS WORLD" PLAYING ON A LOOP.
AN ECOSYSTEM EVOLVED COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT FROM OUR OWN.
ALL LIFE TIED TO A LIVING CURRENT IN THE GROUND.
HEY--LOOK! THAT MONKEY'S GOT A GREEN BUTTHOLE!
I DOUBT ANY CREATURE BORN HERE WOULD SURVIVE OUTSIDE THE ALIEN JUNGLE'S BORDERS.
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PEOPLE IN THE TOWN?
PROBABLY EATEN BY THESE GIANT MOSQUITO THINGS.
DEAD. NOTHING OF THE PREVIOUS INHABITANTS REMAINS HERE.
WARREN USED THE WORLD AND THE LIFE SEED TO DO THIS...
...TO KILL THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.
WITH TOOLS I LET SLIP FROM MY GRASP...
IF I TALK YOU DOWN FROM THIS GUILT-LEDGE, DOES THAT MEAN WE'RE BECOMING "HOLLA BACK GIRLS"?
WE ALL KNOW ARCHANGEL'S LOST HIS MIND, CHEESE-BALL.
IT AIN'T ON YOU WE HAVE TO KILL HIM.

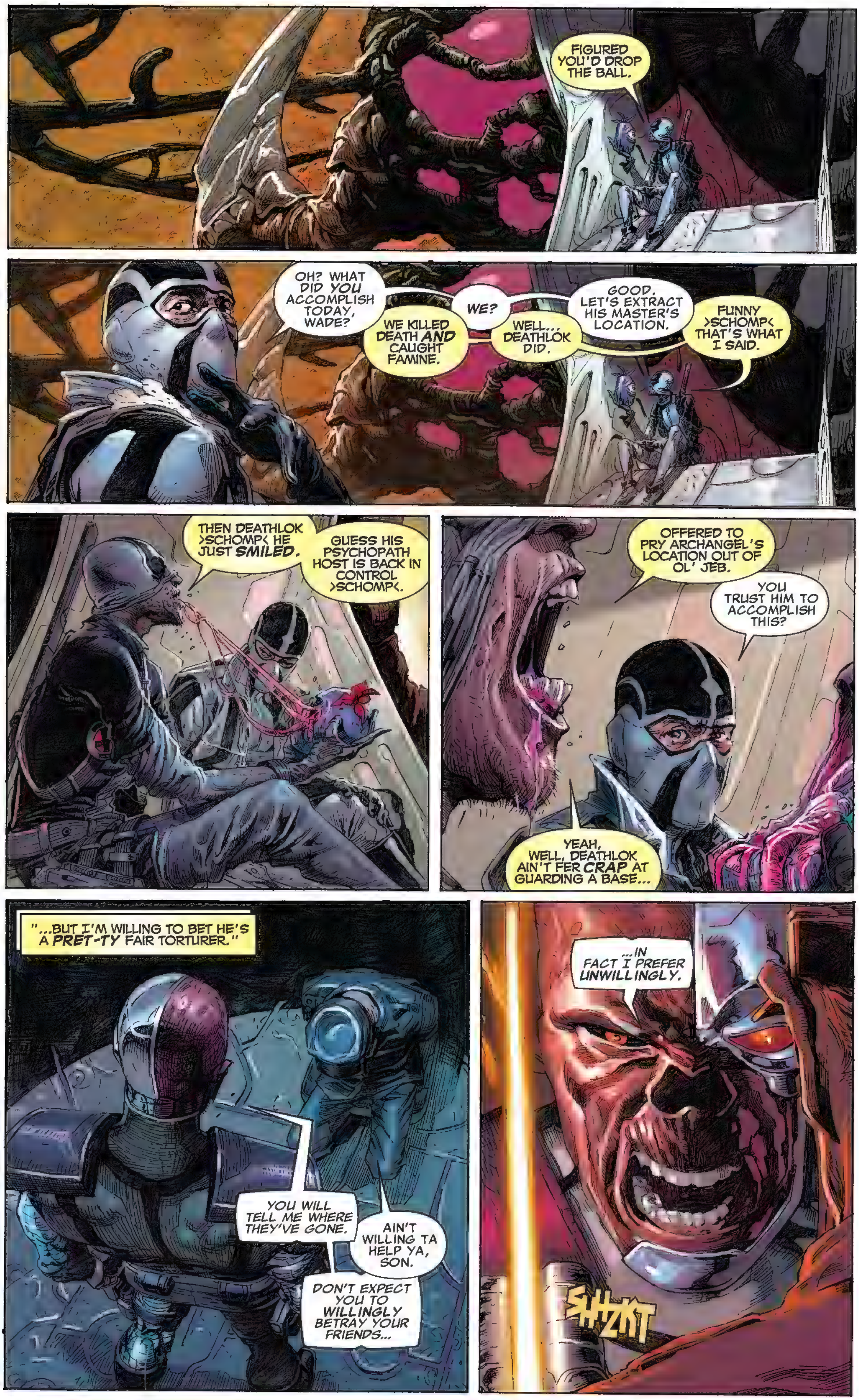

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE.
SHHLUNK
OUCH!
IF THERE WAS *ANY HOPE* OF SAVING YOU...
BLAM BLAM BLAM
...ANY HOPE OF SALVAGING WARREN WORTHINGTON...
PNG
SNK
PNG
...YOU SPENT IT HERE, *YOU BLOODTHIRSTY SON OF A BITCH!*

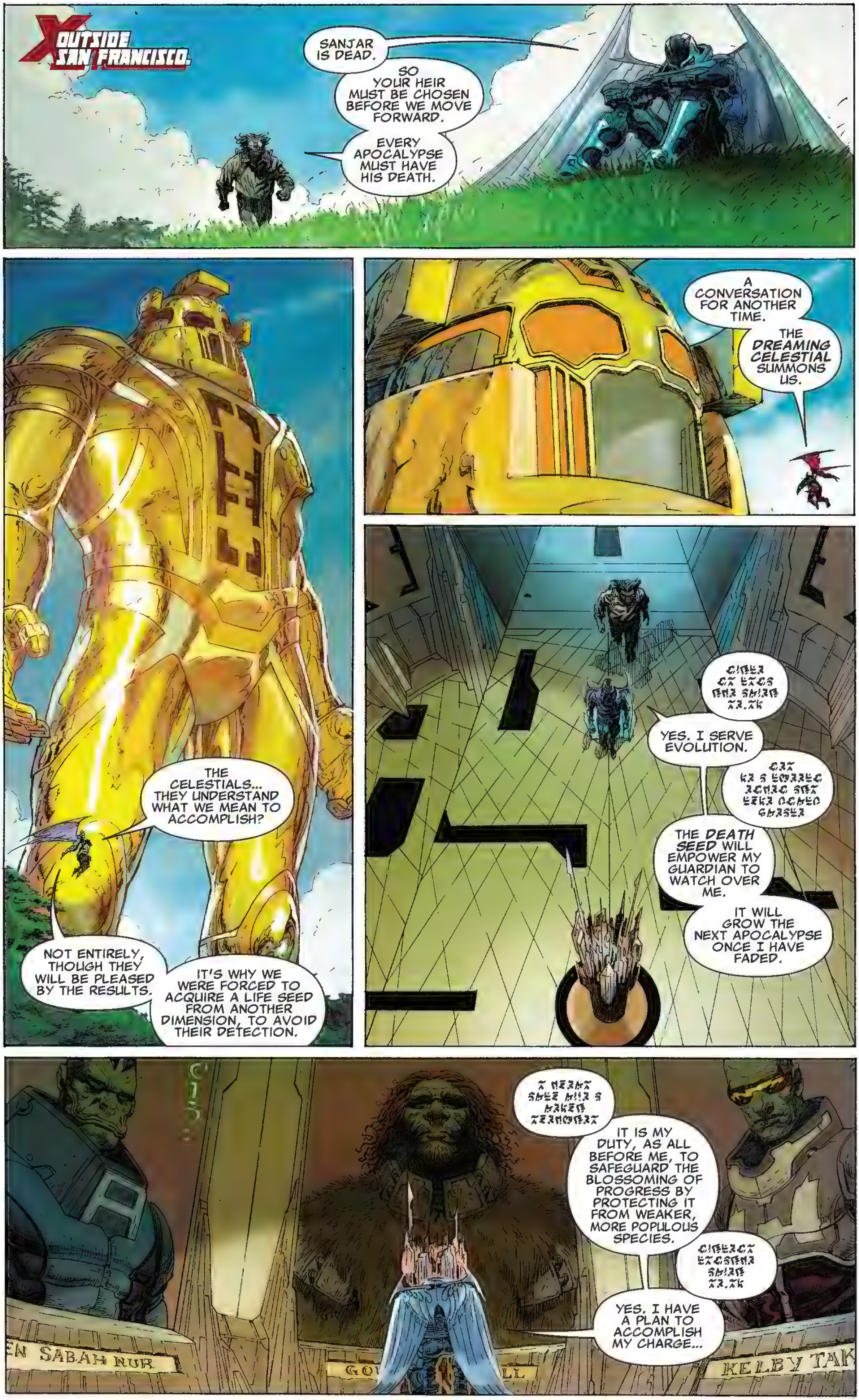

THWUUD
COME ON, GOTTA GO SPLIT UP THOSE TWO RASCALS BEFORE--WAIT.
YOU HEAR THAT?
I AM AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE GOVERNING THE BODY OF A PSYCHOPATH.
I AM AVERSE TO VIOLENCE.
A SAVAGE AND FUTILE URGE OF LOWER BEINGS THAT CONTRADICTS ALL REASON.
THERE IS A SOLUTION TO THE LIFE EQUATION. THERE IS A MEANING.
AN ENERGY THAT GIVES LIFE PURPOSE.
IT IS LOVE.
GAA--DAMMIT!
FAMINE'S DOPE BEATS GOT ME AGAIN! THE RHYTHM REALLY IS GONNA GET YOU.
WHAT FOOLS CHASE DOWN DEATH?!
DRUMRUM RUM DRUMBA
SHHZKT
LIFE'S TRUE PROGRESS IS GAUGED ENTIRELY UPON ITS CAPACITY FOR LOVE.
THESE MEN FOCUS SOLELY ON THE PHYSIOLOGICAL MECHANICS OF PROGRESS.
ONE CANNOT GROW BEAUTY IN THE SOIL OF HATE AND PAIN.
MY HUMAN HOST DOES NOT COMPREHEND THIS...
...THUS IN THESE SITUATIONS I TRANSFER DOMINION TO HIM AND HIS WAYS.
SHHRRDD
AN' WHEN I'VE GOT CONTROL...
...PEOPLE TEND TO GET HURT.
TWUDD
OOF--
MEDDLING FOOL. I AM SANJAR JAVEED, SON OF KING SHAPUR II--DEATH, SERVANT OF ARCHANGEL!
YOU POSE NO THREAT TO ME.
I THINK YOU'RE WRONG...
"...HERE, LET ME SHOW YOU."
I UNDERSTAND THERE WILL BE NO MERCY OFFERED.
AS DO I.

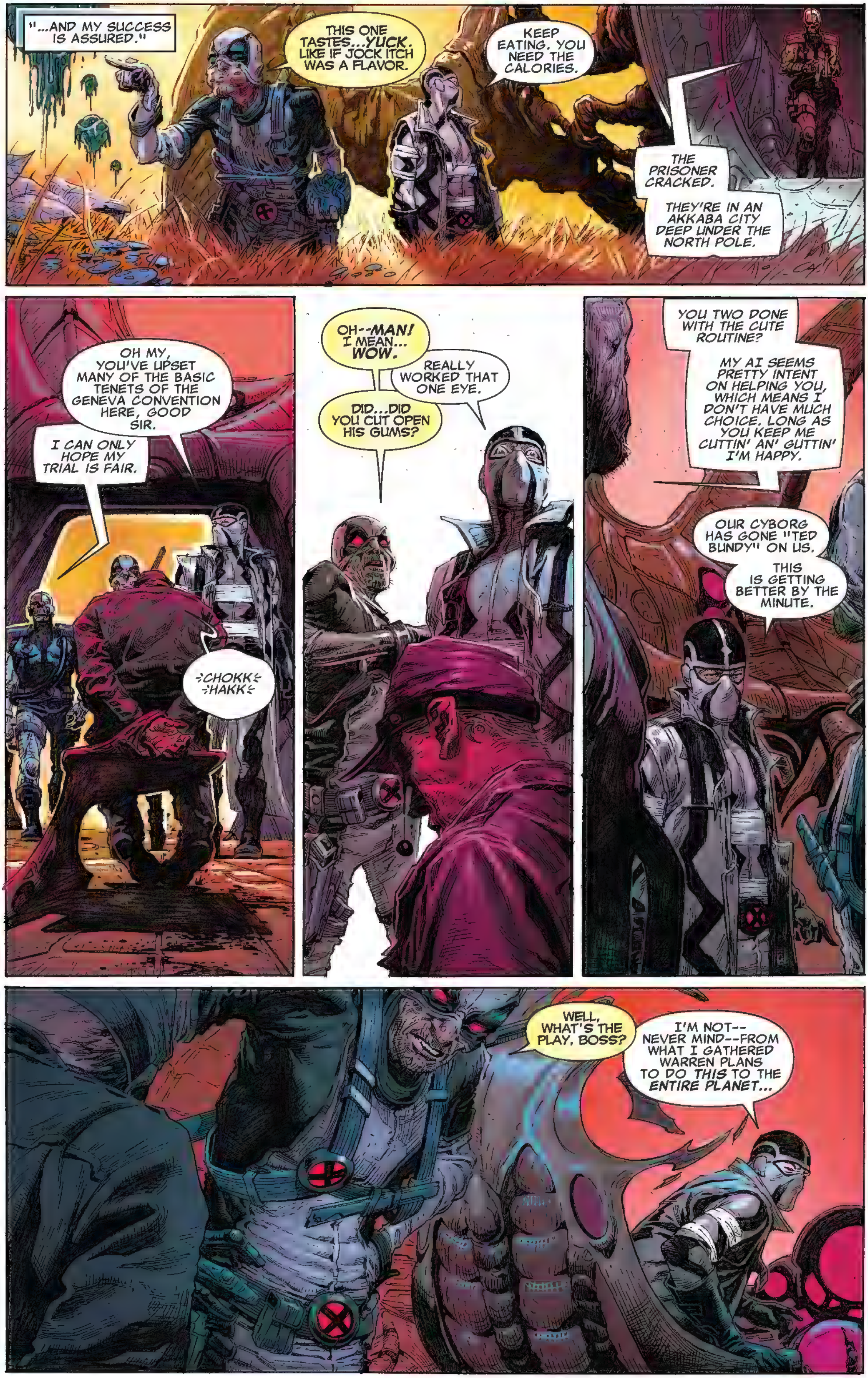

GOOD.
SNK
SNK
SNK
SNK
I AM PROFICIENT WITH A BLA-- YERAGHH!
WHOOPS. LEFT YOUR BELLY OPEN, MR. PROFICIENT.
SKRUKK
ENOUGH!
FEEL A BARRAGE OF AILMENT AURA!
FEEL YOUR FLESH ROT AND DIE! DIE!
DISEASE CAN'T HURT ME, STUPID.
MY BODY'S DEAD.
WELCOME TO THE CLUB.
GWLUNKK

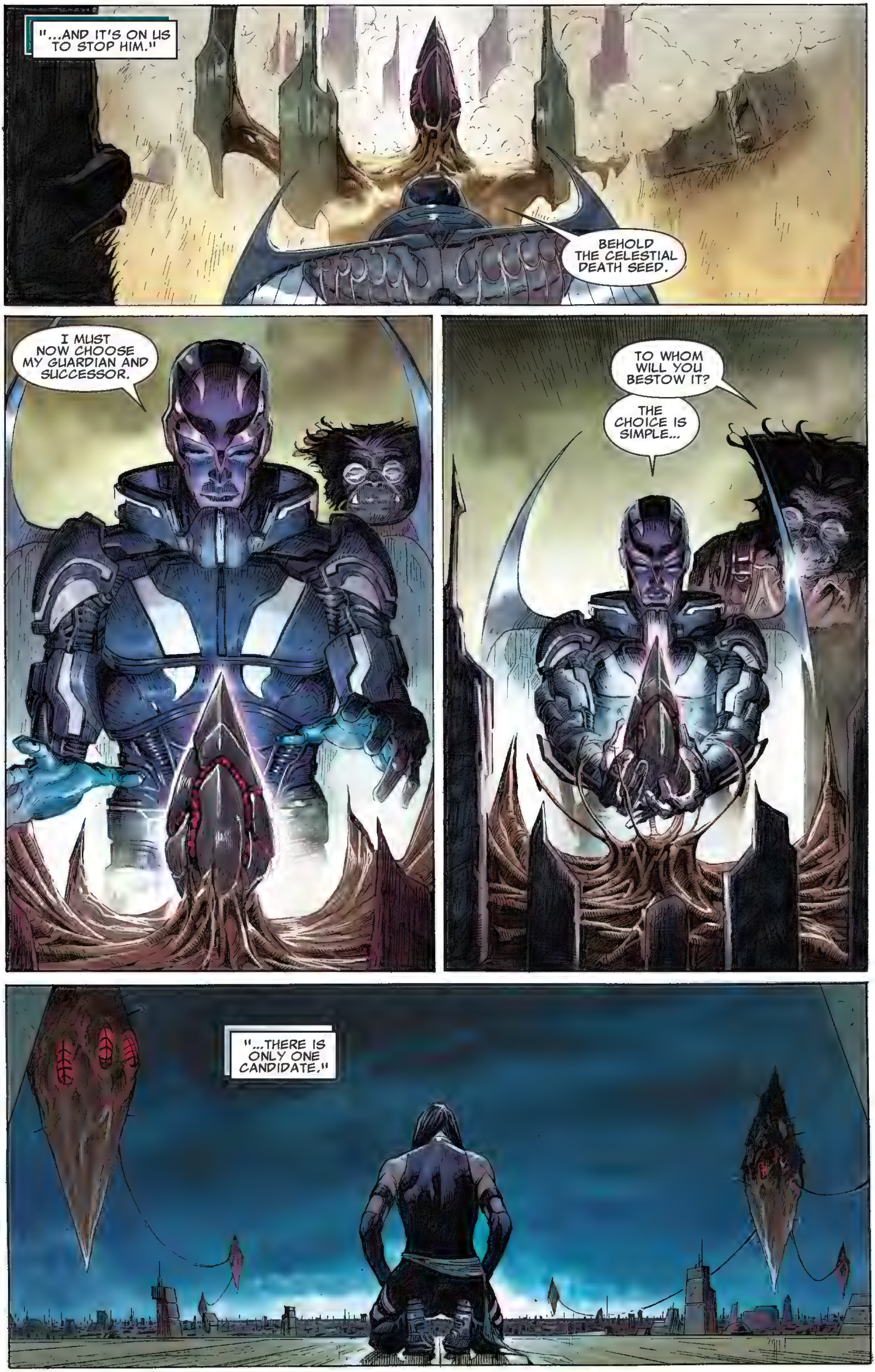

WHAT GIVES YOU SUCH AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF CONFIDENCE?
A BULLET THAT CAN'T MISS ITS TARGET.
BLAM
WELL, IT SEEMS THAT IT HAS.
WAIT FOR IT.
HMM?
TWNGGG
OOF--

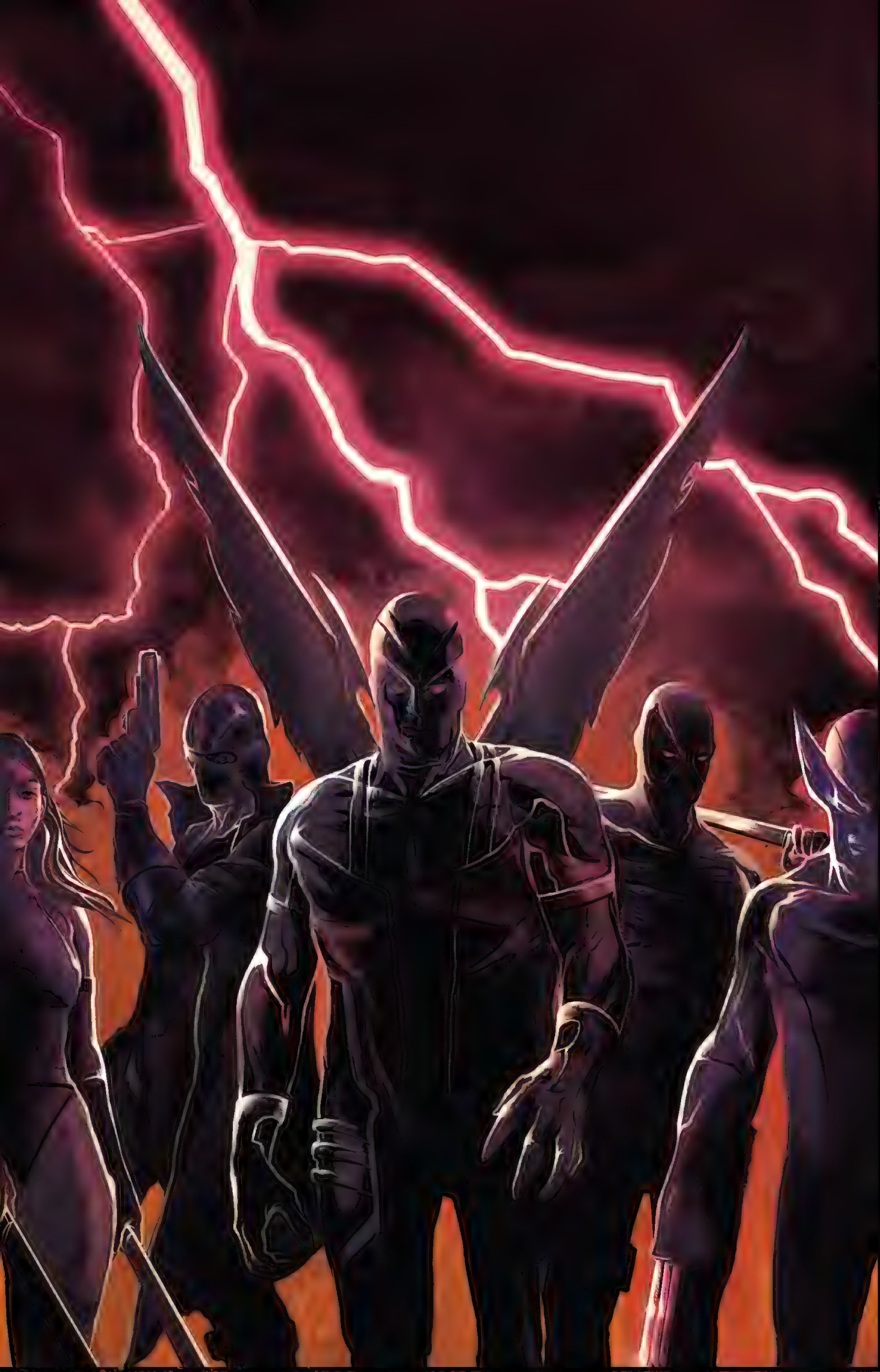

THAT... HURT.
I WAS HOPING IT WOULD KILL YOU.
I DON'T THINK ANYTHING CAN KILL ME, JEAN-PHILIPPE.
TOOOOM
GO, ARCHANGEL, DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME ON THIS RAT!
AT LEAST ACKNOWLEDGE THE BEATING THIS RAT DELIVERED IS PLAYING SOME FACTOR IN YOUR RETREAT.
YOU HAVE MADE YOUR CHOICE--BURN WITH THE OLD WORLD.
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
PNG
PNG
SNK
I DON'T REMEMBER CHOOSING THAT.
LIKE THE REFUSE WHO ONCE LIVED ON THIS GROUND--ALL WILL BURN AT THE TOUCH OF GENOCIDE!
FWOOOSH
YOU SHOULD ASK WHOEVER IS WRITING YOUR DIATRIBES TO TONE DOWN THE MELODRAMA.


FIGURED YOU'D DROP THE BALL.
OH? WHAT DID *YOU* ACCOMPLISH TODAY, WADE?
WE KILLED DEATH **AND** CAUGHT FAMINE.
WE?
WELL... DEATHLOK DID.
GOOD. LET'S EXTRACT HIS MASTER'S LOCATION.
FUNNY >SCHOMP< THAT'S WHAT I SAID.
THEN DEATHLOK >SCHOMP< HE JUST **SMILED.**
GUESS HIS PSYCHOPATH HOST IS BACK IN CONTROL >SCHOMP<.
OFFERED TO PRY ARCHANGEL'S LOCATION OUT OF OL' JEB.
YOU TRUST HIM TO ACCOMPLISH THIS?
YEAH, WELL, DEATHLOK AIN'T FER **CRAP** AT GUARDING A BASE...
"...BUT I'M WILLING TO BET HE'S A ***PRET-TY*** FAIR TORTURER."
YOU WILL TELL ME WHERE THEY'VE GONE.
AIN'T WILLING TA HELP YA, SON.
*DON'T EXPECT YOU TO **WILLINGLY** BETRAY YOUR FRIENDS...*
*...IN FACT I PREFER **UNWILLINGLY.***
SHZKT


OUTSIDE SAN FRANCISCO.
SANJAR IS DEAD.
SO YOUR HEIR MUST BE CHOSEN BEFORE WE MOVE FORWARD.
EVERY APOCALYPSE MUST HAVE HIS DEATH.
A CONVERSATION FOR ANOTHER TIME.
THE DREAMING CELESTIAL SUMMONS US.
THE CELESTIALS... THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT WE MEAN TO ACCOMPLISH?
NOT ENTIRELY, THOUGH THEY WILL BE PLEASED BY THE RESULTS.
IT'S WHY WE WERE FORCED TO ACQUIRE A LIFE SEED FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION, TO AVOID THEIR DETECTION.
YES. I SERVE EVOLUTION.
THE DEATH SEED WILL EMPOWER MY GUARDIAN TO WATCH OVER ME.
IT WILL GROW THE NEXT APOCALYPSE ONCE I HAVE FADED.
IT IS MY DUTY, AS ALL BEFORE ME, TO SAFEGUARD THE BLOSSOMING OF PROGRESS BY PROTECTING IT FROM WEAKER, MORE POPULOUS SPECIES.
YES. I HAVE A PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH MY CHARGE...
EN SABAH NUR
GO
LL
KELBY TAK


"...AND MY SUCCESS IS ASSURED."
THIS ONE TASTES...*YUCK.* LIKE IF JOCK ITCH WAS A FLAVOR.
KEEP EATING. YOU NEED THE CALORIES.
THE PRISONER CRACKED.
THEY'RE IN AN AKKABA CITY DEEP UNDER THE NORTH POLE.
OH MY, YOU'VE UPSET MANY OF THE BASIC TENETS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION HERE, GOOD SIR.
I CAN ONLY HOPE MY TRIAL IS FAIR.
CHOKK *HAKK*
OH--*MAN!* I MEAN... *WOW.*
DID...DID YOU CUT OPEN HIS GUMS?
REALLY WORKED THAT ONE EYE.
YOU TWO DONE WITH THE CUTE ROUTINE?
MY AI SEEMS PRETTY INTENT ON HELPING YOU, WHICH MEANS I DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE. LONG AS YOU KEEP ME CUTTIN' AN' GUTTIN' I'M HAPPY.
OUR CYBORG HAS GONE "TED BUNDY" ON US.
THIS IS GETTING BETTER BY THE MINUTE.
WELL, WHAT'S THE PLAY, BOSS?
I'M NOT--NEVER MIND--FROM WHAT I GATHERED WARREN PLANS TO DO *THIS* TO THE *ENTIRE PLANET...*

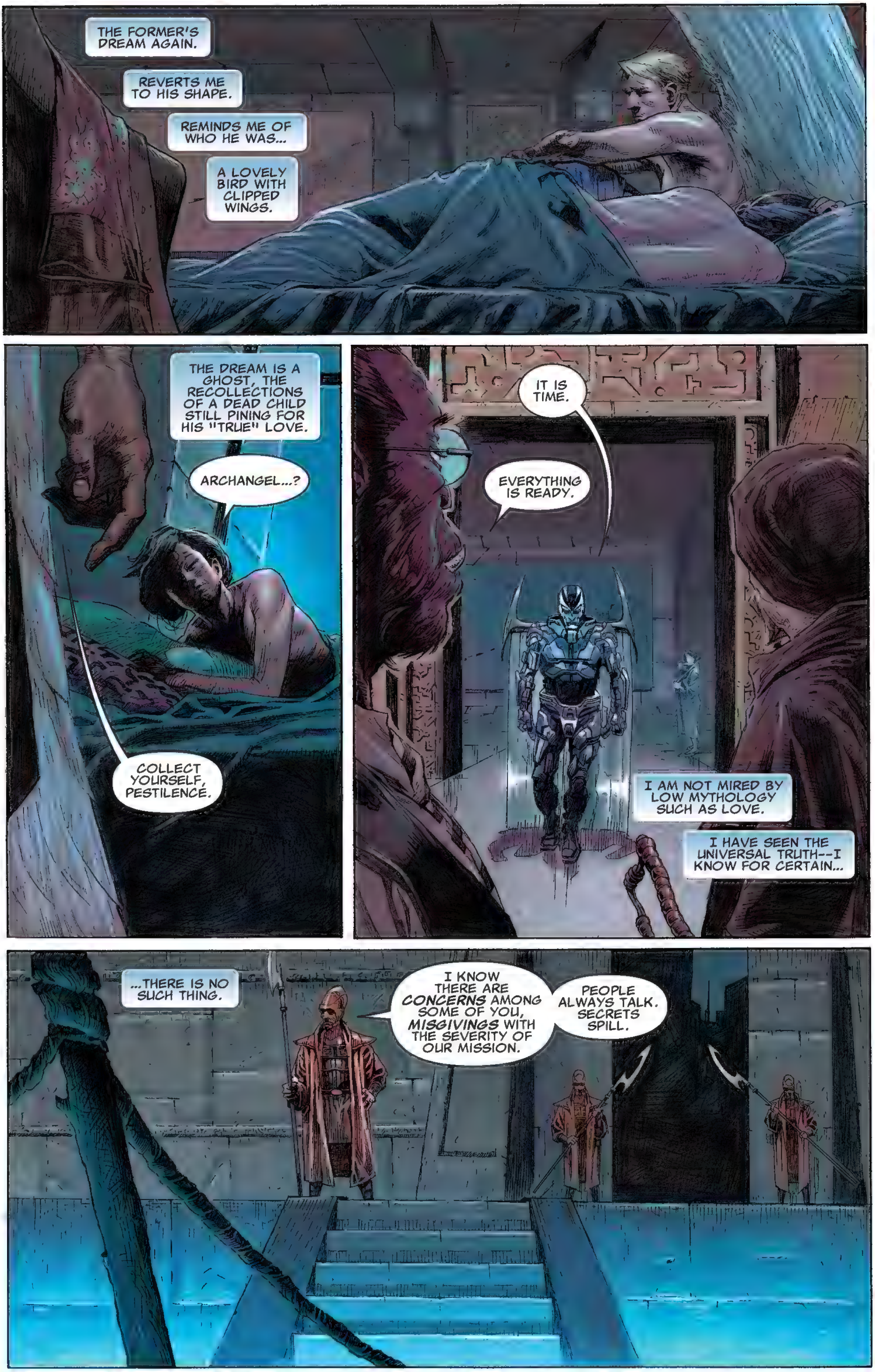

"...AND IT'S ON US TO STOP HIM."
BEHOLD THE CELESTIAL DEATH SEED.
I MUST NOW CHOOSE MY GUARDIAN AND SUCCESSOR.
TO WHOM WILL YOU BESTOW IT?
THE CHOICE IS SIMPLE...
"...THERE IS ONLY ONE CANDIDATE."

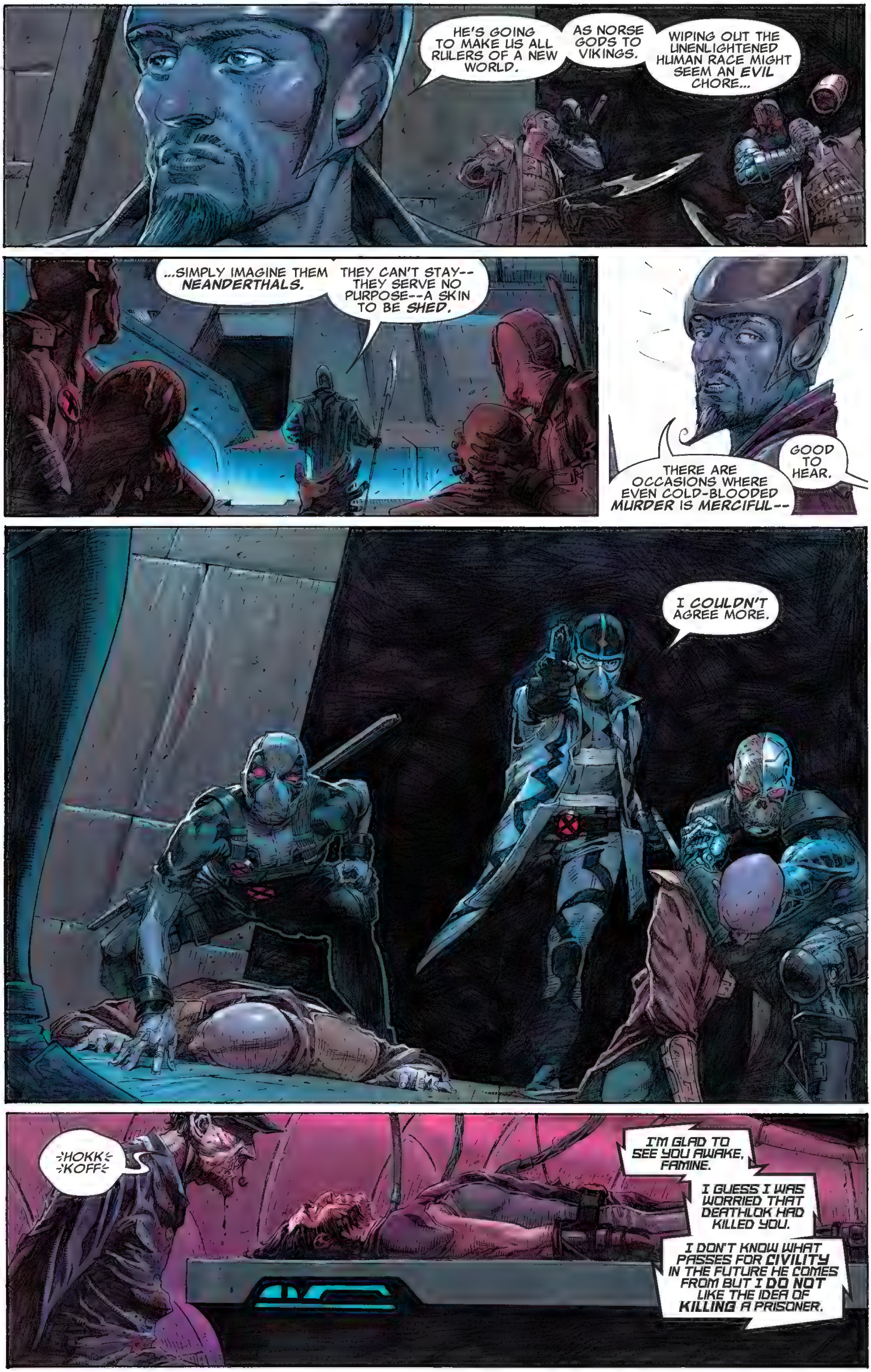


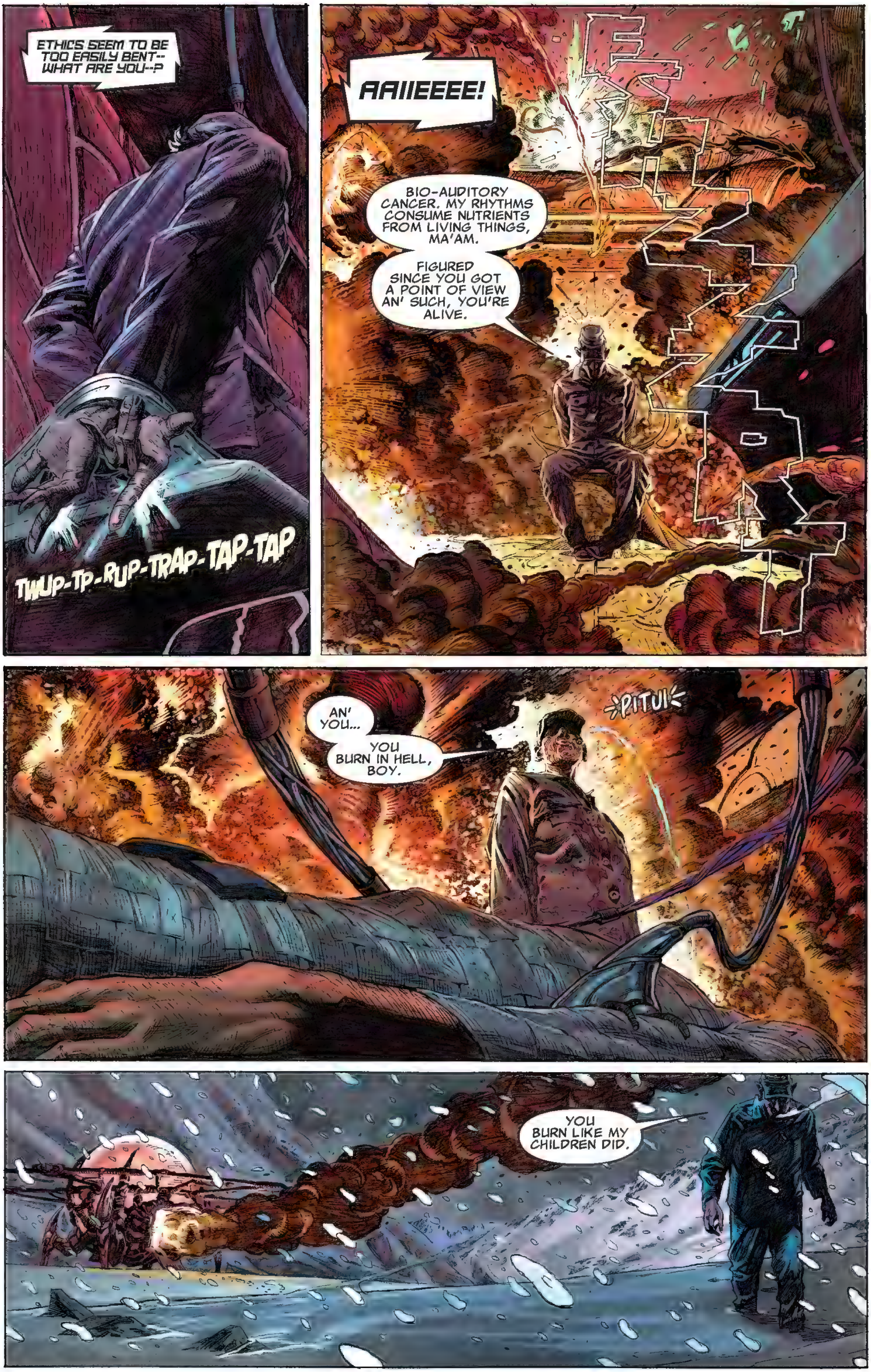
UNCANNY X-FORCE 16 MARVEL 50TH ANNIVERSARY VARIANT
ART BY MICHAEL DEL MUNDO

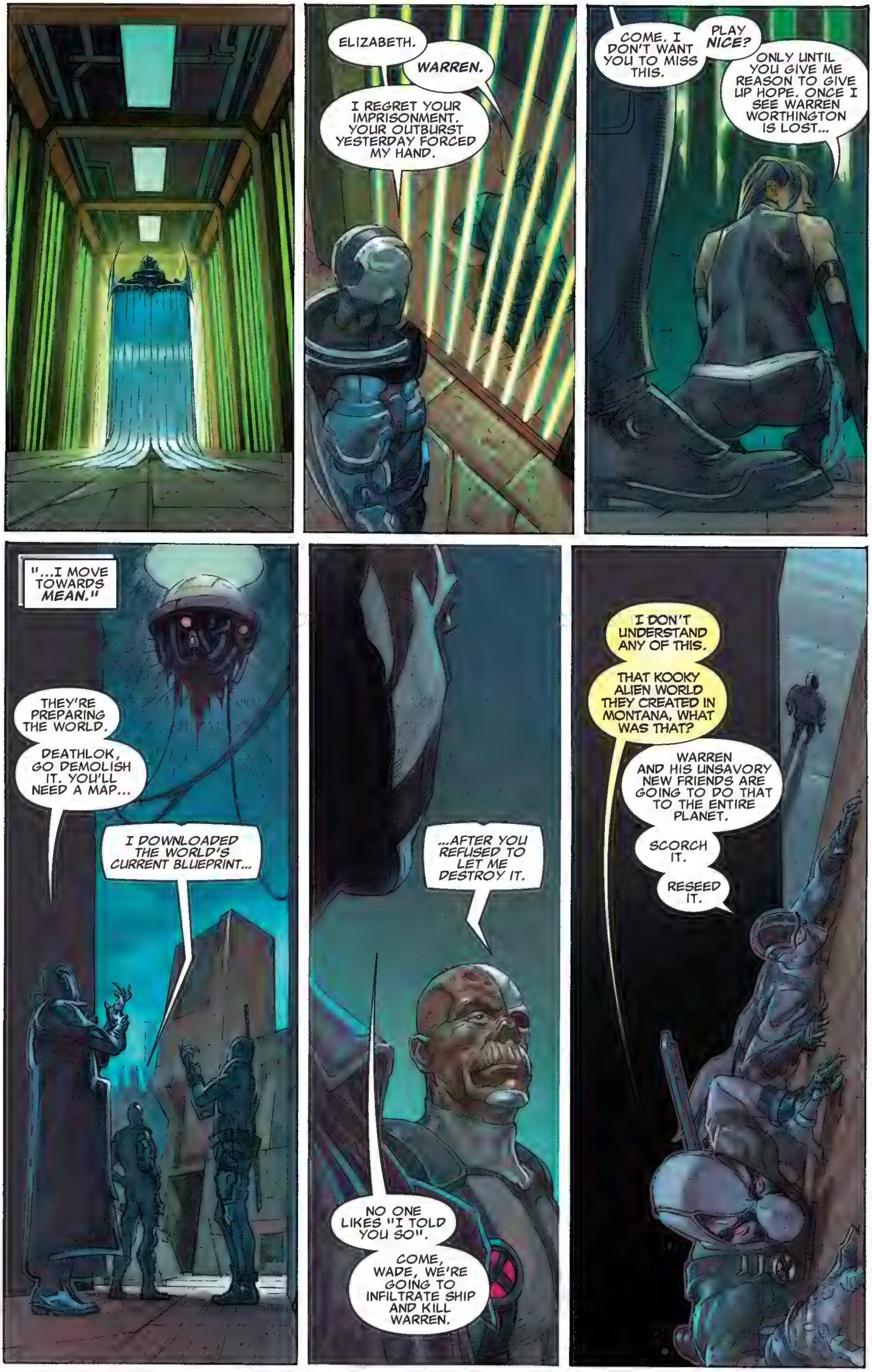
16 THE DARK ANGEL SAGA

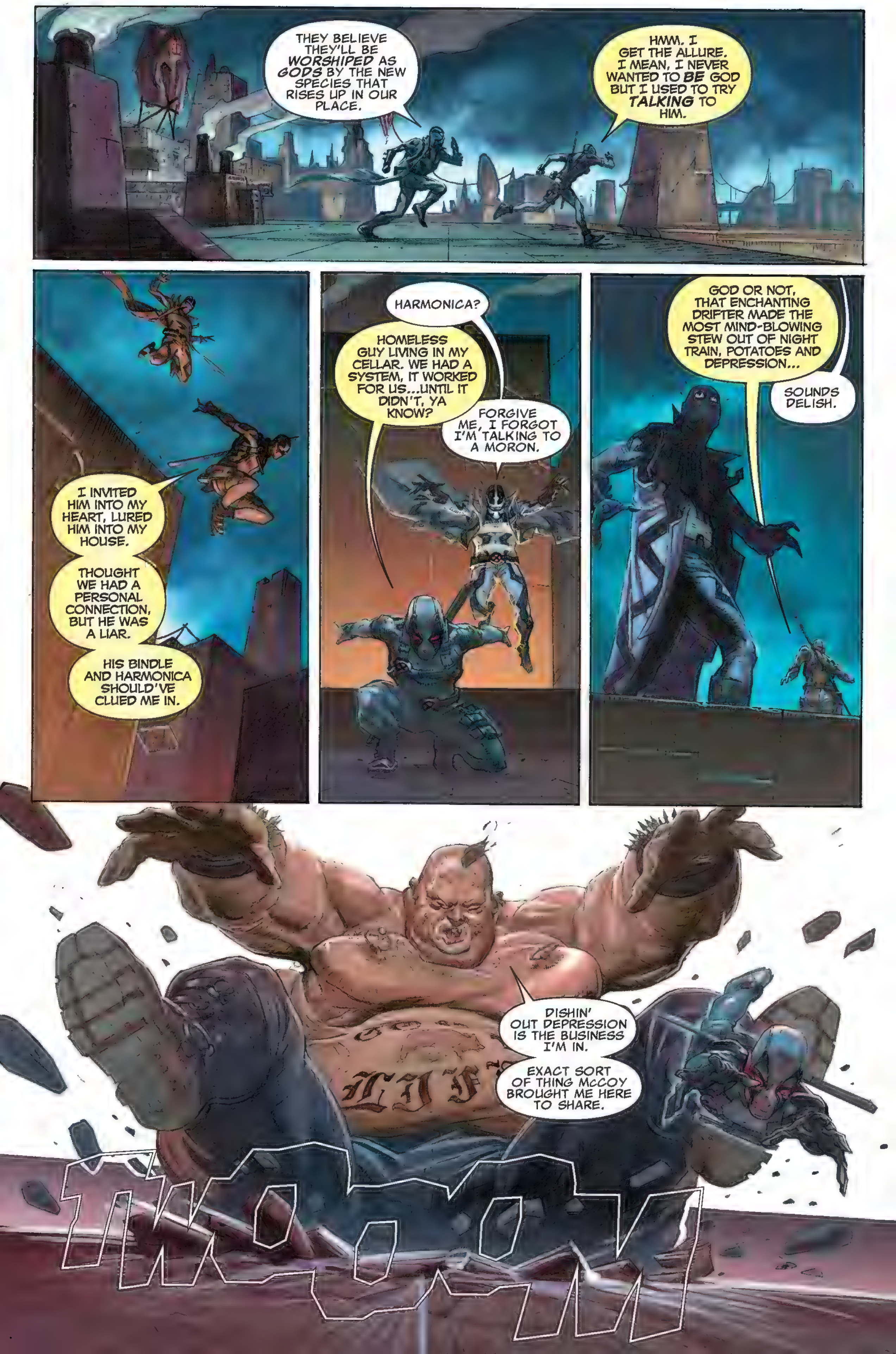
CHAPTER 6: NO SUCH THING

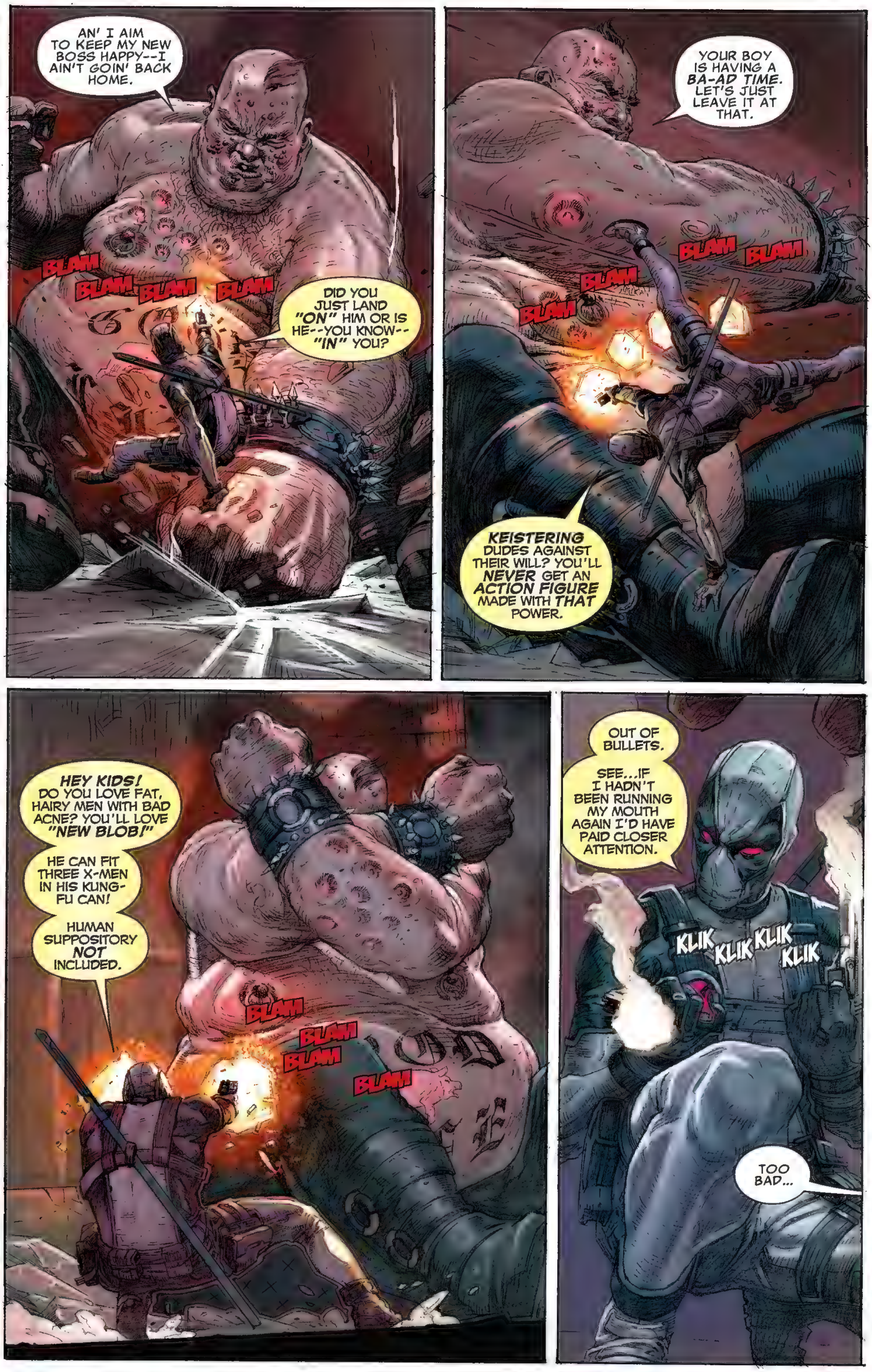

THE FORMER'S DREAM AGAIN.
REVERTS ME TO HIS SHAPE.
REMINDS ME OF WHO HE WAS...
A LOVELY BIRD WITH CLIPPED WINGS.
THE DREAM IS A GHOST, THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A DEAD CHILD STILL PINING FOR HIS "TRUE" LOVE.
ARCHANGEL...?
COLLECT YOURSELF, PESTILENCE.
IT IS TIME.
EVERYTHING IS READY.
I AM NOT MIRED BY LOW MYTHOLOGY SUCH AS LOVE.
I HAVE SEEN THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH--I KNOW FOR CERTAIN...
...THERE IS NO SUCH THING.
I KNOW THERE ARE *CONCERNS* AMONG SOME OF YOU, *MISGIVINGS* WITH THE SEVERITY OF OUR MISSION.
PEOPLE ALWAYS TALK. SECRETS SPILL.

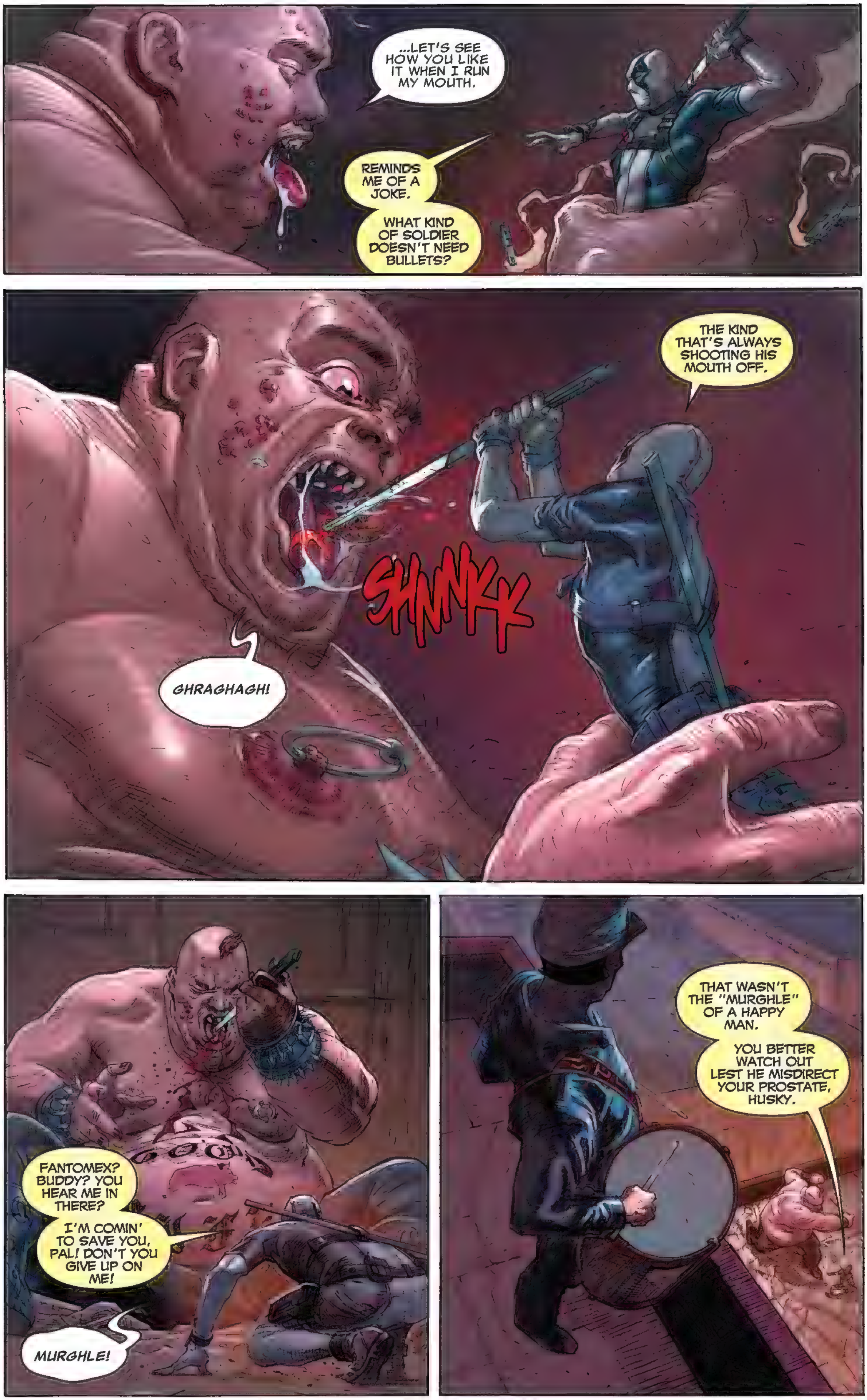

HE'S GOING TO MAKE US ALL RULERS OF A NEW WORLD.
AS NORSE GODS TO VIKINGS.
WIPING OUT THE UNENLIGHTENED HUMAN RACE MIGHT SEEM AN *EVIL* CHORE...
...SIMPLY IMAGINE THEM *NEANDERTHALS.*
THEY CAN'T STAY-- THEY SERVE NO PURPOSE--A SKIN TO BE *SHED.*
THERE ARE OCCASIONS WHERE EVEN COLD-BLOODED *MURDER* IS *MERCIFUL*--
GOOD TO HEAR.
I *COULDN'T* AGREE MORE.
HOKK KOFF
I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU AWAKE, FAMINE.
I GUESS I WAS WORRIED THAT DEATHLOK HAD KILLED YOU.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT PASSES FOR *CIVILITY* IN THE FUTURE HE COMES FROM BUT I *DO NOT* LIKE THE IDEA OF *KILLING* A PRISONER.

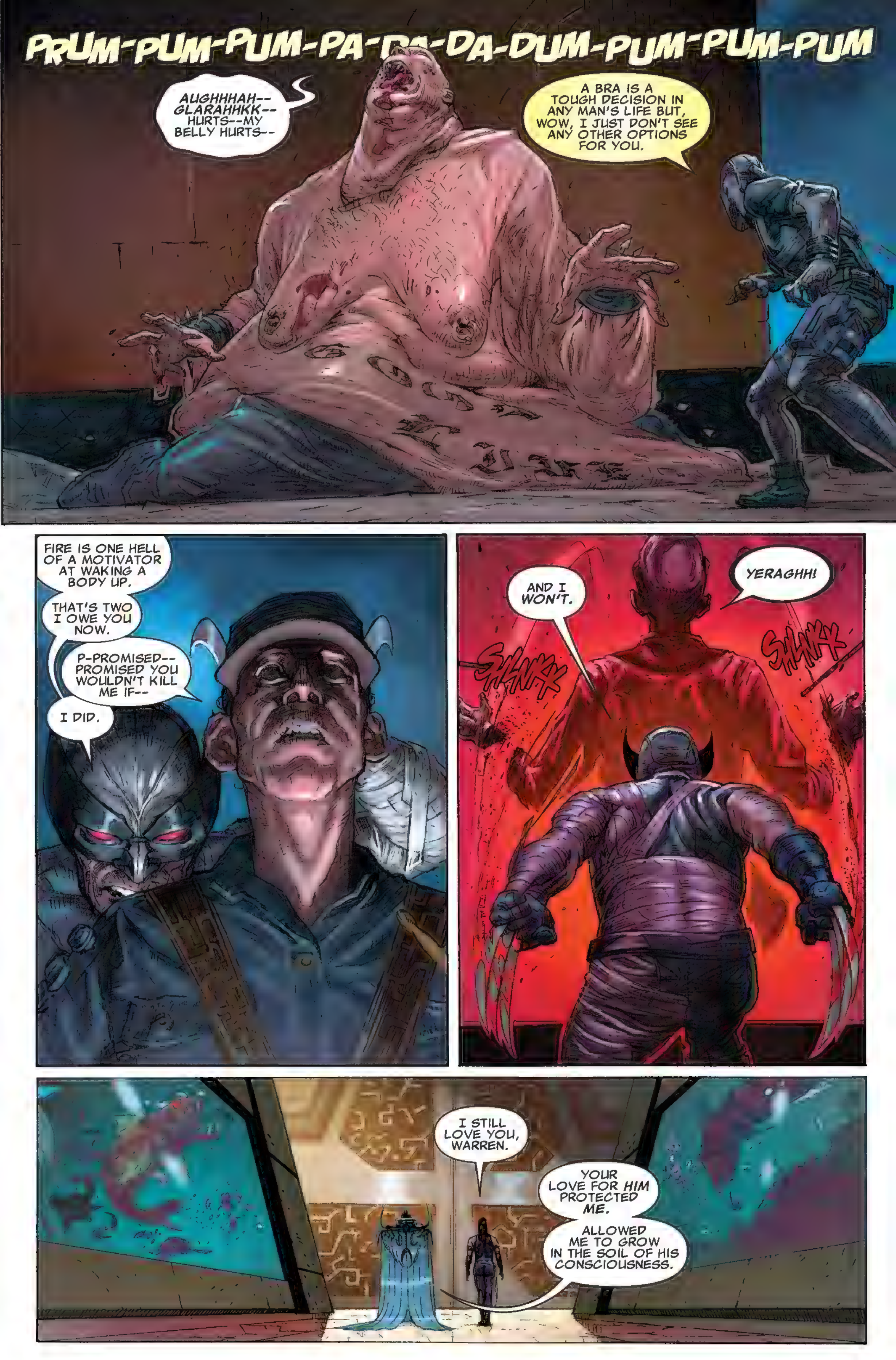

ETHICS SEEM TO BE TOO EASILY BENT-- WHAT ARE YOU--?
TWUP-TP-RUP-TRAP-TAP-TAP
AAIIEEEE!
BIO-AUDITORY CANCER. MY RHYTHMS CONSUME NUTRIENTS FROM LIVING THINGS, MA'AM.
FIGURED SINCE YOU GOT A POINT OF VIEW AN' SUCH, YOU'RE ALIVE.
AN' YOU...
YOU BURN IN HELL, BOY.
PITUI
YOU BURN LIKE MY CHILDREN DID.

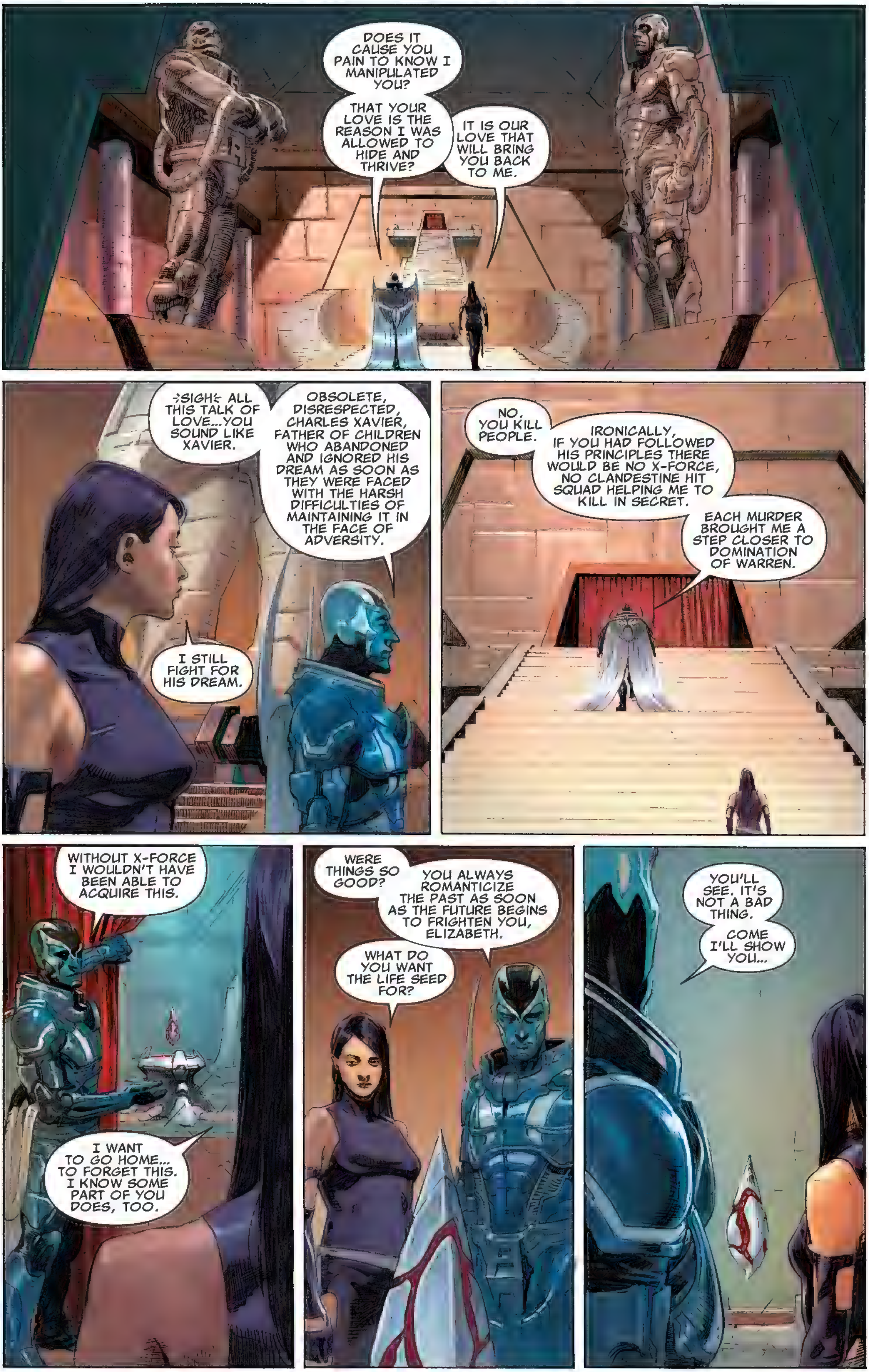

ELIZABETH.
WARREN.
I REGRET YOUR IMPRISONMENT. YOUR OUTBURST YESTERDAY FORCED MY HAND.
COME. I DON'T WANT YOU TO MISS THIS.
PLAY NICE?
ONLY UNTIL YOU GIVE ME REASON TO GIVE UP HOPE. ONCE I SEE WARREN WORTHINGTON IS LOST...
"...I MOVE TOWARDS MEAN."
THEY'RE PREPARING THE WORLD.
DEATHLOK, GO DEMOLISH IT. YOU'LL NEED A MAP...
I DOWNLOADED THE WORLD'S CURRENT BLUEPRINT...
...AFTER YOU REFUSED TO LET ME DESTROY IT.
NO ONE LIKES "I TOLD YOU SO".
COME, WADE, WE'RE GOING TO INFILTRATE SHIP AND KILL WARREN.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS.
THAT KOOKY ALIEN WORLD THEY CREATED IN MONTANA, WHAT WAS THAT?
WARREN AND HIS UNSAVORY NEW FRIENDS ARE GOING TO DO THAT TO THE ENTIRE PLANET.
SCORCH IT.
RESEED IT.

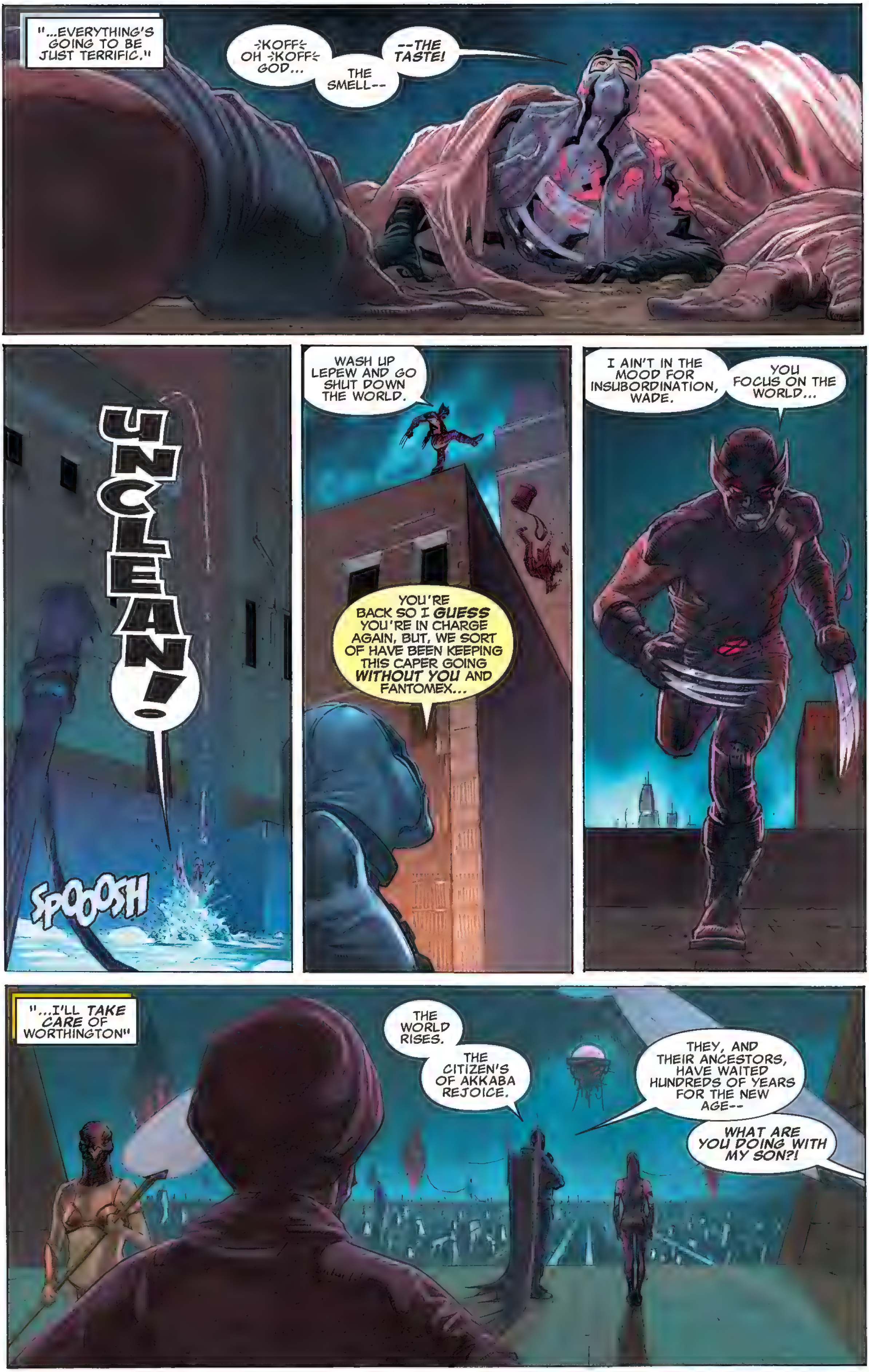

THEY BELIEVE THEY'LL BE WORSHIPED AS GODS BY THE NEW SPECIES THAT RISES UP IN OUR PLACE.
HMM. I GET THE ALLURE. I MEAN, I NEVER WANTED TO BE GOD BUT I USED TO TRY TALKING TO HIM.
I INVITED HIM INTO MY HEART, LURED HIM INTO MY HOUSE.
THOUGHT WE HAD A PERSONAL CONNECTION, BUT HE WAS A LIAR.
HIS BINDLE AND HARMONICA SHOULD'VE CLUED ME IN.
HARMONICA?
HOMELESS GUY LIVING IN MY CELLAR. WE HAD A SYSTEM, IT WORKED FOR US...UNTIL IT DIDN'T, YA KNOW?
FORGIVE ME, I FORGOT I'M TALKING TO A MORON.
GOD OR NOT, THAT ENCHANTING DRIFTER MADE THE MOST MIND-BLOWING STEW OUT OF NIGHT TRAIN, POTATOES AND DEPRESSION...
SOUNDS DELISH.
DISHIN' OUT DEPRESSION IS THE BUSINESS I'M IN.
EXACT SORT OF THING McCOY BROUGHT ME HERE TO SHARE.
THOOOM

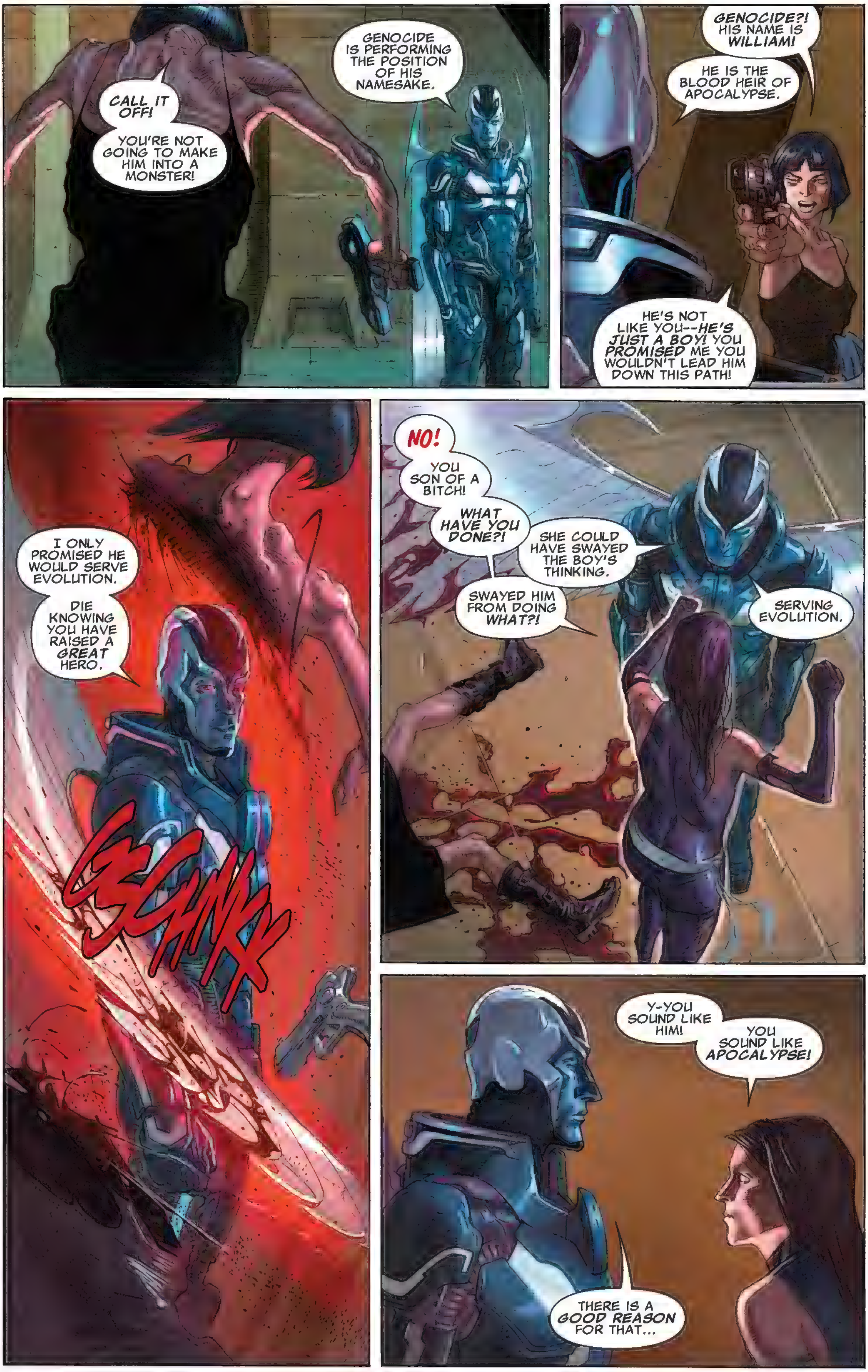

AN' I AIM TO KEEP MY NEW BOSS HAPPY--I AIN'T GOIN' BACK HOME.
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
DID YOU JUST LAND "ON" HIM OR IS HE--YOU KNOW--"IN" YOU?
YOUR BOY IS HAVING A BA-AD TIME. LET'S JUST LEAVE IT AT THAT.
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
KEISTERING DUDES AGAINST THEIR WILL? YOU'LL NEVER GET AN ACTION FIGURE MADE WITH THAT POWER.
HEY KIDS! DO YOU LOVE FAT, HAIRY MEN WITH BAD ACNE? YOU'LL LOVE "NEW BLOB!"
HE CAN FIT THREE X-MEN IN HIS KUNG-FU CAN!
HUMAN SUPPOSITORY NOT INCLUDED.
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
OUT OF BULLETS.
SEE...IF I HADN'T BEEN RUNNING MY MOUTH AGAIN I'D HAVE PAID CLOSER ATTENTION.
KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK
TOO BAD...

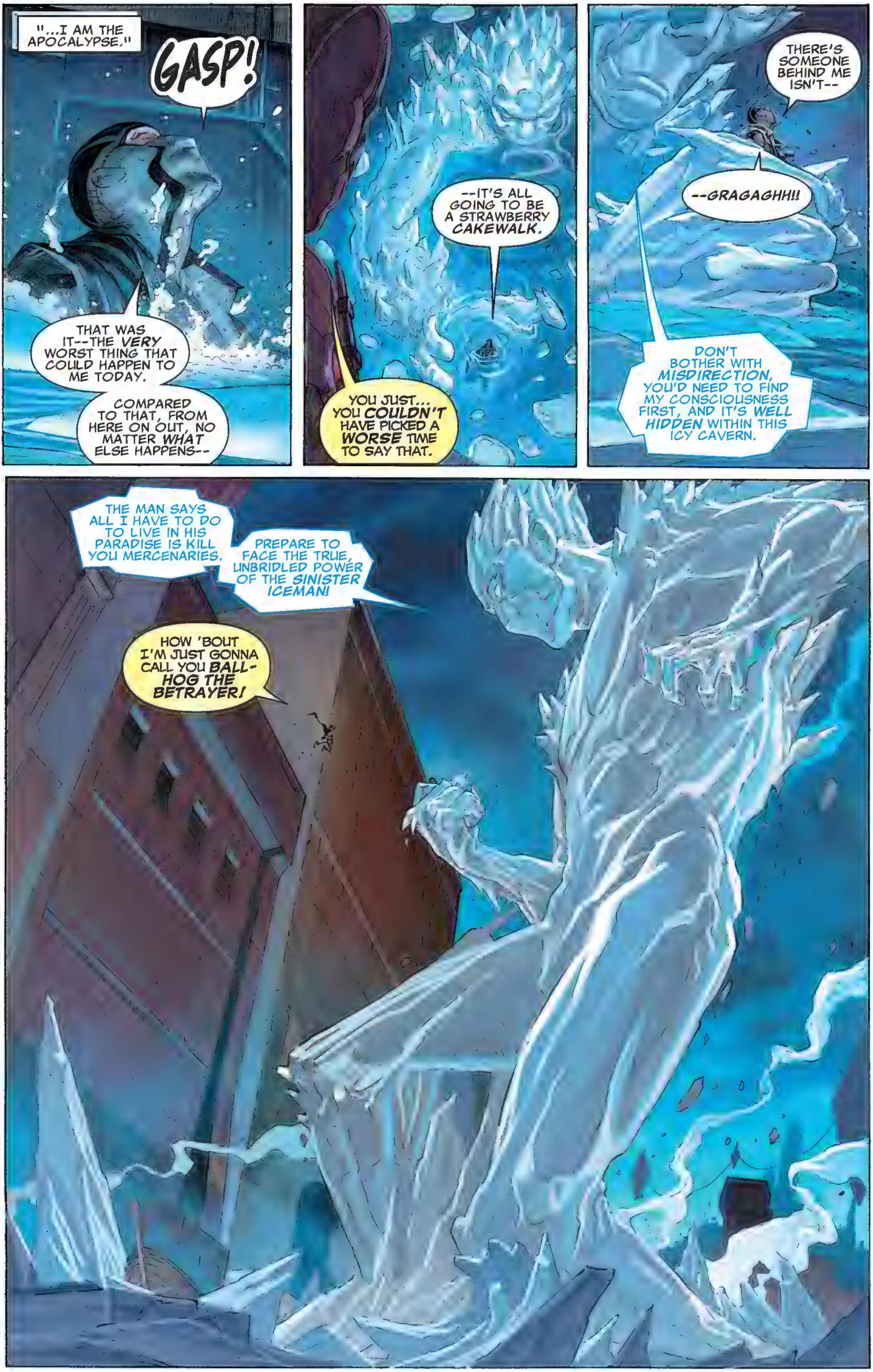

...LET'S SEE HOW YOU LIKE IT WHEN I RUN MY MOUTH.
REMINDS ME OF A JOKE.
WHAT KIND OF SOLDIER DOESN'T NEED BULLETS?
THE KIND THAT'S ALWAYS SHOOTING HIS MOUTH OFF.
SHNNKK
GHRAGHAGH!
FANTOMEX? BUDDY? YOU HEAR ME IN THERE?
I'M COMIN' TO SAVE YOU, PAL! DON'T YOU GIVE UP ON ME!
MURGHLE!
THAT WASN'T THE "MURGHLE" OF A HAPPY MAN.
YOU BETTER WATCH OUT LEST HE MISDIRECT YOUR PROSTATE, HUSKY.

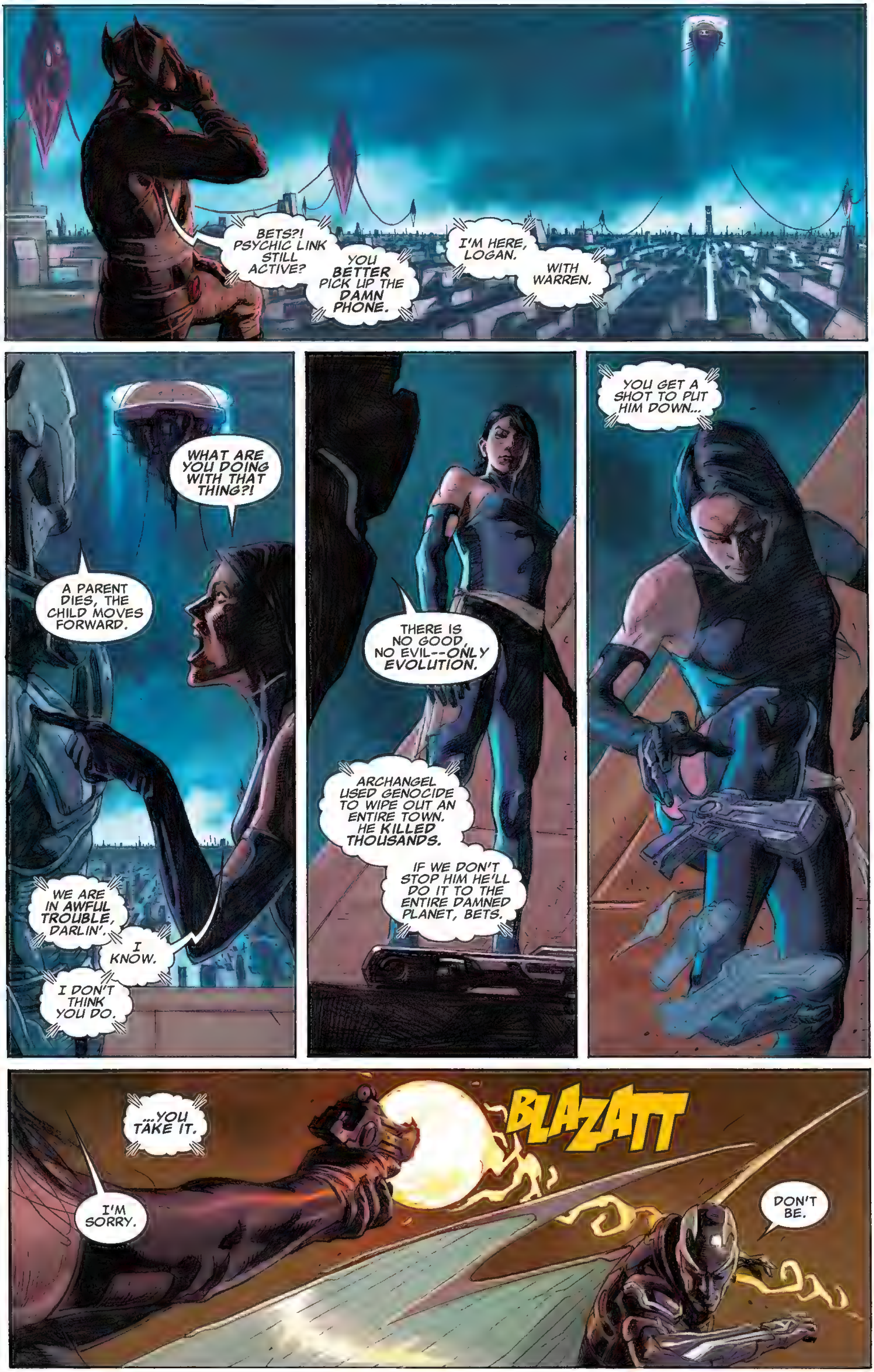

PRUM-PUM-PUM-PA-PA-DA-DUM-PUM-PUM-PUM
AUGHHHAH-- GLARAHHKK-- HURTS--MY BELLY HURTS--
A BRA IS A TOUGH DECISION IN ANY MAN'S LIFE BUT, WOW, I JUST DON'T SEE ANY OTHER OPTIONS FOR YOU.
FIRE IS ONE HELL OF A MOTIVATOR AT WAKING A BODY UP.
THAT'S TWO I OWE YOU NOW.
P-PROMISED-- PROMISED YOU WOULDN'T KILL ME IF--
I DID.
AND I WON'T.
YERAGHH!
SHLNKK
SHLNKK
I STILL LOVE YOU, WARREN.
YOUR LOVE FOR HIM PROTECTED ME.
ALLOWED ME TO GROW IN THE SOIL OF HIS CONSCIOUSNESS.

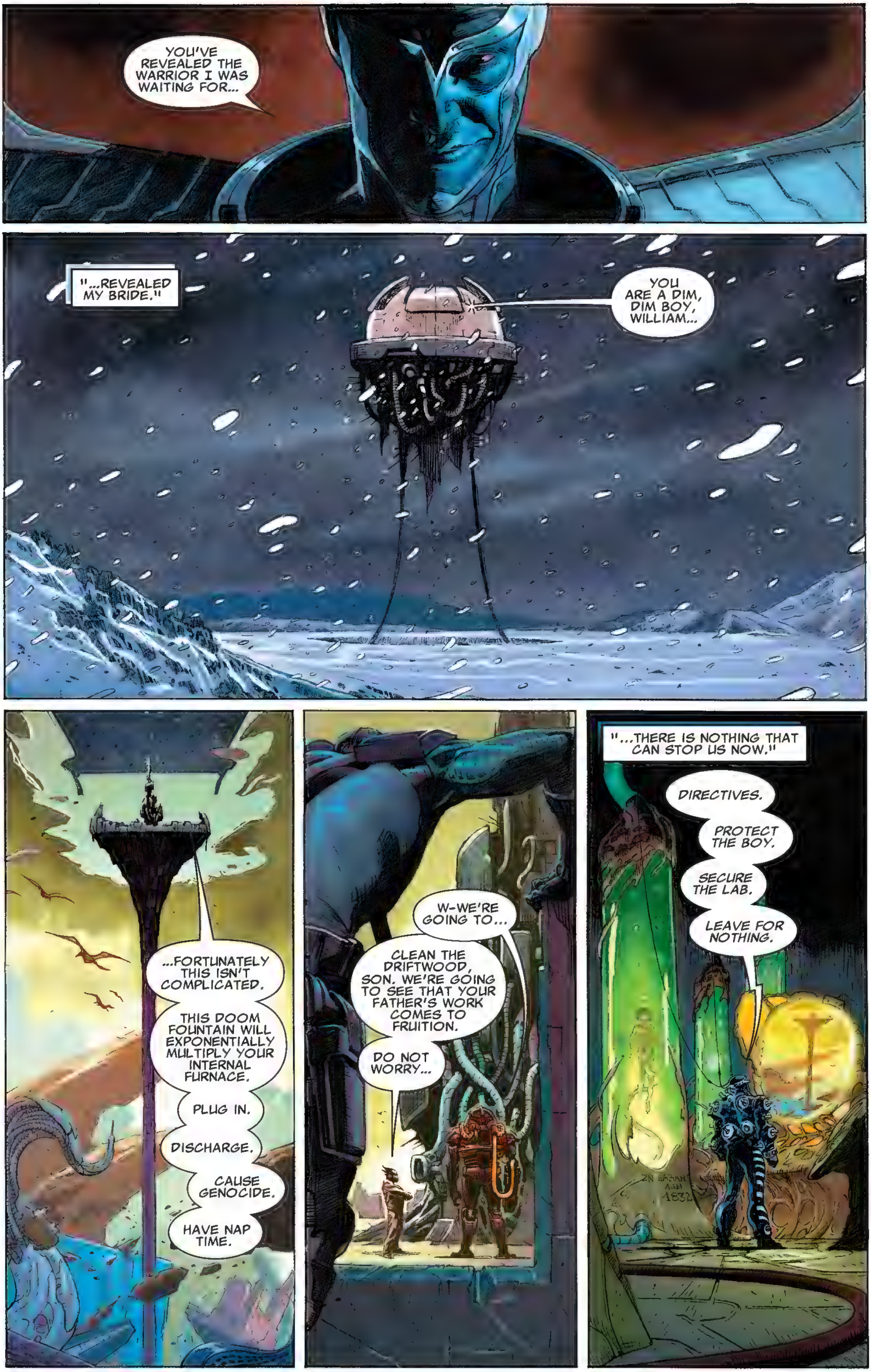

DOES IT CAUSE YOU PAIN TO KNOW I MANIPULATED YOU?
THAT YOUR LOVE IS THE REASON I WAS ALLOWED TO HIDE AND THRIVE?
IT IS OUR LOVE THAT WILL BRING YOU BACK TO ME.
SIGH ALL THIS TALK OF LOVE...YOU SOUND LIKE XAVIER.
OBSOLETE, DISRESPECTED, CHARLES XAVIER, FATHER OF CHILDREN WHO ABANDONED AND IGNORED HIS DREAM AS SOON AS THEY WERE FACED WITH THE HARSH DIFFICULTIES OF MAINTAINING IT IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.
I STILL FIGHT FOR HIS DREAM.
NO. YOU KILL PEOPLE.
IRONICALLY, IF YOU HAD FOLLOWED HIS PRINCIPLES THERE WOULD BE NO X-FORCE, NO CLANDESTINE HIT SQUAD HELPING ME TO KILL IN SECRET.
EACH MURDER BROUGHT ME A STEP CLOSER TO DOMINATION OF WARREN.
WITHOUT X-FORCE I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACQUIRE THIS.
I WANT TO GO HOME... TO FORGET THIS. I KNOW SOME PART OF YOU DOES, TOO.
WERE THINGS SO GOOD?
YOU ALWAYS ROMANTICIZE THE PAST AS SOON AS THE FUTURE BEGINS TO FRIGHTEN YOU, ELIZABETH.
WHAT DO YOU WANT THE LIFE SEED FOR?
YOU'LL SEE. IT'S NOT A BAD THING.
COME I'LL SHOW YOU...

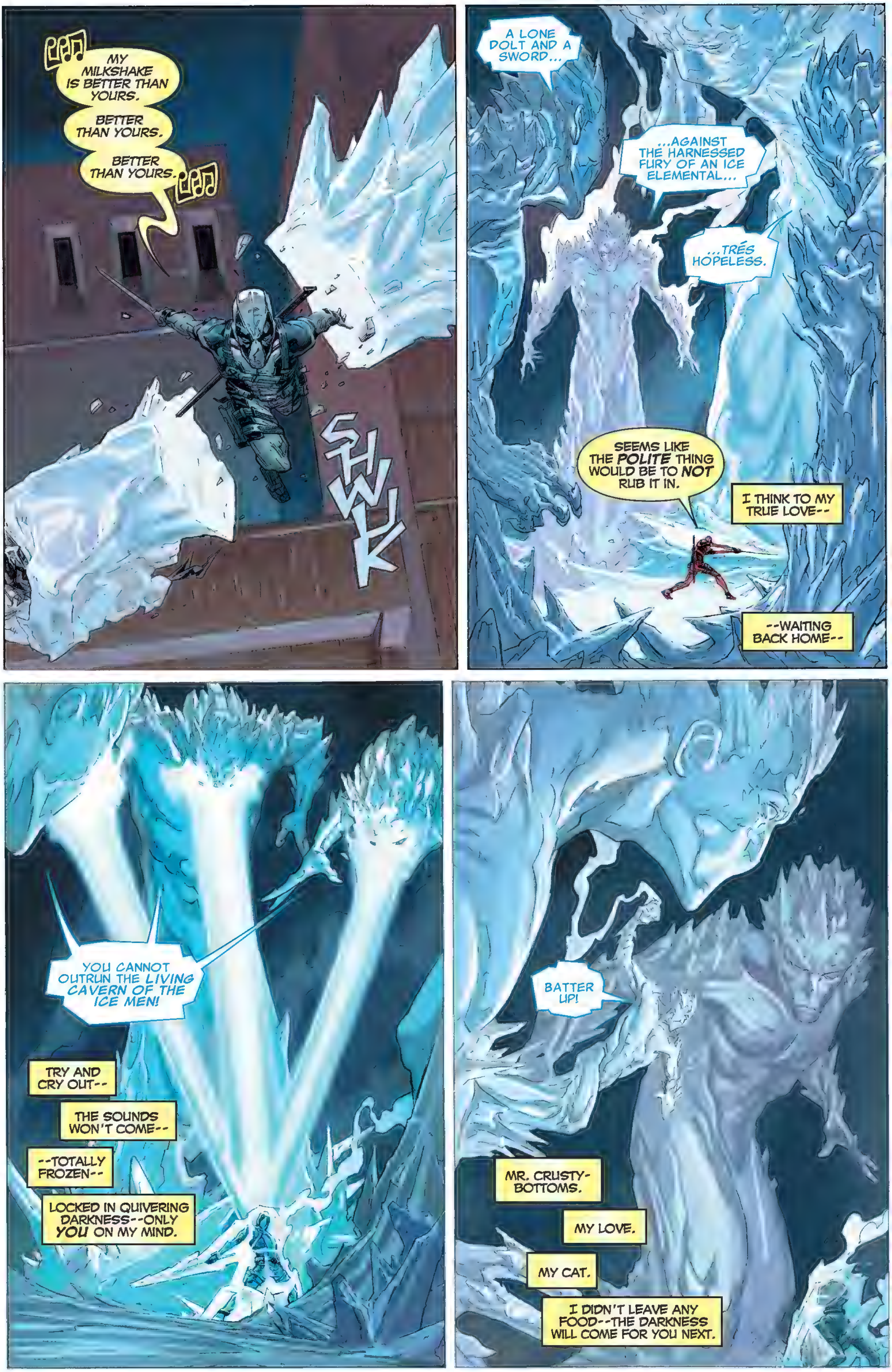

"...EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE JUST TERRIFIC."
KOFF OH KOFF GOD...
THE SMELL--
--THE TASTE!
UNCLEAN!
SPOOOSH
WASH UP LEPEW AND GO SHUT DOWN THE WORLD.
YOU'RE BACK SO I GUESS YOU'RE IN CHARGE AGAIN, BUT, WE SORT OF HAVE BEEN KEEPING THIS CAPER GOING WITHOUT YOU AND FANTOMEX...
I AIN'T IN THE MOOD FOR INSUBORDINATION, WADE.
YOU FOCUS ON THE WORLD...
"...I'LL TAKE CARE OF WORTHINGTON"
THE WORLD RISES.
THE CITIZEN'S OF AKKABA REJOICE.
THEY, AND THEIR ANCESTORS, HAVE WAITED HUNDREDS OF YEARS FOR THE NEW AGE--
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY SON?!

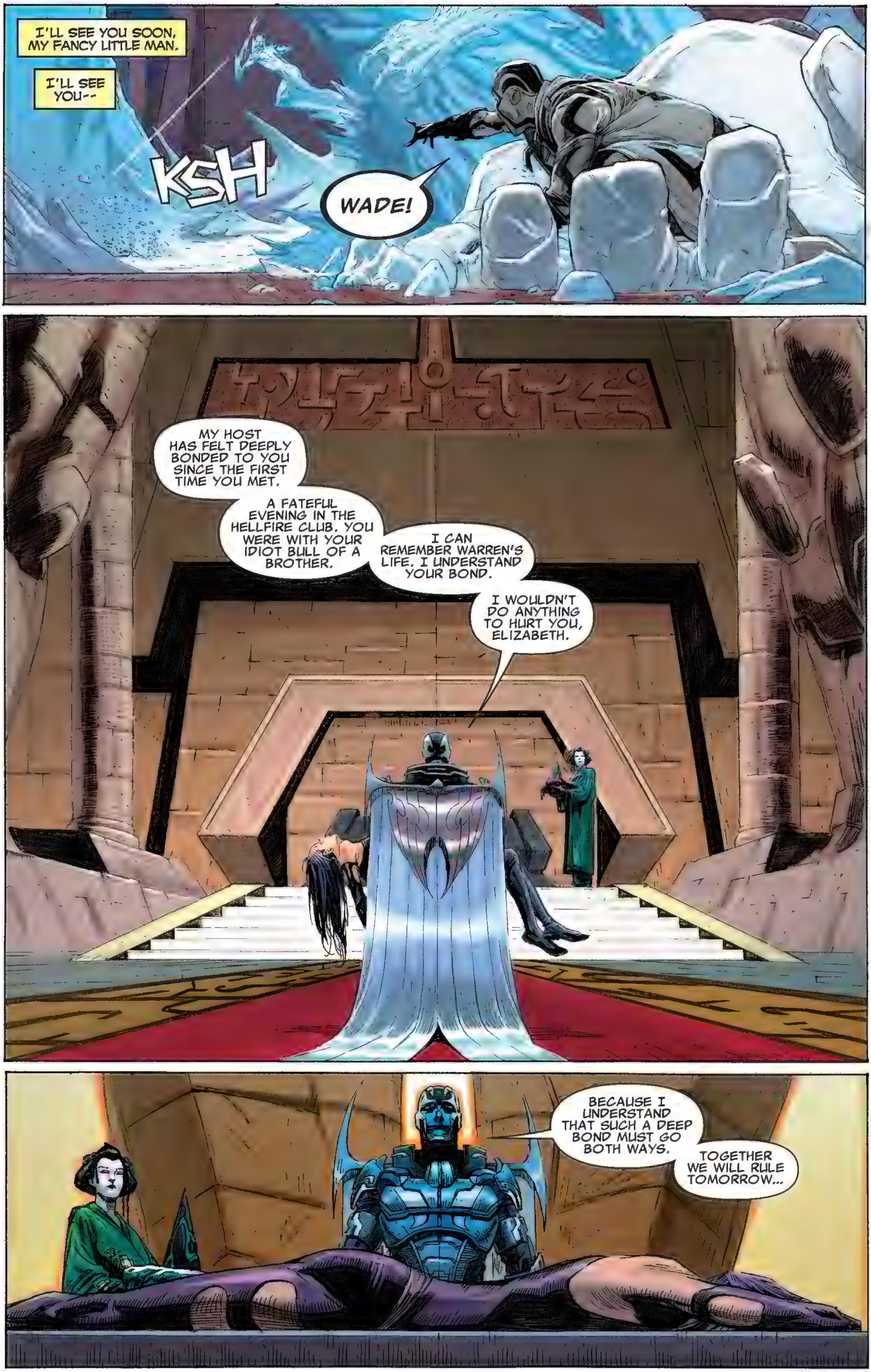

CALL IT OFF!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE HIM INTO A MONSTER!
GENOCIDE IS PERFORMING THE POSITION OF HIS NAMESAKE.
GENOCIDE?! HIS NAME IS WILLIAM!
HE IS THE BLOOD HEIR OF APOCALYPSE.
HE'S NOT LIKE YOU--HE'S JUST A BOY! YOU PROMISED ME YOU WOULDN'T LEAD HIM DOWN THIS PATH!
I ONLY PROMISED HE WOULD SERVE EVOLUTION.
DIE KNOWING YOU HAVE RAISED A GREAT HERO.
SSHNKK
NO!
YOU SON OF A BITCH!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
SHE COULD HAVE SWAYED THE BOY'S THINKING.
SWAYED HIM FROM DOING WHAT?!
SERVING EVOLUTION.
Y-YOU SOUND LIKE HIM!
YOU SOUND LIKE APOCALYPSE!
THERE IS A GOOD REASON FOR THAT...

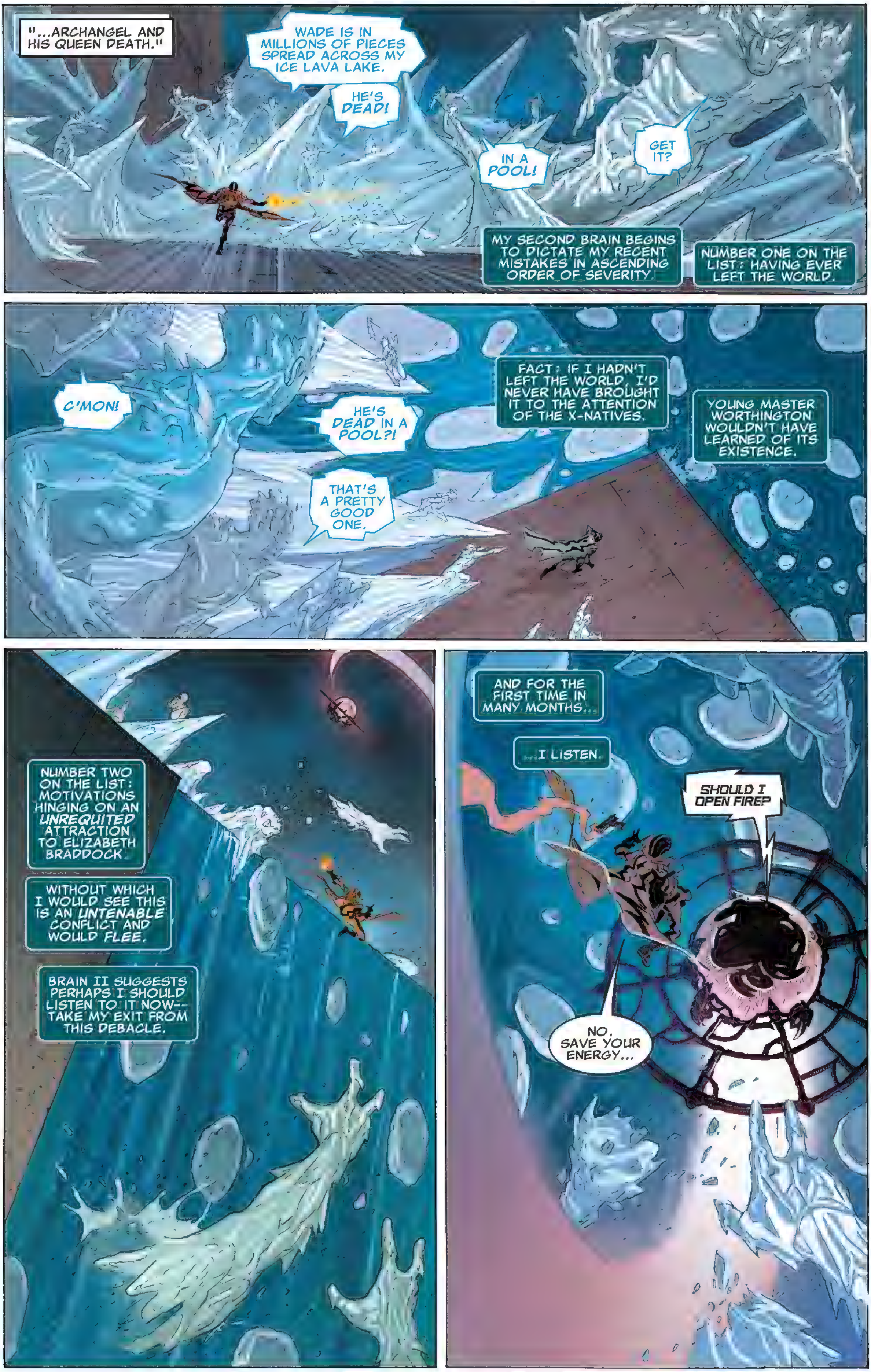

"...I AM THE APOCALYPSE."
GASP!
THAT WAS IT--THE VERY WORST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN TO ME TODAY.
COMPARED TO THAT, FROM HERE ON OUT, NO MATTER WHAT ELSE HAPPENS--
--IT'S ALL GOING TO BE A STRAWBERRY CAKEWALK.
YOU JUST... YOU COULDN'T HAVE PICKED A WORSE TIME TO SAY THAT.
THERE'S SOMEONE BEHIND ME ISN'T--
--GRAGAGHH!!
DON'T BOTHER WITH MISDIRECTION, YOU'D NEED TO FIND MY CONSCIOUSNESS FIRST, AND IT'S WELL HIDDEN WITHIN THIS ICY CAVERN.
THE MAN SAYS ALL I HAVE TO DO TO LIVE IN HIS PARADISE IS KILL YOU MERCENARIES.
PREPARE TO FACE THE TRUE, UNBRIDLED POWER OF THE SINISTER ICEMAN!
HOW 'BOUT I'M JUST GONNA CALL YOU BALL-HOG THE BETRAYER!

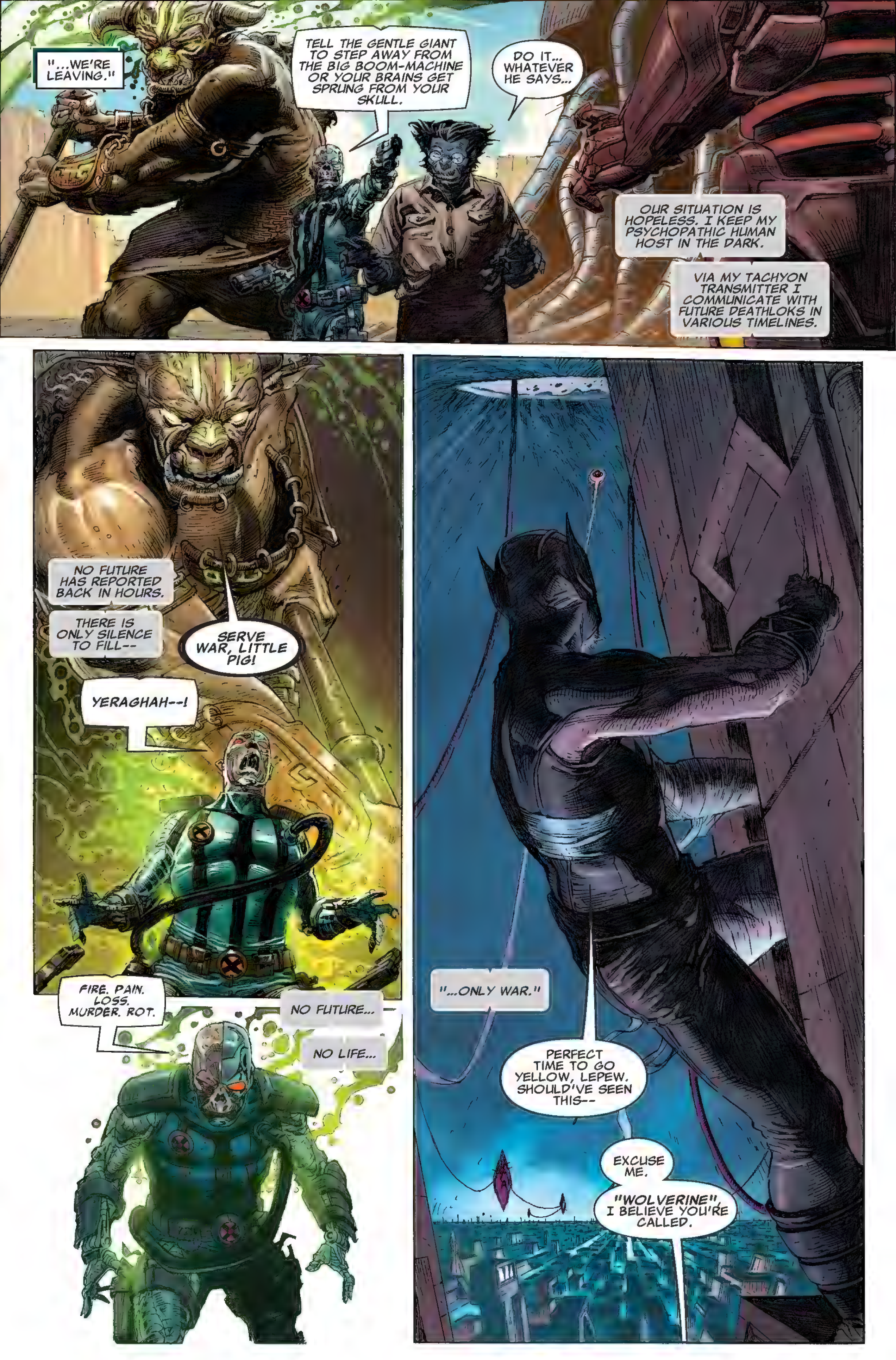

BETS?! PSYCHIC LINK STILL ACTIVE?
YOU BETTER PICK UP THE DAMN PHONE.
I'M HERE, LOGAN.
WITH WARREN.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT THING?!
A PARENT DIES, THE CHILD MOVES FORWARD.
WE ARE IN AWFUL TROUBLE, DARLIN'.
I KNOW.
I DON'T THINK YOU DO.
THERE IS NO GOOD, NO EVIL--ONLY EVOLUTION.
ARCHANGEL USED GENOCIDE TO WIPE OUT AN ENTIRE TOWN. HE KILLED THOUSANDS.
IF WE DON'T STOP HIM HE'LL DO IT TO THE ENTIRE DAMNED PLANET, BETS.
YOU GET A SHOT TO PUT HIM DOWN...
...YOU TAKE IT.
I'M SORRY.
BLAZATT
DON'T BE.

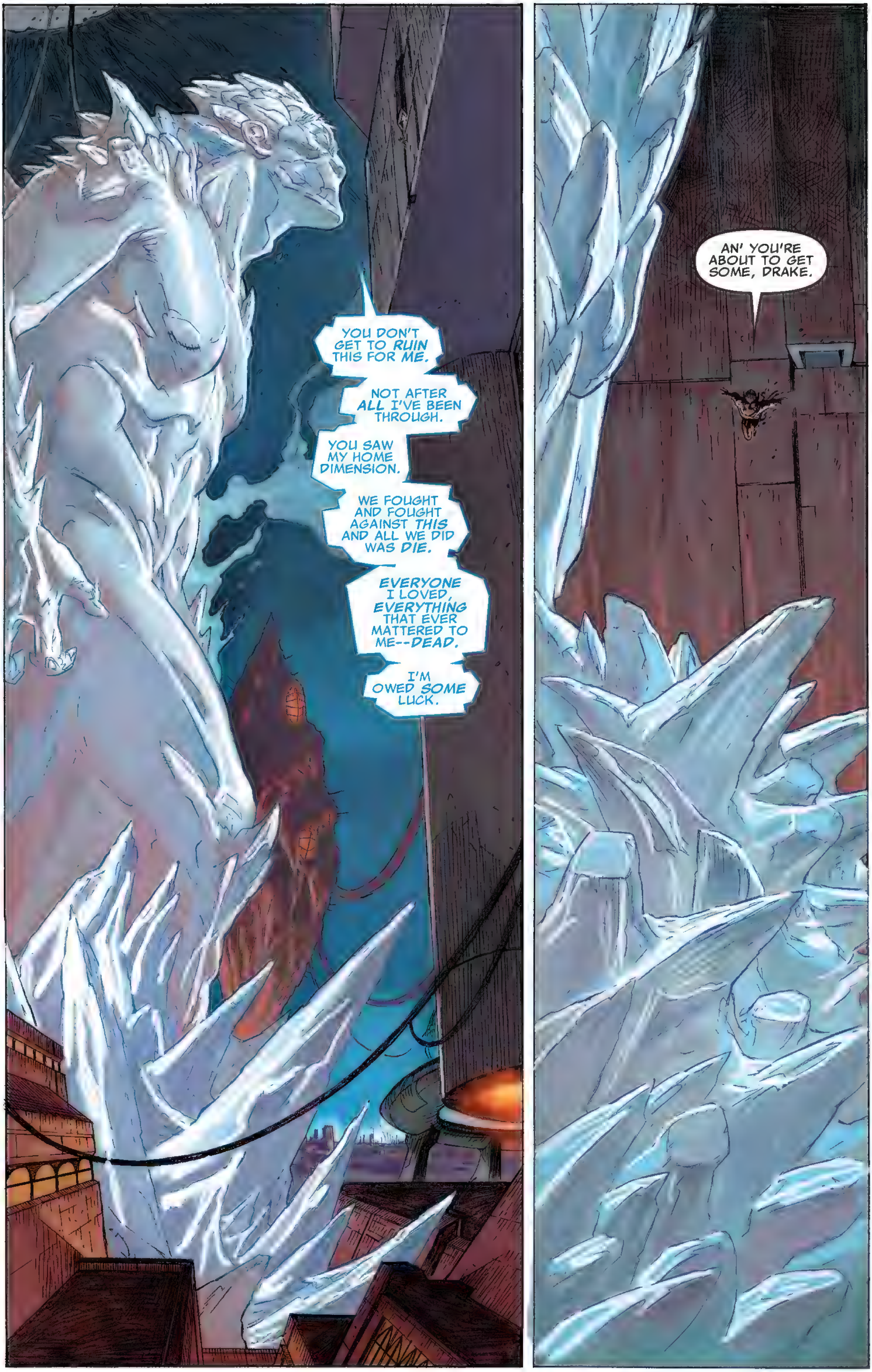

YOU'VE REVEALED THE WARRIOR I WAS WAITING FOR...
"...REVEALED MY BRIDE."
YOU ARE A DIM, DIM BOY, WILLIAM...
...FORTUNATELY THIS ISN'T COMPLICATED.
THIS DOOM FOUNTAIN WILL EXPONENTIALLY MULTIPLY YOUR INTERNAL FURNACE.
PLUG IN.
DISCHARGE.
CAUSE GENOCIDE.
HAVE NAP TIME.
W-WE'RE GOING TO...
CLEAN THE DRIFTWOOD, SON. WE'RE GOING TO SEE THAT YOUR FATHER'S WORK COMES TO FRUITION.
DO NOT WORRY...
"...THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN STOP US NOW."
DIRECTIVES.
PROTECT THE BOY.
SECURE THE LAB.
LEAVE FOR NOTHING.

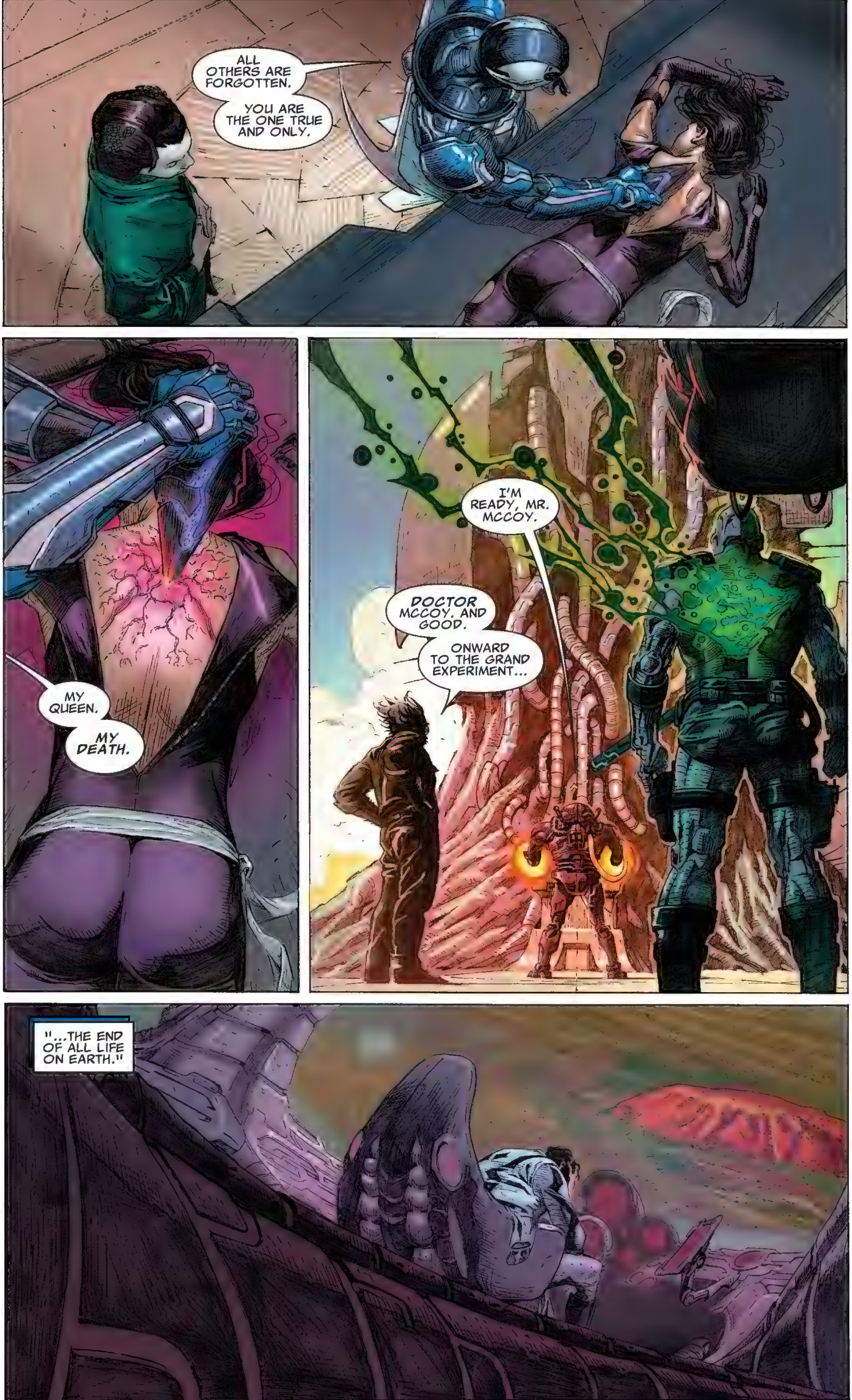

MY MILKSHAKE IS BETTER THAN YOURS.
BETTER THAN YOURS.
BETTER THAN YOURS.
SHWIK
A LONE DOLT AND A SWORD...
...AGAINST THE HARNESSED FURY OF AN ICE ELEMENTAL...
...TRÉS HOPELESS.
SEEMS LIKE THE *POLITE* THING WOULD BE TO *NOT* RUB IT IN.
I THINK TO MY TRUE LOVE--
--WAITING BACK HOME--
YOU CANNOT OUTRUN THE *LIVING CAVERN OF THE ICE MEN!*
TRY AND CRY OUT--
THE SOUNDS WON'T COME--
--TOTALLY FROZEN--
LOCKED IN QUIVERING DARKNESS--ONLY *YOU* ON MY MIND.
BATTER UP!
MR. CRUSTY-BOTTOMS.
MY LOVE.
MY CAT.
I DIDN'T LEAVE ANY FOOD--THE DARKNESS WILL COME FOR YOU NEXT.


I'LL SEE YOU SOON, MY FANCY LITTLE MAN.
I'LL SEE YOU--
KSH
WADE!
MY HOST HAS FELT DEEPLY BONDED TO YOU SINCE THE FIRST TIME YOU MET.
A FATEFUL EVENING IN THE HELLFIRE CLUB. YOU WERE WITH YOUR IDIOT BULL OF A BROTHER.
I CAN REMEMBER WARREN'S LIFE. I UNDERSTAND YOUR BOND.
I WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HURT YOU, ELIZABETH.
BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND THAT SUCH A DEEP BOND MUST GO BOTH WAYS.
TOGETHER WE WILL RULE TOMORROW...


"...ARCHANGEL AND HIS QUEEN DEATH."
WADE IS IN MILLIONS OF PIECES SPREAD ACROSS MY ICE LAVA LAKE.
HE'S *DEAD!*
IN A *POOL!*
GET IT?
MY SECOND BRAIN BEGINS TO DICTATE MY RECENT MISTAKES IN ASCENDING ORDER OF SEVERITY.
NUMBER ONE ON THE LIST: HAVING EVER LEFT THE WORLD.
C'MON!
HE'S *DEAD* IN A *POOL?!*
THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD ONE.
FACT: IF I HADN'T LEFT THE WORLD, I'D NEVER HAVE BROUGHT IT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE X-NATIVES.
YOUNG MASTER WORTHINGTON WOULDN'T HAVE LEARNED OF ITS EXISTENCE.
NUMBER TWO ON THE LIST: MOTIVATIONS HINGING ON AN *UNREQUITED* ATTRACTION TO ELIZABETH BRADDOCK.
WITHOUT WHICH I WOULD SEE THIS IS AN *UNTENABLE* CONFLICT AND WOULD *FLEE.*
BRAIN II SUGGESTS PERHAPS I SHOULD LISTEN TO IT NOW-- TAKE MY EXIT FROM THIS DEBACLE.
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY MONTHS...
...I LISTEN.
SHOULD I OPEN FIRE?
NO, SAVE YOUR ENERGY...

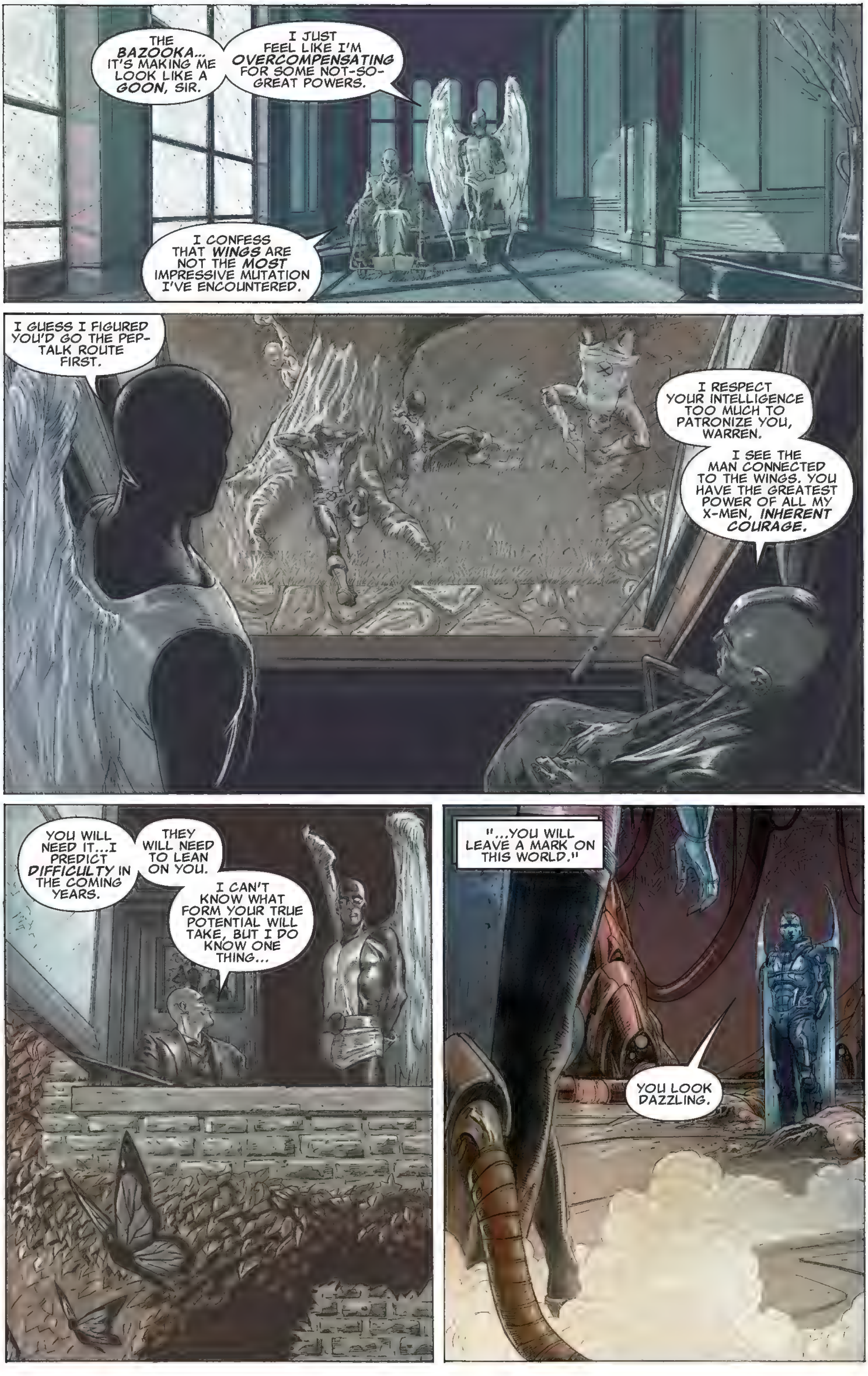

"...WE'RE LEAVING."
TELL THE GENTLE GIANT TO STEP AWAY FROM THE BIG BOOM-MACHINE OR YOUR BRAINS GET SPRUNG FROM YOUR SKULL.
DO IT... WHATEVER HE SAYS...
OUR SITUATION IS HOPELESS. I KEEP MY PSYCHOPATHIC HUMAN HOST IN THE DARK.
VIA MY TACHYON TRANSMITTER I COMMUNICATE WITH FUTURE DEATHLOKS IN VARIOUS TIMELINES.
NO FUTURE HAS REPORTED BACK IN HOURS.
THERE IS ONLY SILENCE TO FILL--
SERVE WAR, LITTLE PIG!
YERAGHAH--!
FIRE. PAIN. LOSS. MURDER. ROT.
NO FUTURE...
NO LIFE...
"...ONLY WAR."
PERFECT TIME TO GO YELLOW, LEPEW. SHOULD'VE SEEN THIS--
EXCUSE ME.
"WOLVERINE", I BELIEVE YOU'RE CALLED.

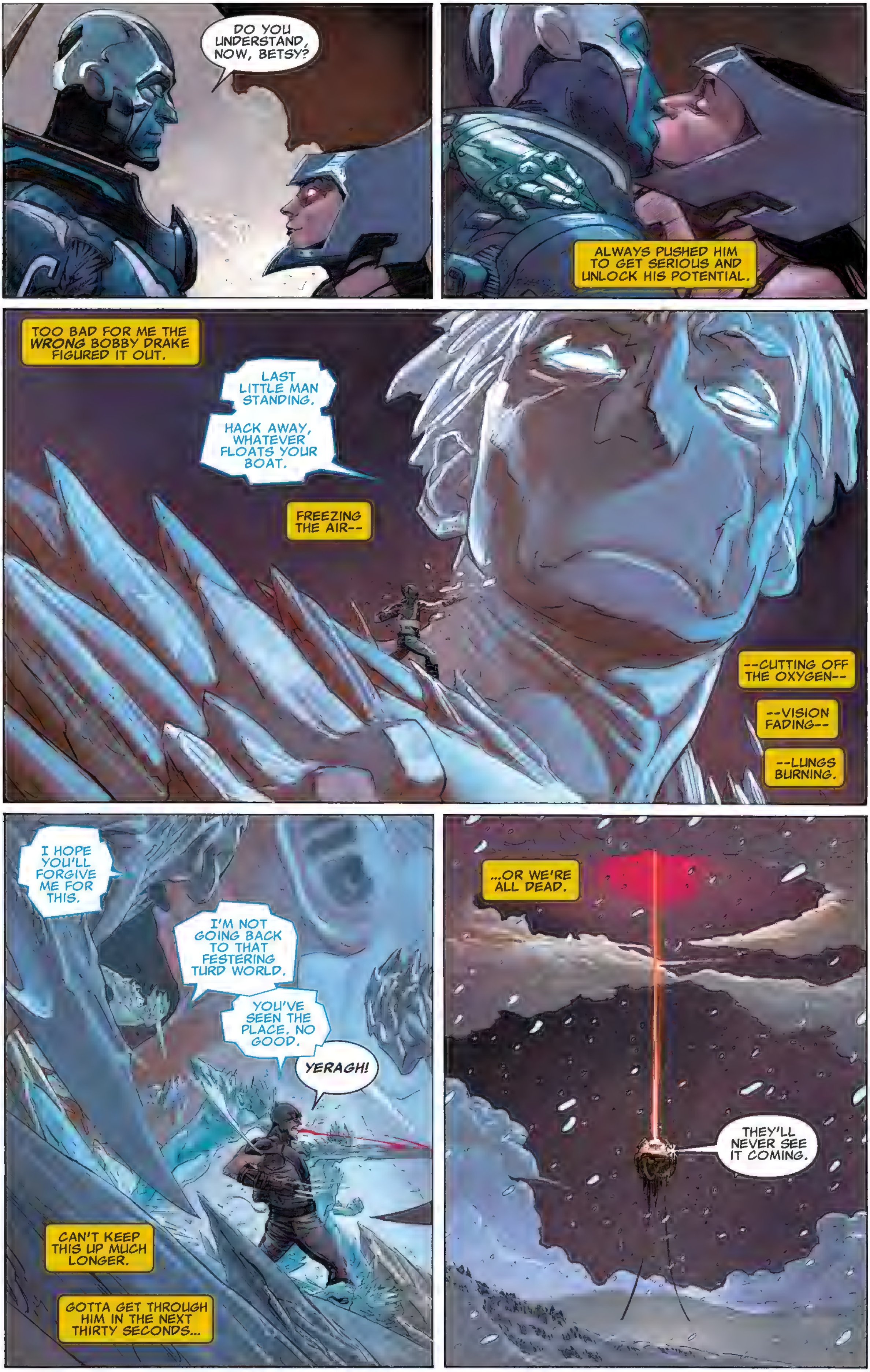

YOU DON'T GET TO *RUIN* THIS FOR *ME.*
NOT AFTER *ALL* I'VE BEEN THROUGH.
YOU SAW MY HOME DIMENSION.
WE FOUGHT AND FOUGHT AGAINST *THIS* AND ALL WE DID WAS *DIE.*
EVERYONE I LOVED, *EVERYTHING* THAT EVER MATTERED TO ME--*DEAD.*
I'M OWED *SOME* LUCK.
AN' YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET SOME, DRAKE.

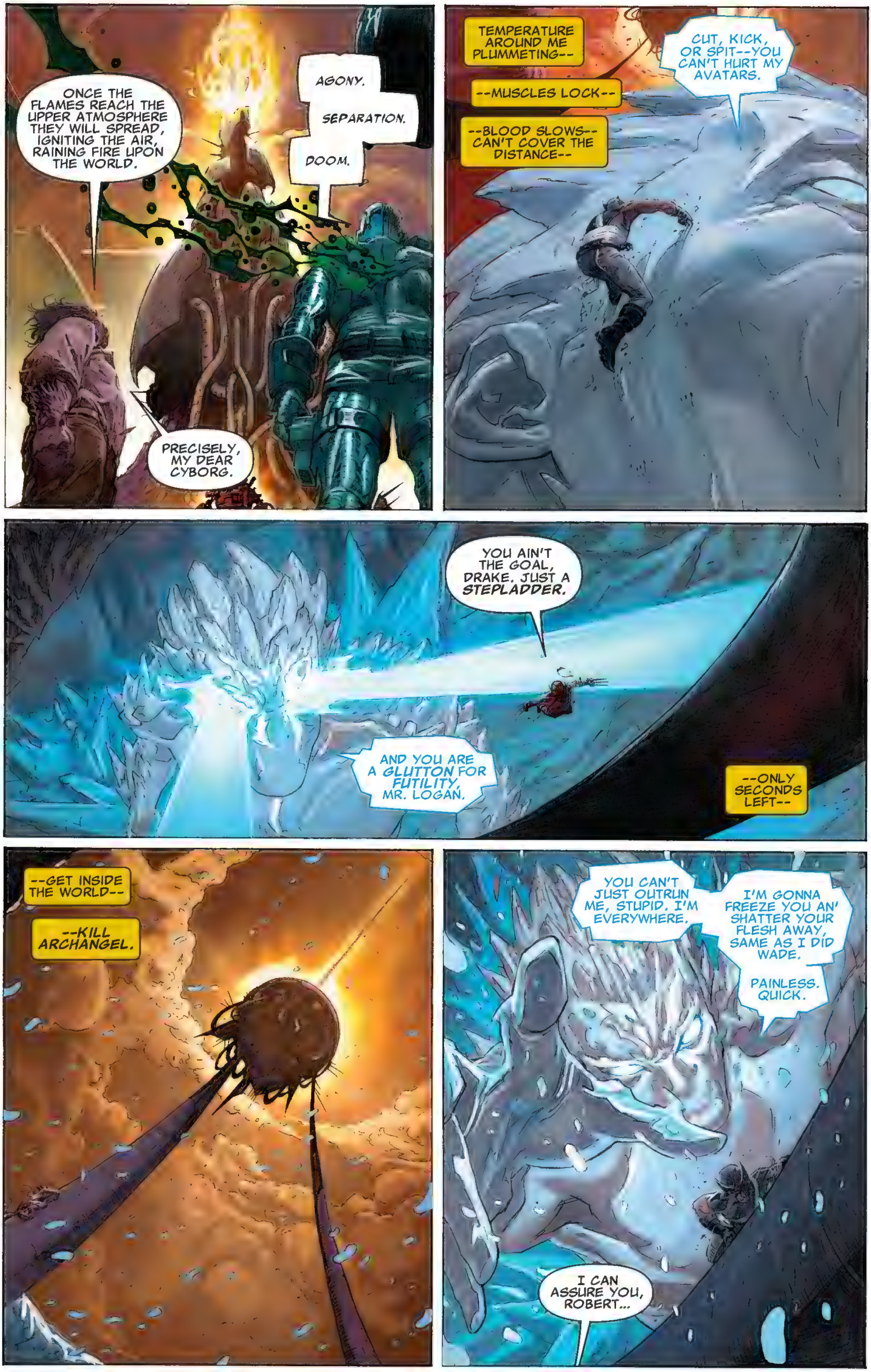

ALL OTHERS ARE FORGOTTEN.
YOU ARE THE ONE TRUE AND ONLY.
MY QUEEN.
MY DEATH.
I'M READY, MR. MCCOY.
DOCTOR MCCOY. AND GOOD.
ONWARD TO THE GRAND EXPERIMENT...
"...THE END OF ALL LIFE ON EARTH."

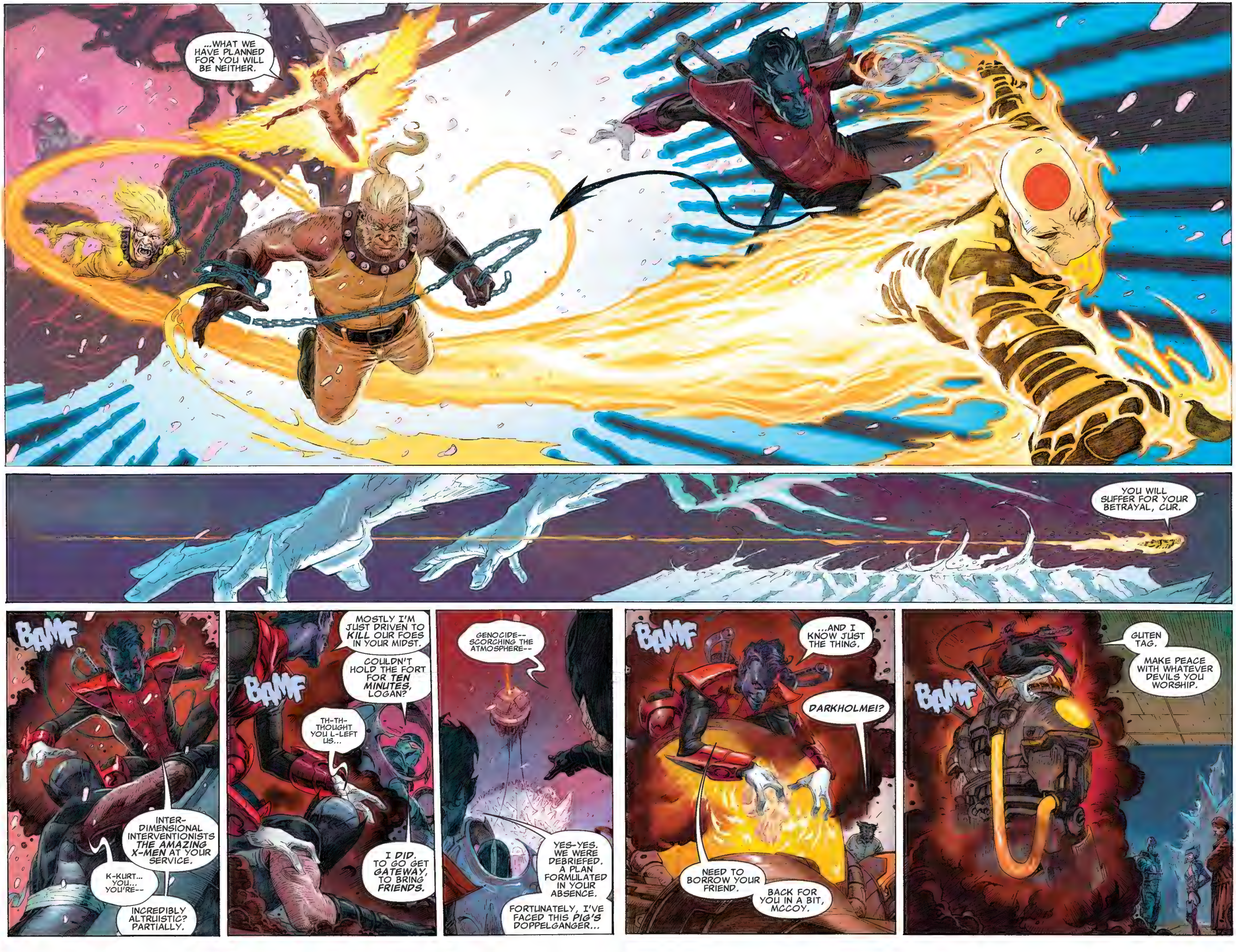
17 THE DARK ANGEL SAGA

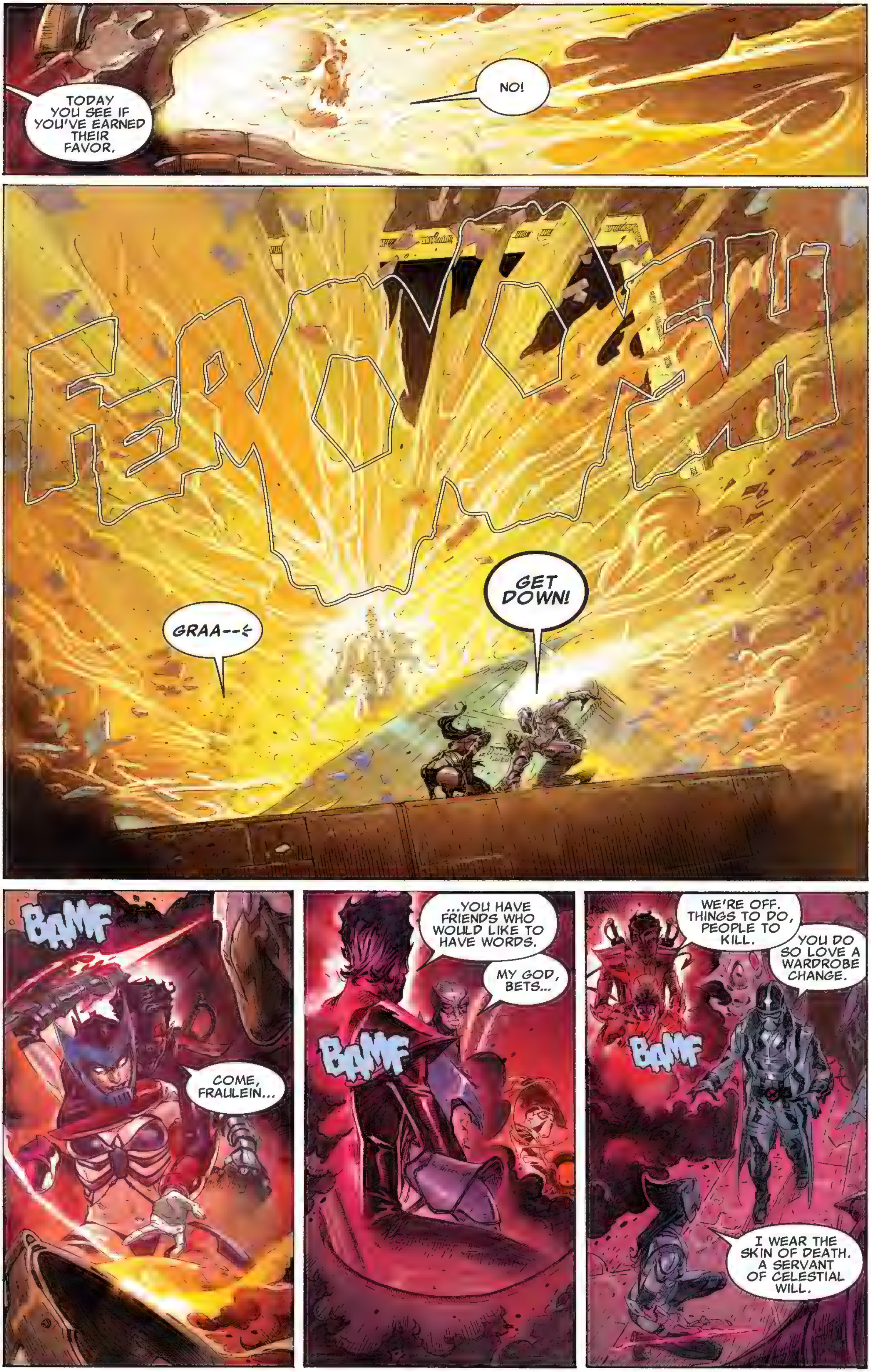
CHAPTER 7: OPENS A WINDOW

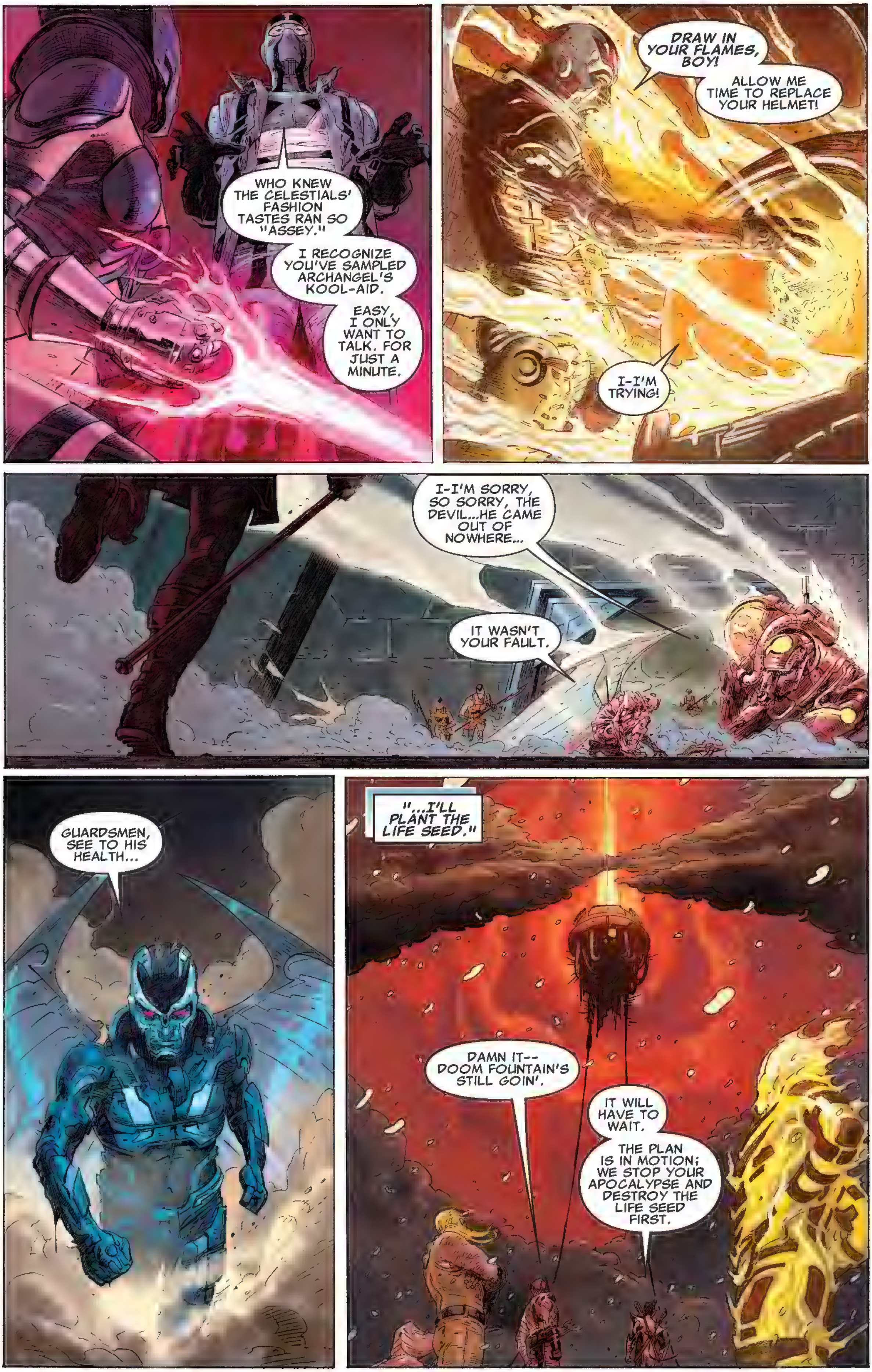

THE *BAZOOKA*... IT'S MAKING ME LOOK LIKE A *GOON*, SIR.
I JUST FEEL LIKE I'M *OVERCOMPENSATING* FOR SOME NOT-SO-GREAT POWERS.
I CONFESS THAT *WINGS* ARE NOT THE *MOST* IMPRESSIVE MUTATION I'VE ENCOUNTERED.
I GUESS I FIGURED YOU'D GO THE PEP-TALK ROUTE FIRST.
I RESPECT YOUR INTELLIGENCE TOO MUCH TO PATRONIZE YOU, WARREN.
I SEE THE MAN CONNECTED TO THE WINGS. YOU HAVE THE GREATEST POWER OF ALL MY X-MEN, *INHERENT COURAGE*.
YOU WILL NEED IT...I PREDICT *DIFFICULTY* IN THE COMING YEARS.
THEY WILL NEED TO LEAN ON YOU.
I CAN'T KNOW WHAT FORM YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL WILL TAKE, BUT I DO KNOW ONE THING...
"...YOU WILL LEAVE A MARK ON THIS WORLD."
YOU LOOK DAZZLING.

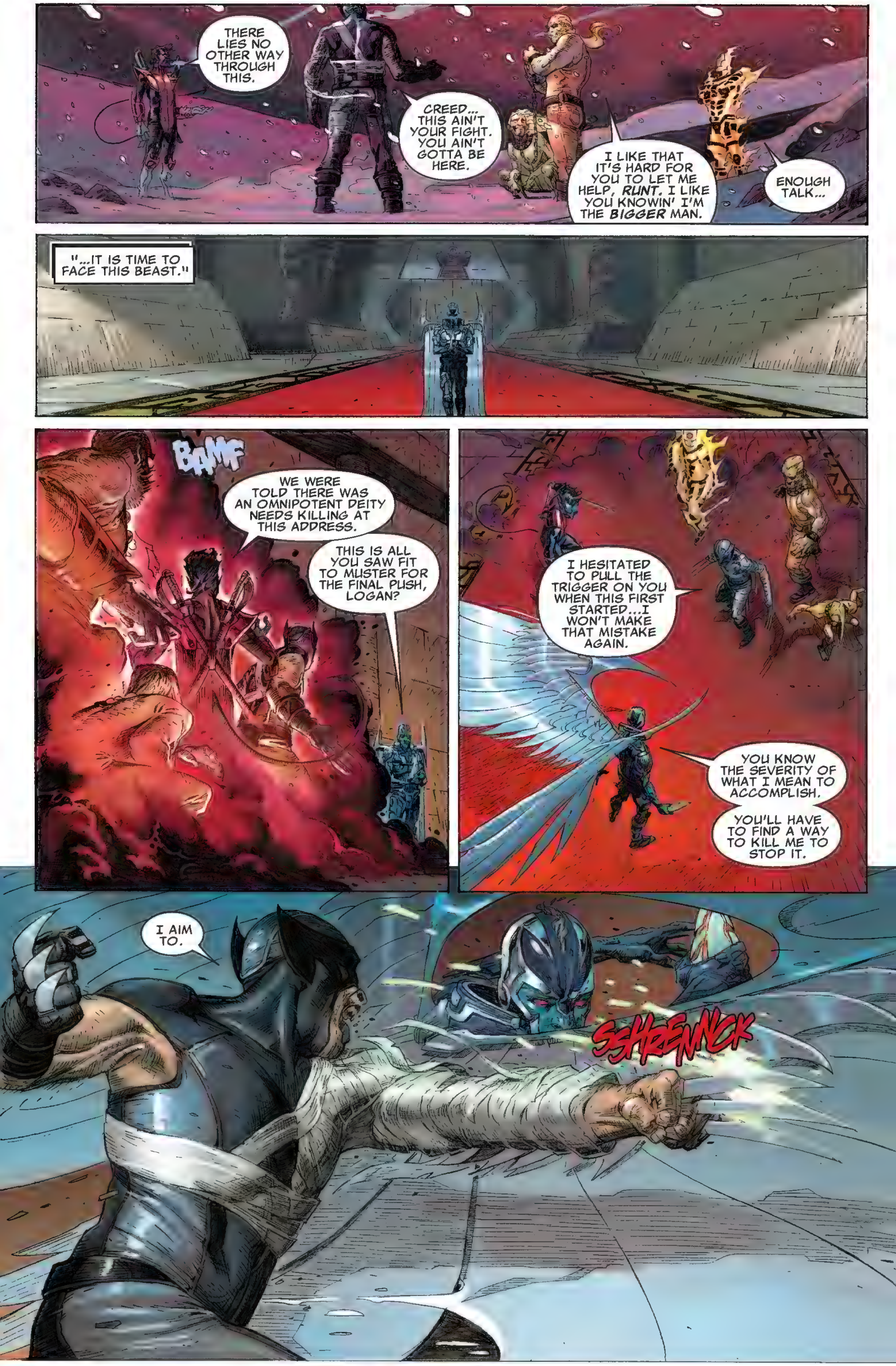

DO YOU UNDERSTAND, NOW, BETSY?
ALWAYS PUSHED HIM TO GET SERIOUS AND UNLOCK HIS POTENTIAL.
TOO BAD FOR ME THE *WRONG* BOBBY DRAKE FIGURED IT OUT.
LAST LITTLE MAN STANDING.
HACK AWAY, WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR BOAT.
FREEZING THE AIR--
--CUTTING OFF THE OXYGEN--
--VISION FADING--
--LUNGS BURNING.
I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME FOR THIS.
I'M NOT GOING BACK TO THAT FESTERING TURD WORLD.
YOU'VE SEEN THE PLACE. NO GOOD.
YERAGH!
CAN'T KEEP THIS UP MUCH LONGER.
GOTTA GET THROUGH HIM IN THE NEXT THIRTY SECONDS...
...OR WE'RE ALL DEAD.
THEY'LL NEVER SEE IT COMING.

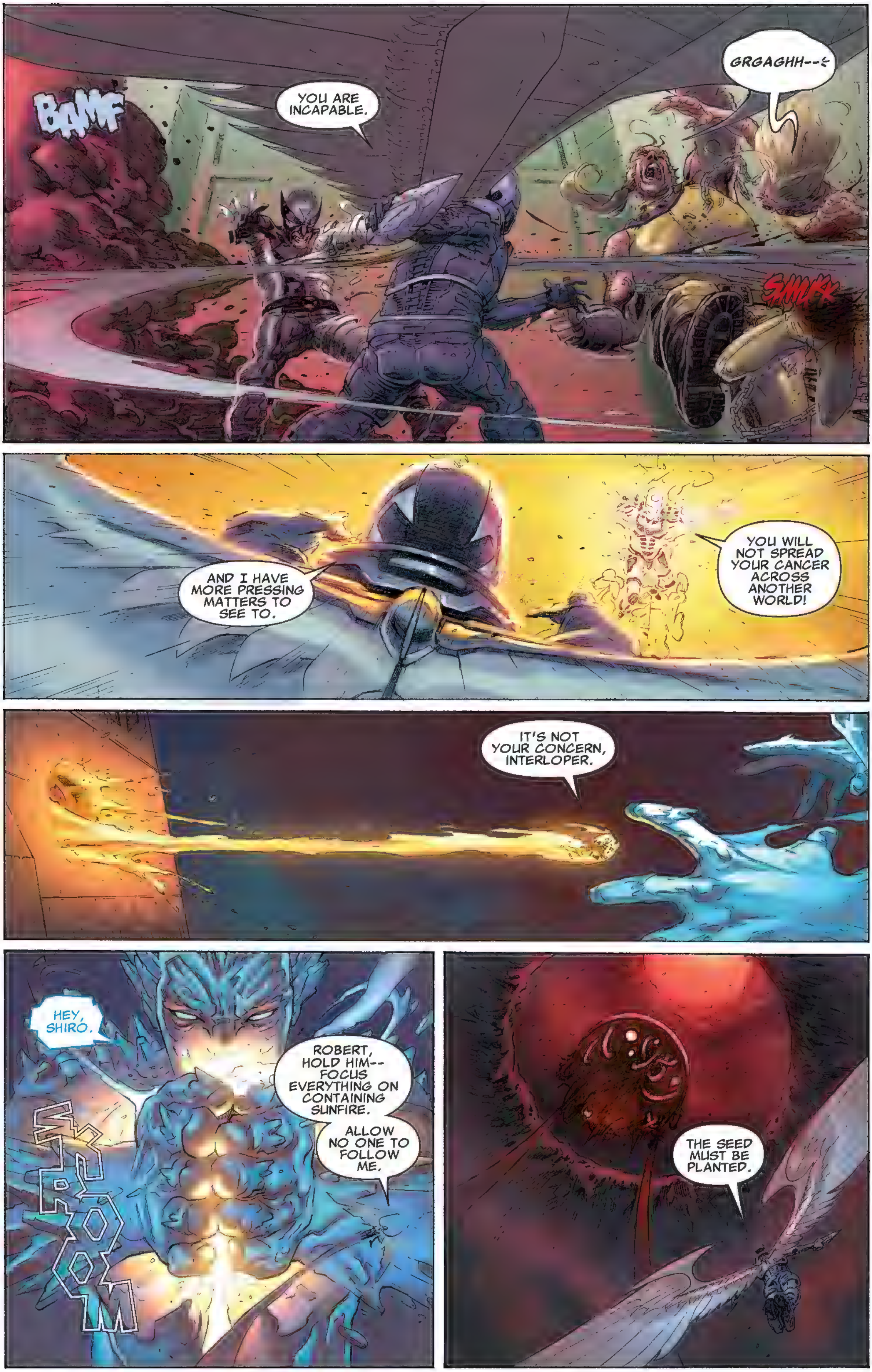

ONCE THE FLAMES REACH THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE THEY WILL SPREAD, IGNITING THE AIR, RAINING FIRE UPON THE WORLD.
AGONY.
SEPARATION.
DOOM.
PRECISELY, MY DEAR CYBORG.
TEMPERATURE AROUND ME PLUMMETING--
--MUSCLES LOCK--
--BLOOD SLOWS-- CAN'T COVER THE DISTANCE--
CUT, KICK, OR SPIT--YOU CAN'T HURT MY AVATARS.
YOU AIN'T THE GOAL, DRAKE. JUST A *STEPLADDER.*
AND YOU ARE A *GLUTTON* FOR *FUTILITY,* MR. LOGAN.
--ONLY SECONDS LEFT--
--GET INSIDE THE WORLD--
--*KILL ARCHANGEL.*
YOU CAN'T JUST OUTRUN ME, STUPID. I'M EVERYWHERE.
I'M GONNA FREEZE YOU AN' SHATTER YOUR FLESH AWAY, SAME AS I DID WADE.
PAINLESS. QUICK.
I CAN ASSURE YOU, ROBERT...

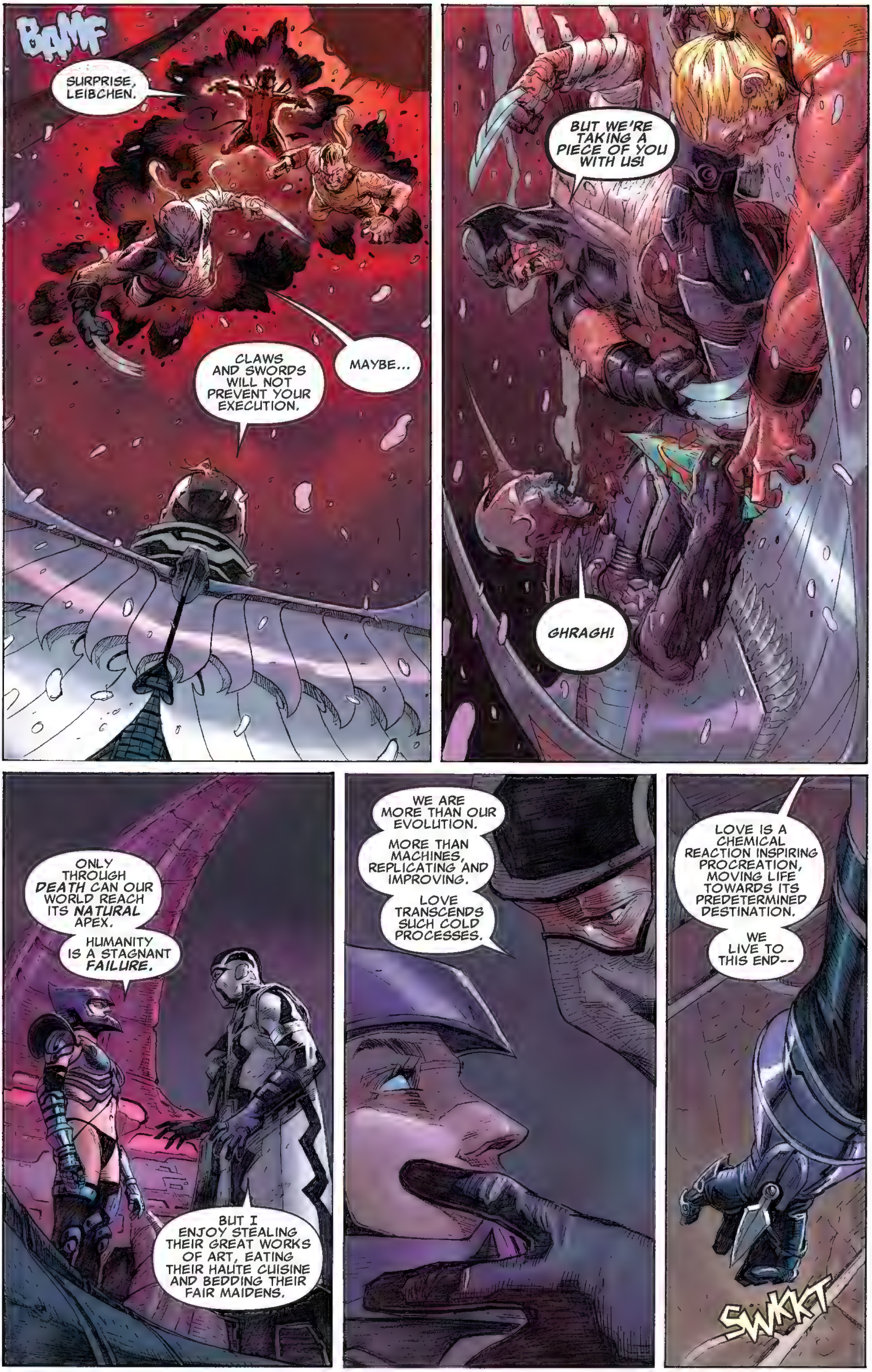

...WHAT WE HAVE PLANNED FOR YOU WILL BE NEITHER.
YOU WILL SUFFER FOR YOUR BETRAYAL, CUR.
BAMF
INTER-DIMENSIONAL INTERVENTIONISTS *THE AMAZING X-MEN* AT YOUR SERVICE.
K-KURT... YOU... YOU'RE--
INCREDIBLY ALTRUISTIC? PARTIALLY.
MOSTLY I'M JUST DRIVEN TO *KILL* OUR FOES IN YOUR MIDST.
BAMF
COULDN'T HOLD THE FORT FOR *TEN MINUTES,* LOGAN?
TH-TH-THOUGHT YOU L-LEFT US...
I DID. TO GO GET *GATEWAY,* TO BRING *FRIENDS.*
GENOCIDE-- SCORCHING THE ATMOSPHERE--
YES-YES. WE WERE DEBRIEFED. A PLAN FORMULATED IN YOUR ABSENCE.
FORTUNATELY, I'VE FACED THIS *PIG'S* DOPPELGANGER...
BAMF
...AND I KNOW JUST THE THING.
DARKHOLME!?
NEED TO BORROW YOUR FRIEND.
BACK FOR YOU IN A BIT, MCCOY.
BAMF
GUTEN TAG.
MAKE PEACE WITH WHATEVER DEVILS YOU WORSHIP.

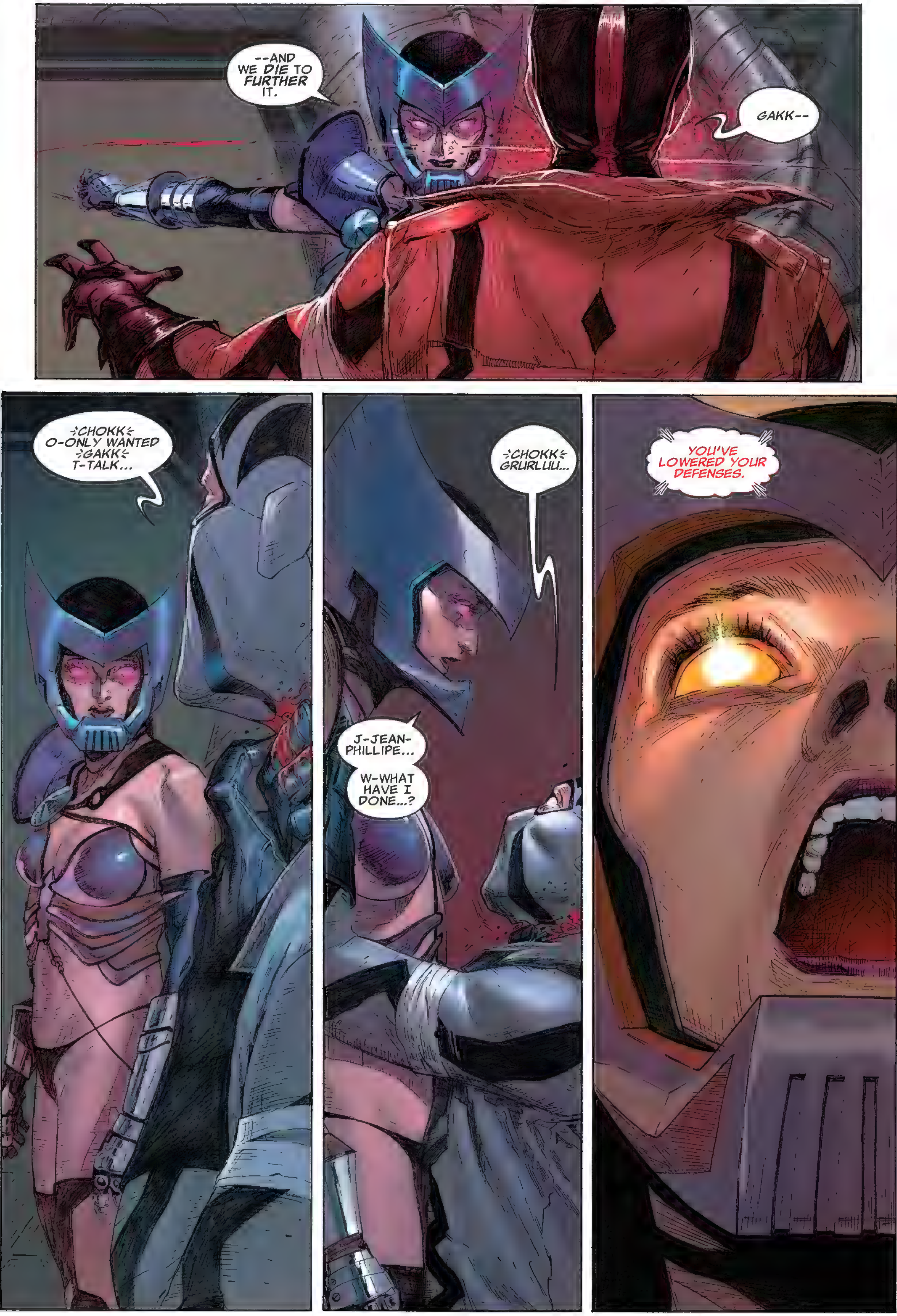

TODAY YOU SEE IF YOU'VE EARNED THEIR FAVOR.
NO!
GRAA--
GET DOWN!
BAMF
COME, FRAULEIN...
...YOU HAVE FRIENDS WHO WOULD LIKE TO HAVE WORDS.
MY GOD, BETS...
BAMF
WE'RE OFF. THINGS TO DO, PEOPLE TO KILL.
YOU DO SO LOVE A WARDROBE CHANGE.
BAMF
I WEAR THE SKIN OF DEATH. A SERVANT OF CELESTIAL WILL.

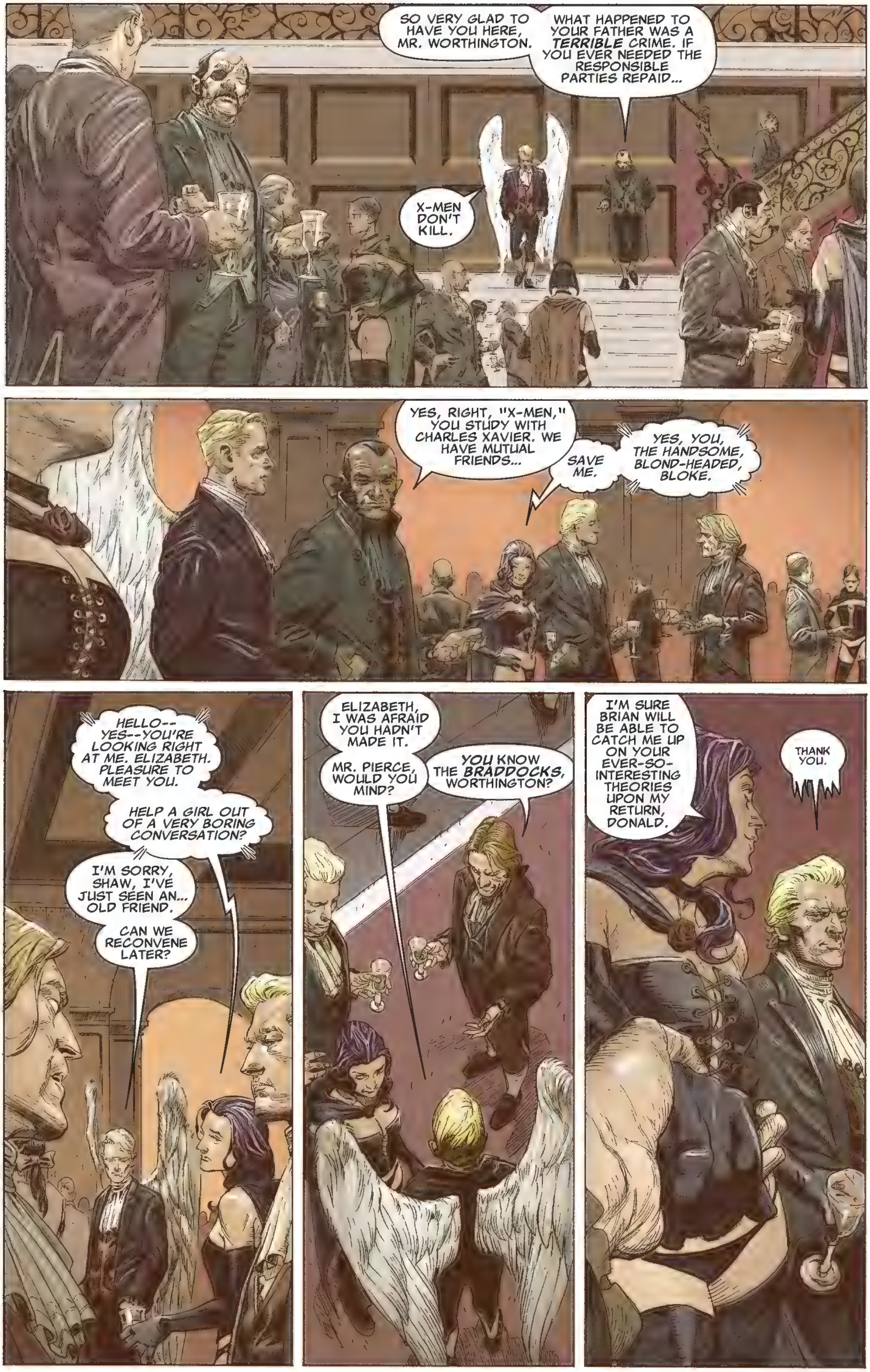

WHO KNEW THE CELESTIALS' FASHION TASTES RAN SO "ASSEY."
I RECOGNIZE YOU'VE SAMPLED ARCHANGEL'S KOOL-AID.
EASY, I ONLY WANT TO TALK. FOR JUST A MINUTE.
DRAW IN YOUR FLAMES, BOY!
ALLOW ME TIME TO REPLACE YOUR HELMET!
I-I'M TRYING!
I-I'M SORRY, SO SORRY, THE DEVIL...HE CAME OUT OF NOWHERE...
IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT.
GUARDSMEN, SEE TO HIS HEALTH...
"...I'LL PLANT THE LIFE SEED."
DAMN IT-- DOOM FOUNTAIN'S STILL GOIN'.
IT WILL HAVE TO WAIT.
THE PLAN IS IN MOTION; WE STOP YOUR APOCALYPSE AND DESTROY THE LIFE SEED FIRST.

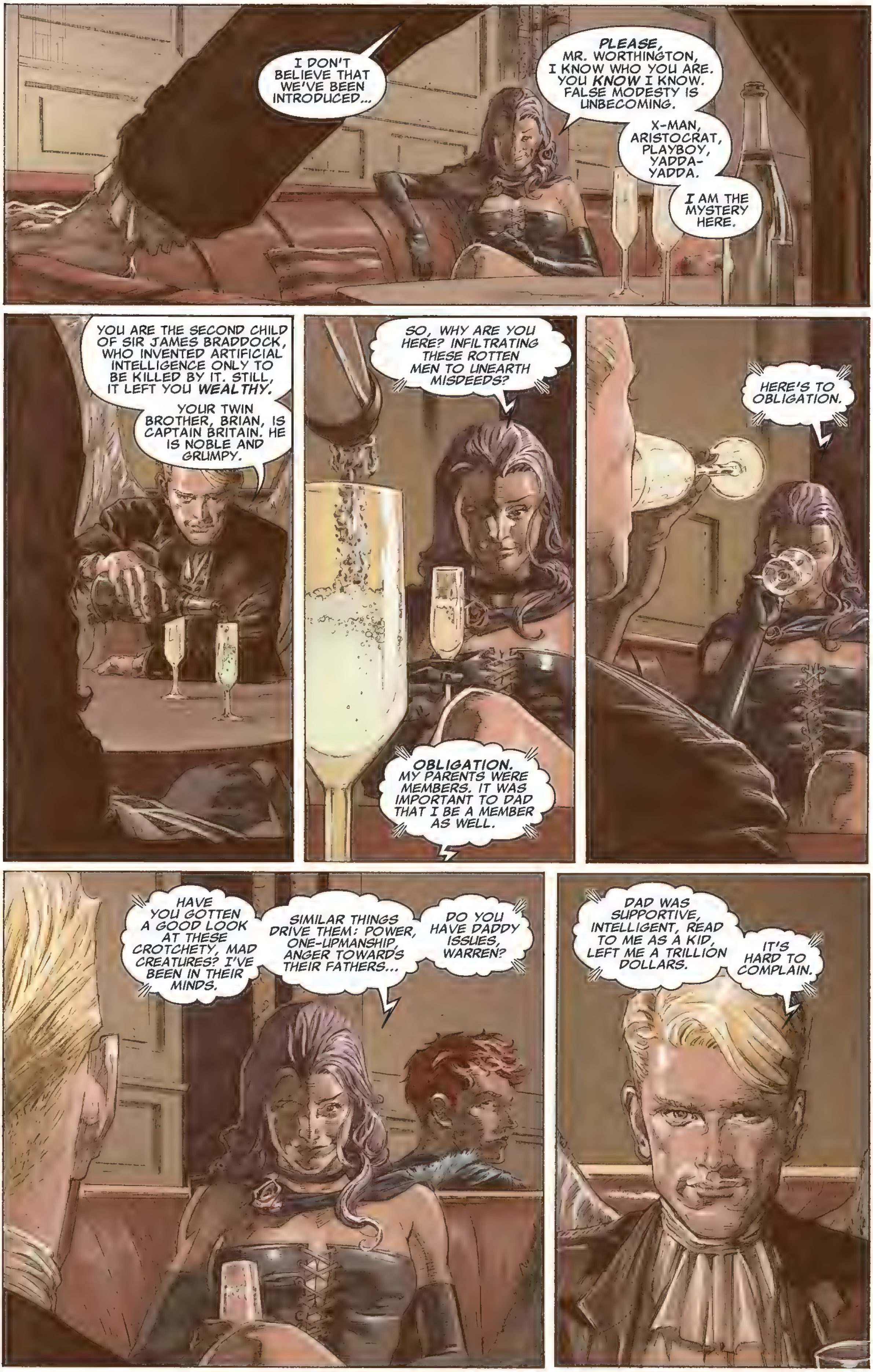

THERE LIES NO OTHER WAY THROUGH THIS.
CREED... THIS AIN'T YOUR FIGHT. YOU AIN'T GOTTA BE HERE.
I LIKE THAT IT'S HARD FOR YOU TO LET ME HELP, **RUNT**. I LIKE YOU KNOWIN' I'M THE **BIGGER** MAN.
ENOUGH TALK...
"...IT IS TIME TO FACE THIS BEAST."
BAMF
WE WERE TOLD THERE WAS AN OMNIPOTENT DEITY NEEDS KILLING AT THIS ADDRESS.
THIS IS ALL YOU SAW FIT TO MUSTER FOR THE FINAL PUSH, LOGAN?
I HESITATED TO PULL THE TRIGGER ON YOU WHEN THIS FIRST STARTED...I WON'T MAKE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN.
YOU KNOW THE SEVERITY OF WHAT I MEAN TO ACCOMPLISH.
YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO KILL ME TO STOP IT.
I AIM TO.
SSHRENNCK

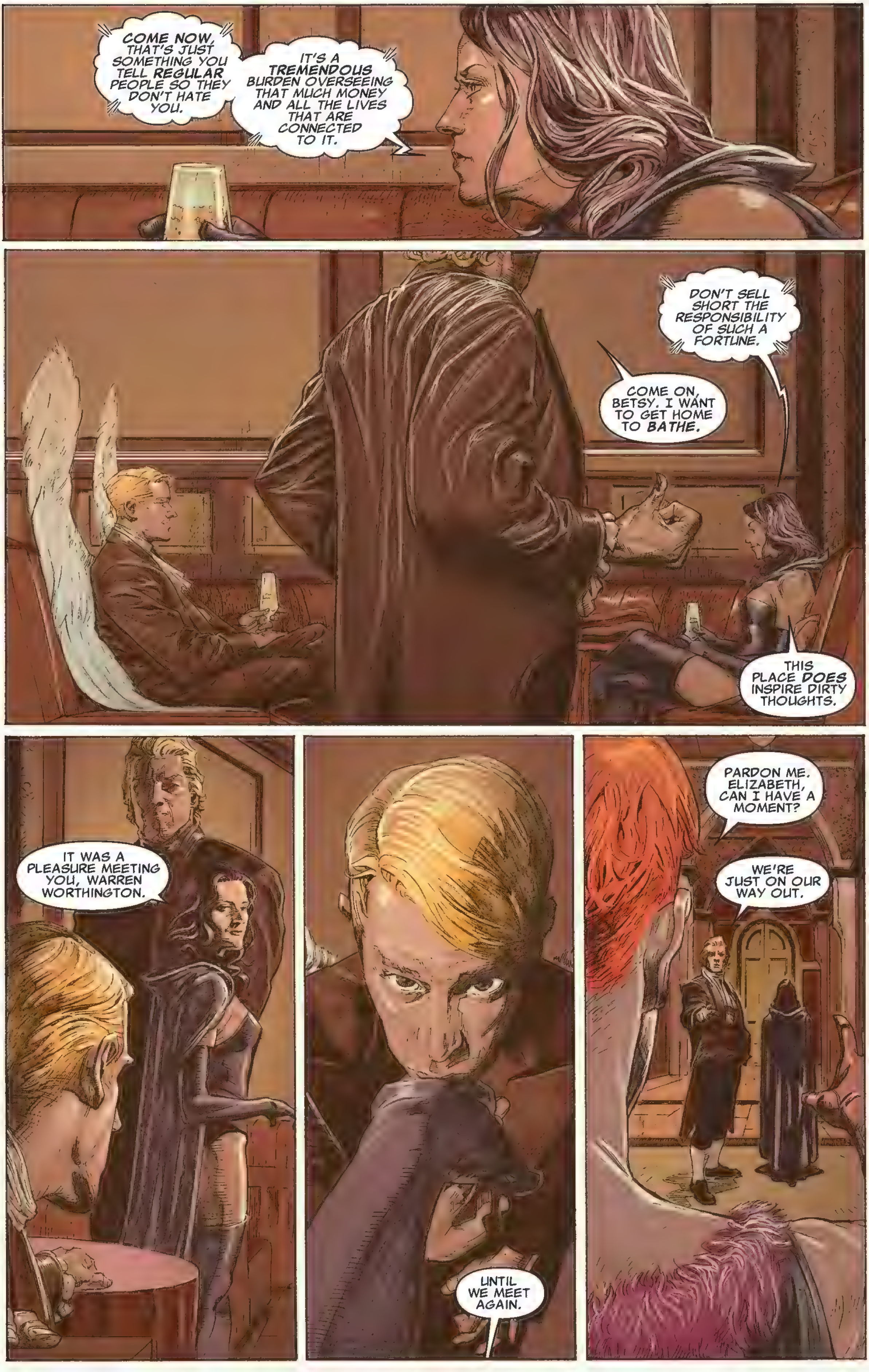

BAMF
YOU ARE INCAPABLE.
GRGAGHH--
SHUKK
AND I HAVE MORE PRESSING MATTERS TO SEE TO.
YOU WILL NOT SPREAD YOUR CANCER ACROSS ANOTHER WORLD!
IT'S NOT YOUR CONCERN, INTERLOPER.
HEY, SHIRO.
ROBERT, HOLD HIM-- FOCUS EVERYTHING ON CONTAINING SUNFIRE.
ALLOW NO ONE TO FOLLOW ME.
SHROOM
THE SEED MUST BE PLANTED.

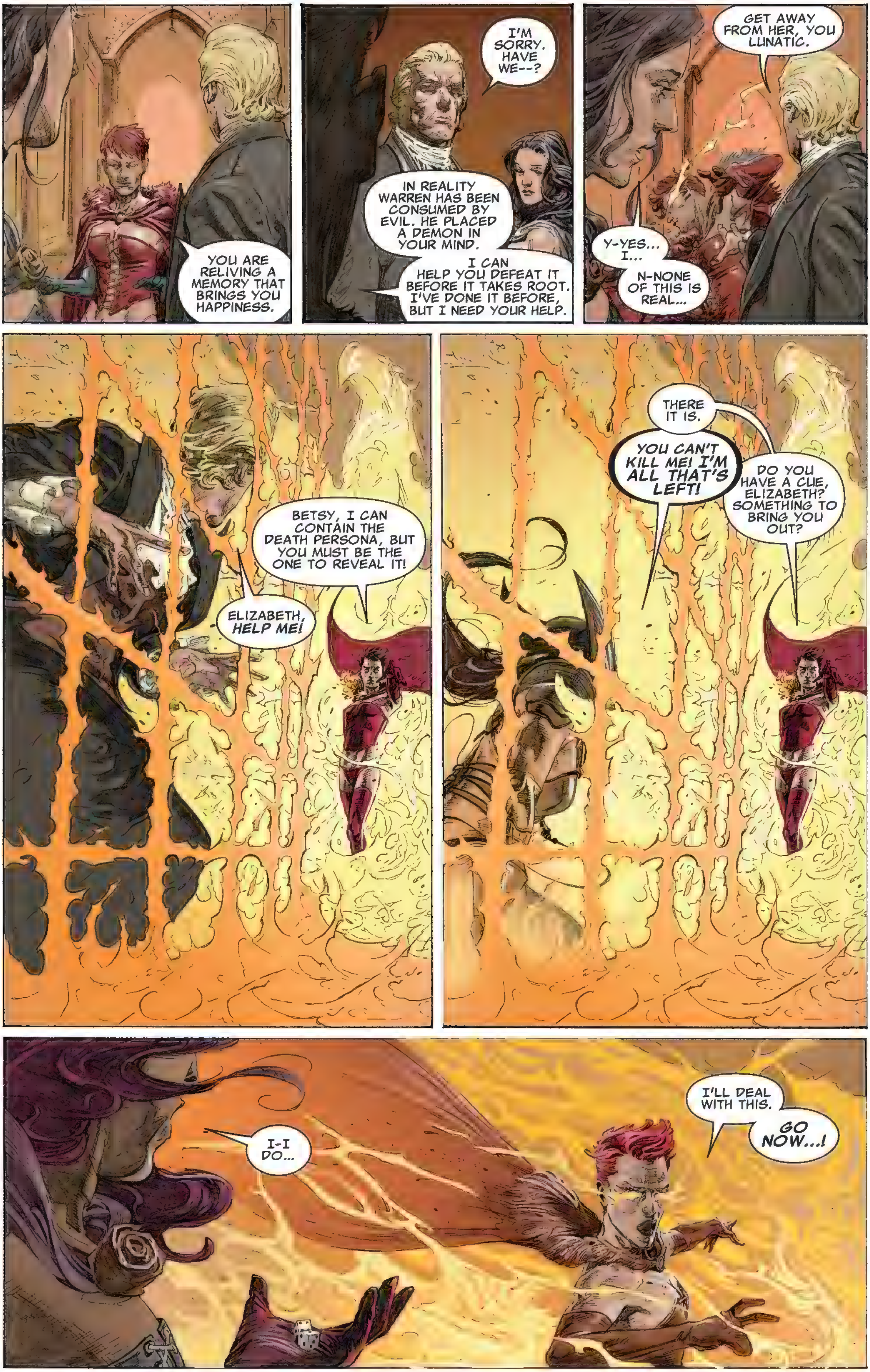

BAMF
SURPRISE, LEIBCHEN.
MAYBE...
CLAWS AND SWORDS WILL NOT PREVENT YOUR EXECUTION.
BUT WE'RE TAKING A PIECE OF YOU WITH US!
GHRAGH!
ONLY THROUGH DEATH CAN OUR WORLD REACH ITS NATURAL APEX.
HUMANITY IS A STAGNANT FAILURE.
BUT I ENJOY STEALING THEIR GREAT WORKS OF ART, EATING THEIR HAUTE CUISINE AND BEDDING THEIR FAIR MAIDENS.
WE ARE MORE THAN OUR EVOLUTION.
MORE THAN MACHINES, REPLICATING AND IMPROVING.
LOVE TRANSCENDS SUCH COLD PROCESSES.
LOVE IS A CHEMICAL REACTION INSPIRING PROCREATION, MOVING LIFE TOWARDS ITS PREDETERMINED DESTINATION.
WE LIVE TO THIS END--
SWKKT

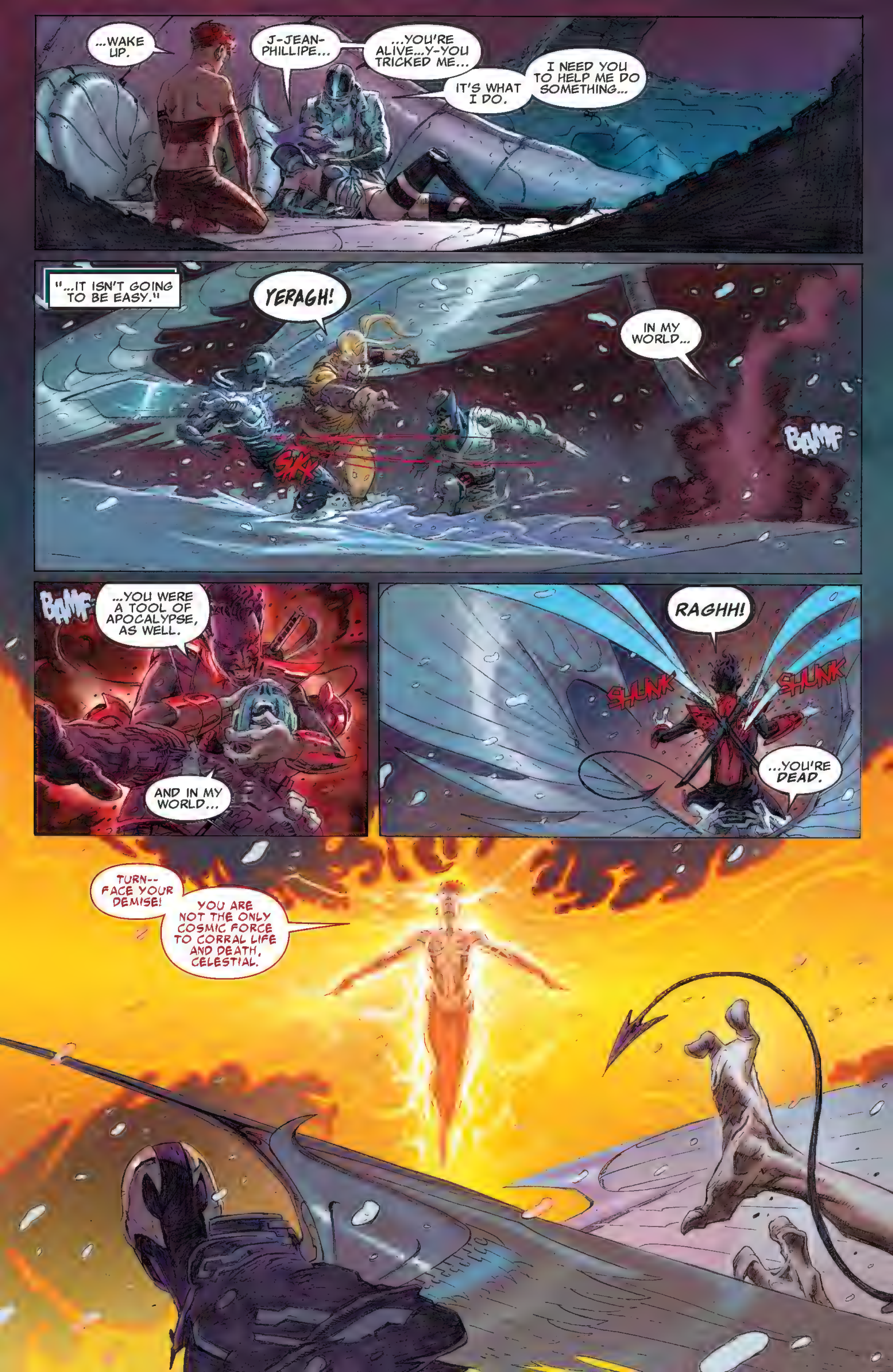

--AND WE *DIE* TO FURTHER IT.
GAKK--
≈CHOKK≈ O-ONLY WANTED ≈GAKK≈ T-TALK...
≈CHOKK≈ GRURLUU...
J-JEAN-PHILLIPE...
W-WHAT HAVE I DONE...?
YOU'VE LOWERED YOUR DEFENSES.

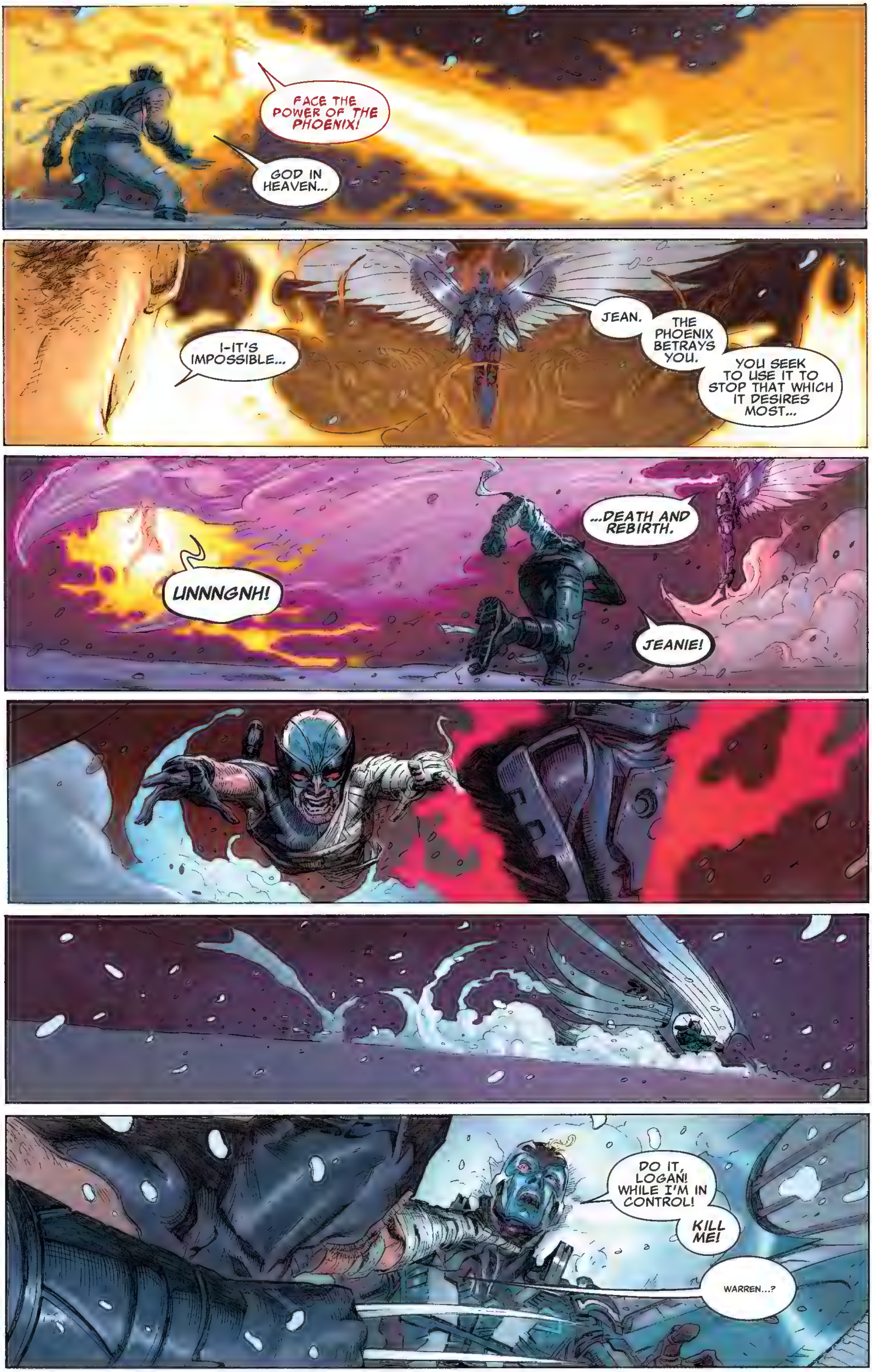

SO VERY GLAD TO HAVE YOU HERE, MR. WORTHINGTON.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FATHER WAS A *TERRIBLE* CRIME. IF YOU EVER NEEDED THE RESPONSIBLE PARTIES REPAID...
X-MEN DON'T KILL.
YES, RIGHT, "X-MEN," YOU STUDY WITH CHARLES XAVIER. WE HAVE MUTUAL FRIENDS...
SAVE ME.
YES, YOU, THE HANDSOME, BLOND-HEADED, BLOKE.
HELLO-- YES--YOU'RE LOOKING RIGHT AT ME. ELIZABETH. PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
HELP A GIRL OUT OF A VERY BORING CONVERSATION?
I'M SORRY, SHAW, I'VE JUST SEEN AN... OLD FRIEND.
CAN WE RECONVENE LATER?
ELIZABETH, I WAS AFRAID YOU HADN'T MADE IT.
MR. PIERCE, WOULD YOU MIND?
YOU KNOW THE *BRADDOCKS*, WORTHINGTON?
I'M SURE BRIAN WILL BE ABLE TO CATCH ME UP ON YOUR EVER-SO-INTERESTING THEORIES UPON MY RETURN, DONALD.
THANK YOU.

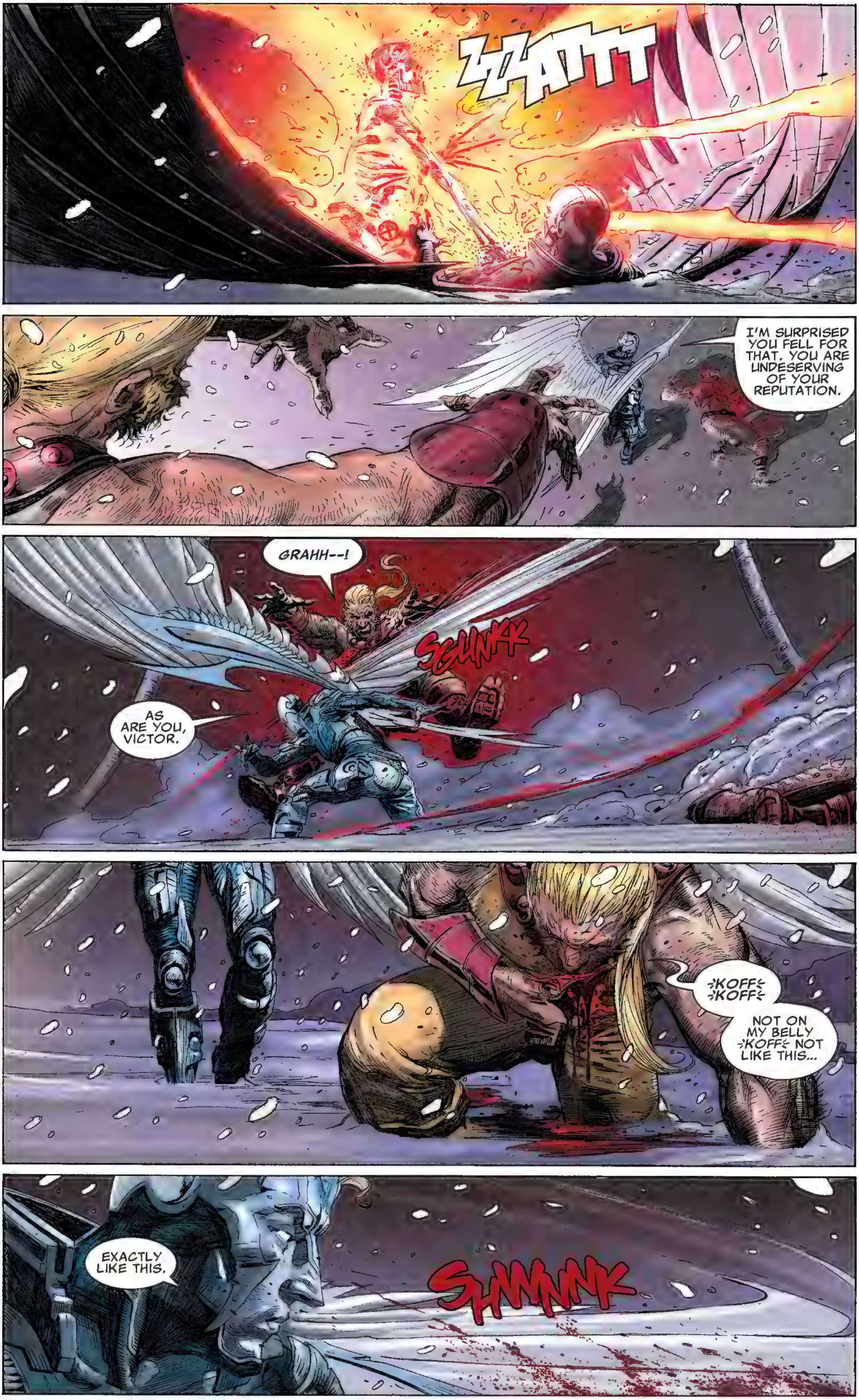

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT WE'VE BEEN INTRODUCED...
PLEASE, MR. WORTHINGTON, I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. YOU *KNOW* I KNOW. FALSE MODESTY IS UNBECOMING.
X-MAN, ARISTOCRAT, PLAYBOY, YADDA-YADDA.
I AM THE MYSTERY HERE.
YOU ARE THE SECOND CHILD OF SIR JAMES BRADDOCK, WHO INVENTED ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ONLY TO BE KILLED BY IT. STILL, IT LEFT YOU *WEALTHY.*
YOUR TWIN BROTHER, BRIAN, IS CAPTAIN BRITAIN. HE IS NOBLE AND GRUMPY.
SO, WHY ARE YOU HERE? INFILTRATING THESE ROTTEN MEN TO UNEARTH MISDEEDS?
OBLIGATION. MY PARENTS WERE MEMBERS. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO DAD THAT I BE A MEMBER AS WELL.
HERE'S TO OBLIGATION.
HAVE YOU GOTTEN A GOOD LOOK AT THESE CROTCHETY, MAD CREATURES? I'VE BEEN IN THEIR MINDS.
SIMILAR THINGS DRIVE THEM: POWER, ONE-UPMANSHIP, ANGER TOWARD'S THEIR FATHERS...
DO YOU HAVE DADDY ISSUES, WARREN?
DAD WAS SUPPORTIVE, INTELLIGENT, READ TO ME AS A KID, LEFT ME A TRILLION DOLLARS.
IT'S HARD TO COMPLAIN.

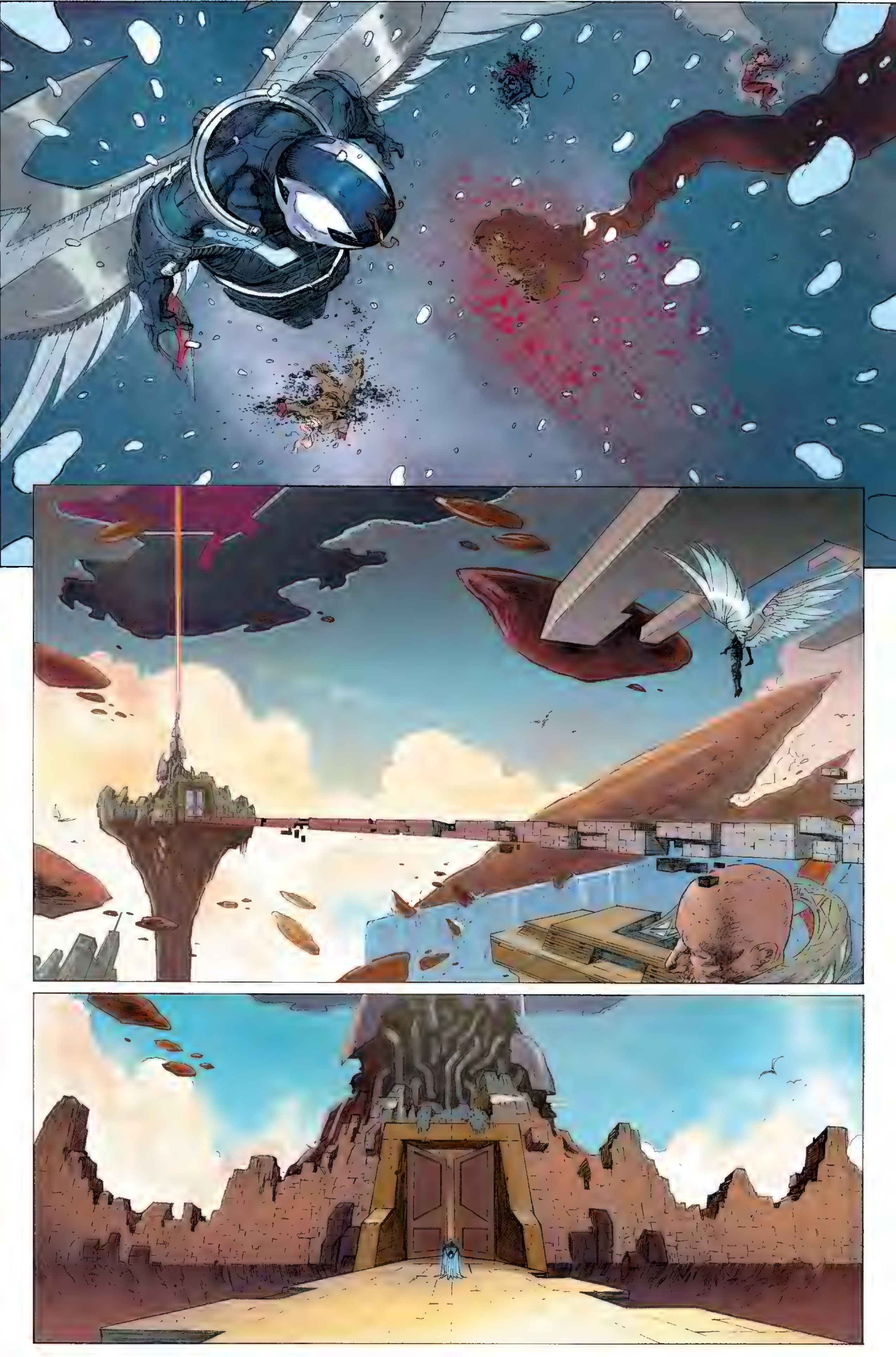

COME NOW, THAT'S JUST SOMETHING YOU TELL **REGULAR** PEOPLE SO THEY DON'T HATE YOU.
IT'S A **TREMENDOUS** BURDEN OVERSEEING THAT MUCH MONEY AND ALL THE LIVES THAT ARE CONNECTED TO IT.
DON'T SELL SHORT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SUCH A FORTUNE.
COME ON, BETSY. I WANT TO GET HOME TO *BATHE.*
THIS PLACE **DOES** INSPIRE DIRTY THOUGHTS.
IT WAS A PLEASURE MEETING YOU, WARREN WORTHINGTON.
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.
PARDON ME. ELIZABETH, CAN I HAVE A MOMENT?
WE'RE JUST ON OUR WAY OUT.


YOU ARE RELIVING A MEMORY THAT BRINGS YOU HAPPINESS.
I'M SORRY. HAVE WE--?
IN REALITY WARREN HAS BEEN CONSUMED BY EVIL. HE PLACED A DEMON IN YOUR MIND.
I CAN HELP YOU DEFEAT IT BEFORE IT TAKES ROOT. I'VE DONE IT BEFORE, BUT I NEED YOUR HELP.
GET AWAY FROM HER, YOU LUNATIC.
Y-YES... I...
N-NONE OF THIS IS REAL...
BETSY, I CAN CONTAIN THE DEATH PERSONA, BUT YOU MUST BE THE ONE TO REVEAL IT!
ELIZABETH, *HELP ME!*
THERE IT IS.
YOU CAN'T KILL ME! I'M ALL THAT'S LEFT!
DO YOU HAVE A CUE, ELIZABETH? SOMETHING TO BRING YOU OUT?
I-I DO...
I'LL DEAL WITH THIS.
GO NOW...!

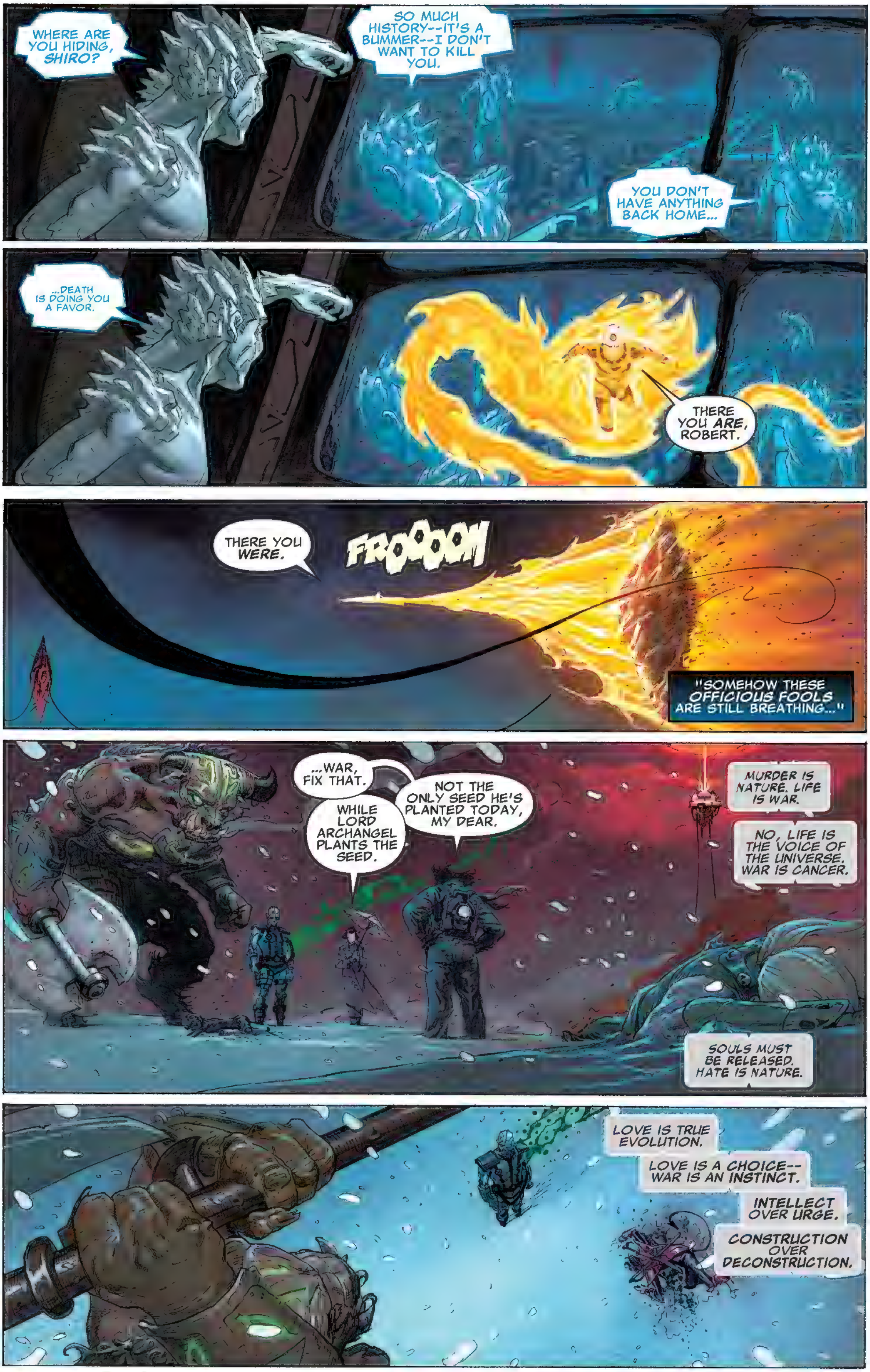

...WAKE UP.
J-JEAN-PHILLIPE...
...YOU'RE ALIVE...Y-YOU TRICKED ME...
IT'S WHAT I DO.
I NEED YOU TO HELP ME DO SOMETHING...
"...IT ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY."
YERAGH!
SKK
IN MY WORLD...
BAMF
BAMF
...YOU WERE A TOOL OF APOCALYPSE, AS WELL.
AND IN MY WORLD...
RAGHH!
SHUNK
SHUNK
...YOU'RE DEAD.
TURN--FACE YOUR DEMISE!
YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY COSMIC FORCE TO CORRAL LIFE AND DEATH, CELESTIAL.

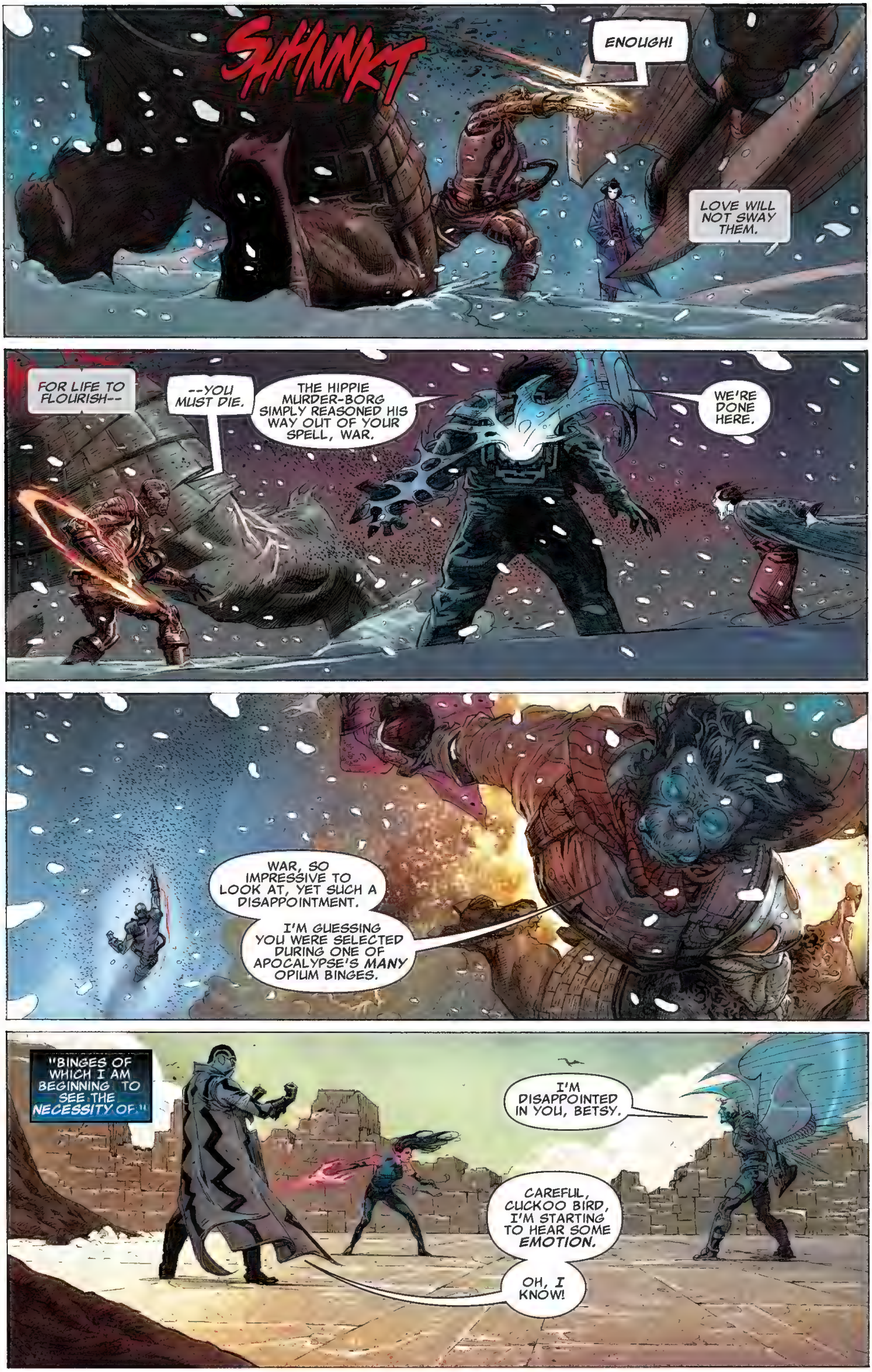

FACE THE POWER OF THE PHOENIX!
GOD IN HEAVEN...
I-IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...
JEAN.
THE PHOENIX BETRAYS YOU.
YOU SEEK TO USE IT TO STOP THAT WHICH IT DESIRES MOST...
...DEATH AND REBIRTH.
UNNNGNH!
JEANIE!
DO IT, LOGAN! WHILE I'M IN CONTROL!
KILL ME!
WARREN...?

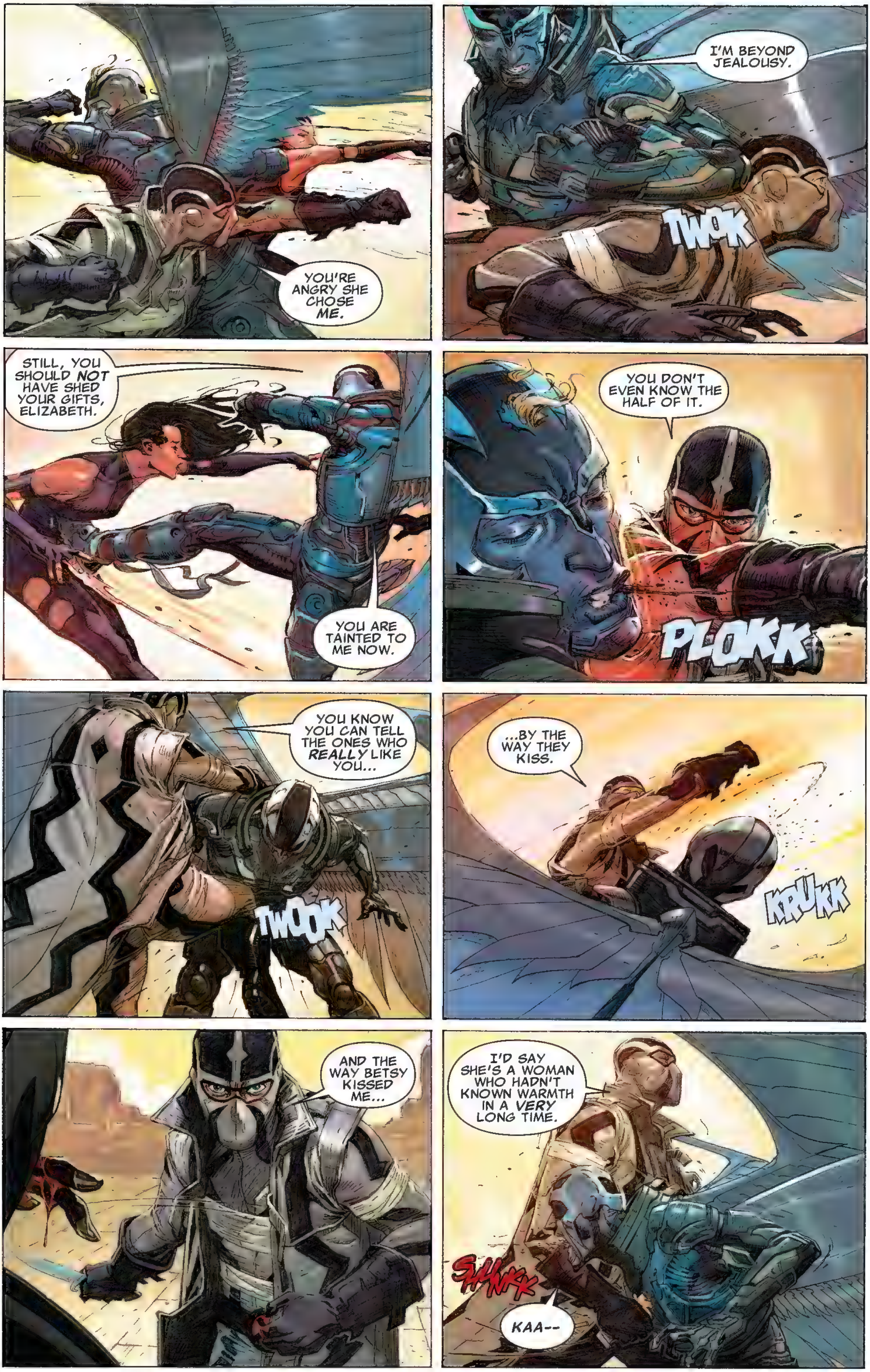

ZZATTT
I'M SURPRISED YOU FELL FOR THAT. YOU ARE UNDESERVING OF YOUR REPUTATION.
GRAHH--!
SCHUNK
AS ARE YOU, VICTOR.
KOFF *KOFF*
NOT ON MY BELLY *KOFF* NOT LIKE THIS...
EXACTLY LIKE THIS.
SHNNNK

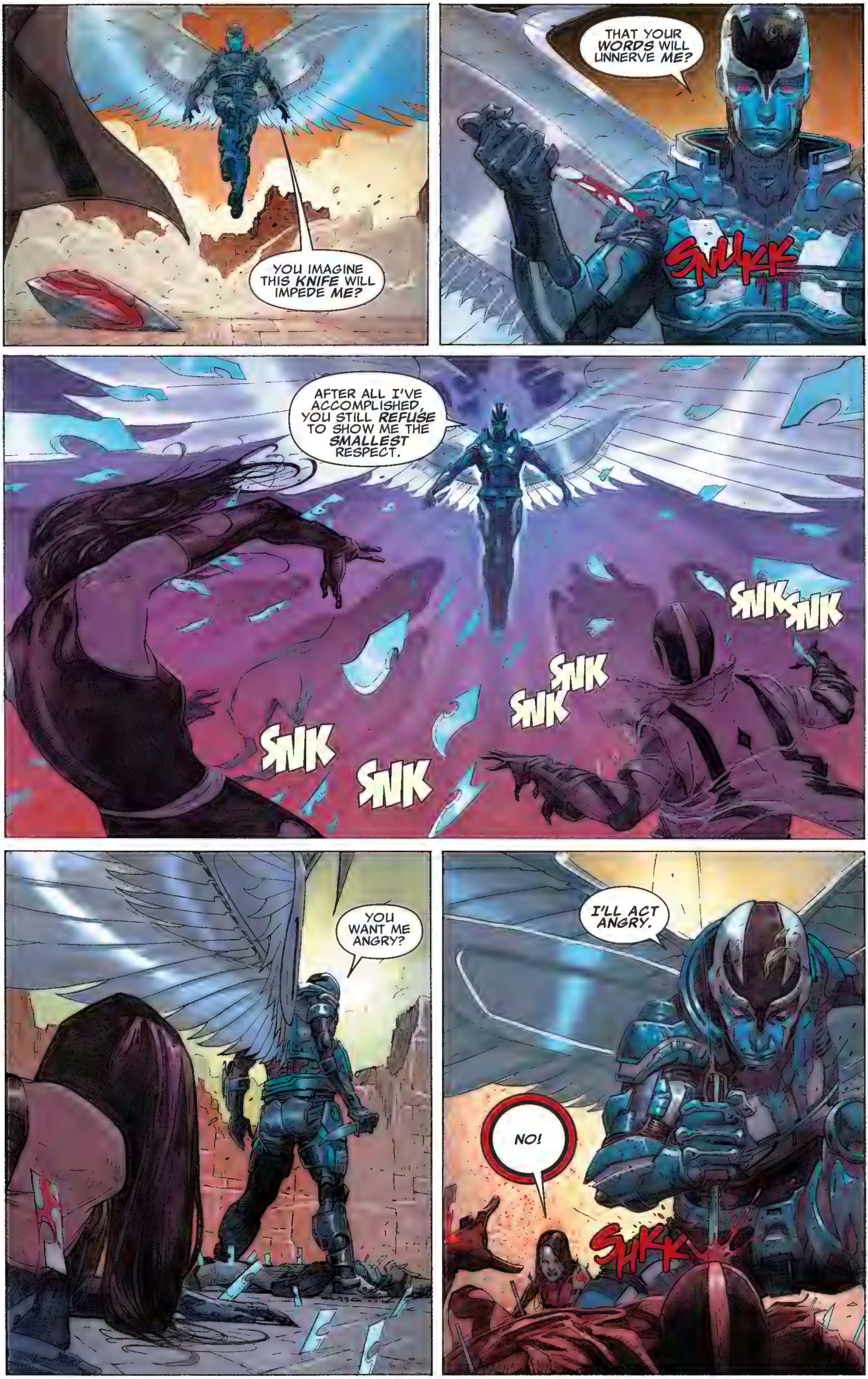


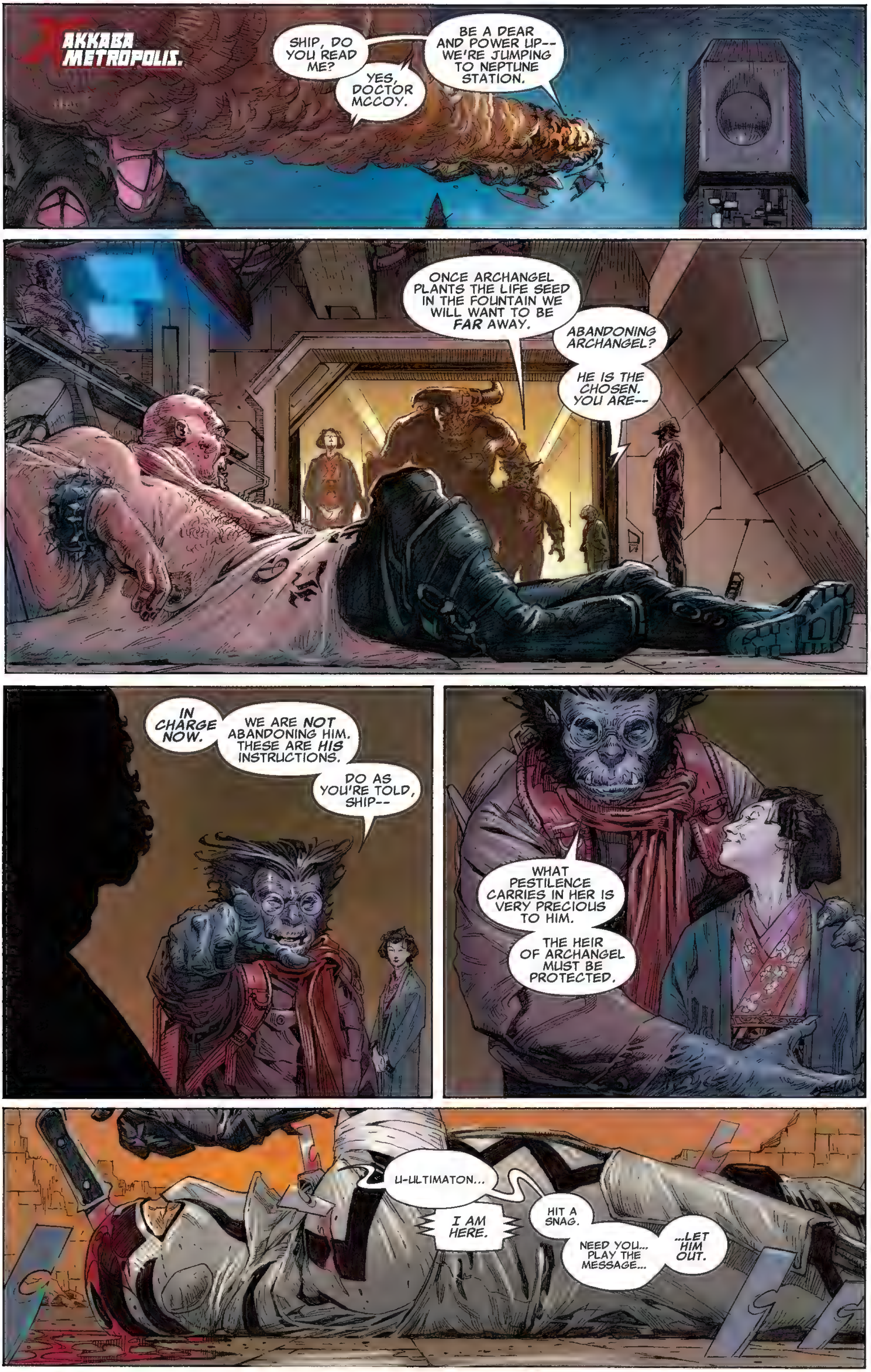
18 THE DARK ANGEL SAGA
CHAPTER 8: RED SKY BLUE

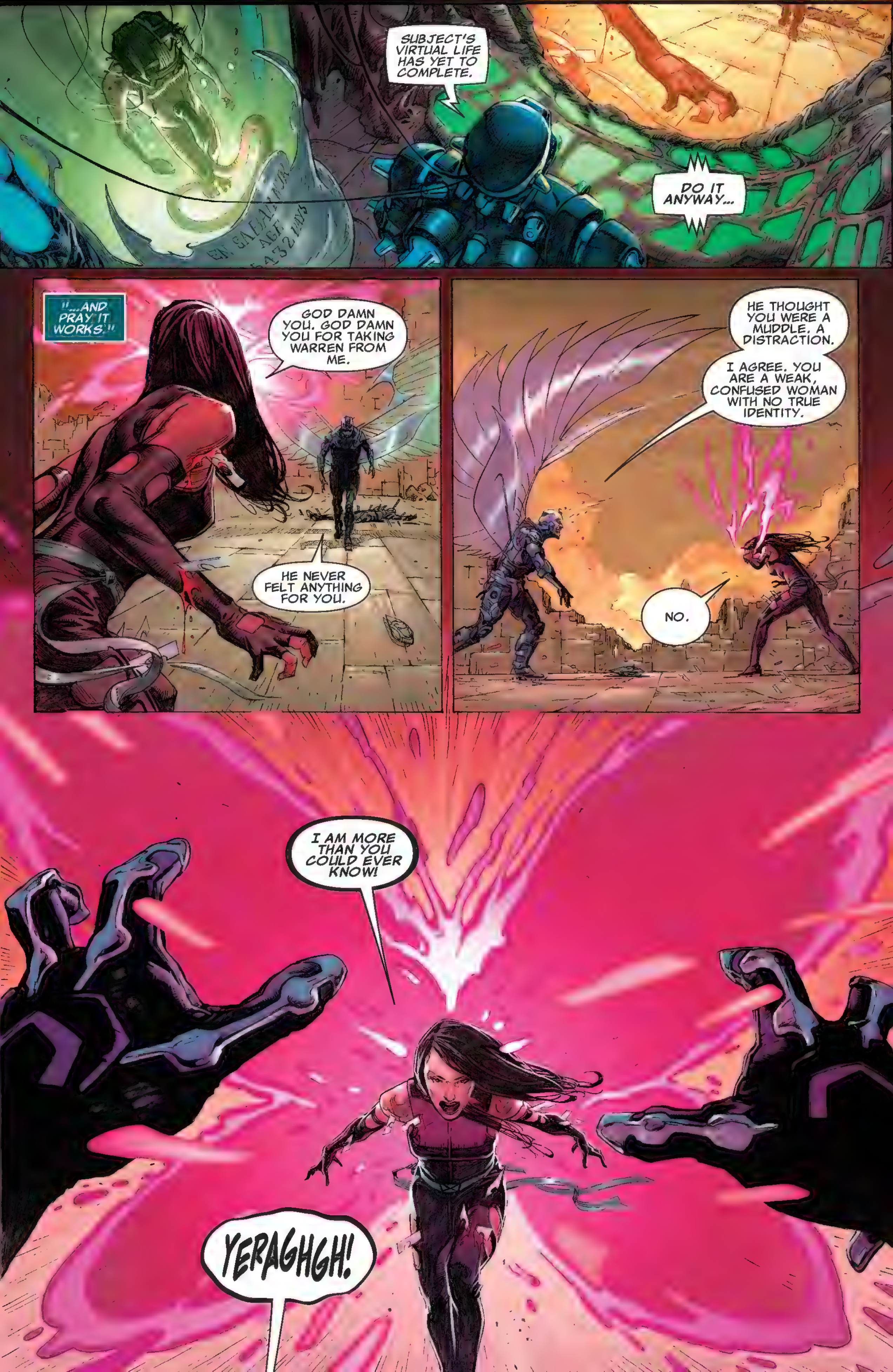

WHERE ARE YOU HIDING, SHIRO?
SO MUCH HISTORY--IT'S A BUMMER--I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING BACK HOME...
...DEATH IS DOING YOU A FAVOR.
THERE YOU ARE, ROBERT.
THERE YOU WERE.
FROOOOM
"SOMEHOW THESE OFFICIOUS FOOLS ARE STILL BREATHING..."
...WAR, FIX THAT.
WHILE LORD ARCHANGEL PLANTS THE SEED.
NOT THE ONLY SEED HE'S PLANTED TODAY, MY DEAR.
MURDER IS NATURE. LIFE IS WAR.
NO, LIFE IS THE VOICE OF THE UNIVERSE. WAR IS CANCER.
SOULS MUST BE RELEASED. HATE IS NATURE.
LOVE IS TRUE EVOLUTION.
LOVE IS A CHOICE-- WAR IS AN INSTINCT.
INTELLECT OVER URGE.
CONSTRUCTION OVER DECONSTRUCTION.

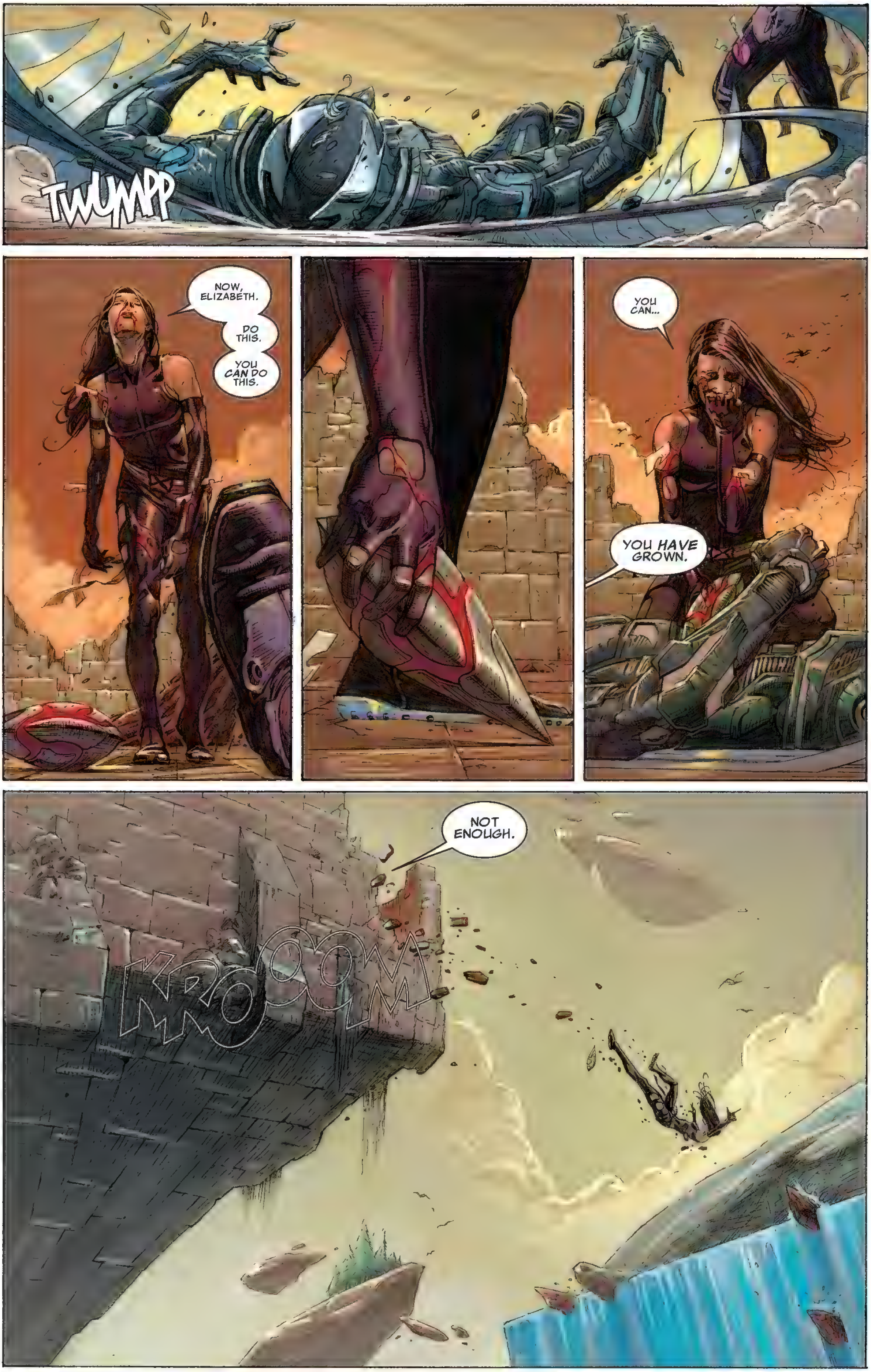

SHHNKT
ENOUGH!
LOVE WILL NOT SWAY THEM.
FOR LIFE TO FLOURISH--
--YOU MUST DIE.
THE HIPPIE MURDER-BORG SIMPLY REASONED HIS WAY OUT OF YOUR SPELL, WAR.
WE'RE DONE HERE.
WAR, SO IMPRESSIVE TO LOOK AT, YET SUCH A DISAPPOINTMENT.
I'M GUESSING YOU WERE SELECTED DURING ONE OF APOCALYPSE'S MANY OPIUM BINGES.
"BINGES OF WHICH I AM BEGINNING TO SEE THE NECESSITY OF."
I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, BETSY.
CAREFUL, CUCKOO BIRD, I'M STARTING TO HEAR SOME EMOTION.
OH, I KNOW!

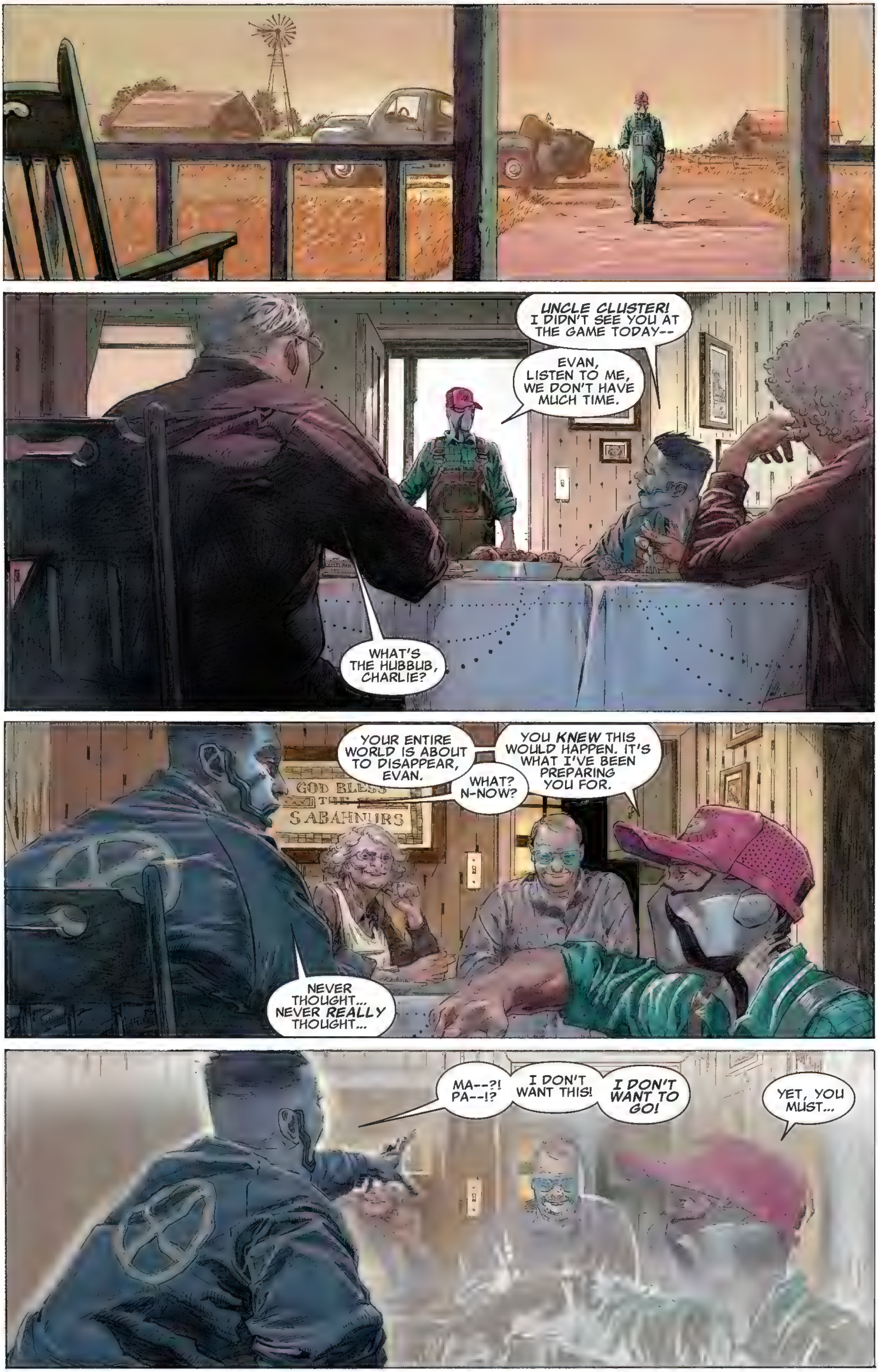

YOU'RE ANGRY SHE CHOSE *ME.*
I'M BEYOND JEALOUSY.
TWOK
STILL, YOU SHOULD *NOT* HAVE SHED YOUR GIFTS, ELIZABETH.
YOU ARE TAINTED TO ME NOW.
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THE HALF OF IT.
PLOKK
YOU KNOW YOU CAN TELL THE ONES WHO *REALLY* LIKE YOU...
TWOOK
...BY THE WAY THEY KISS.
KRUNK
AND THE WAY BETSY KISSED ME...
I'D SAY SHE'S A WOMAN WHO HADN'T KNOWN WARMTH IN A *VERY* LONG TIME.
SHUNKK
KAA--

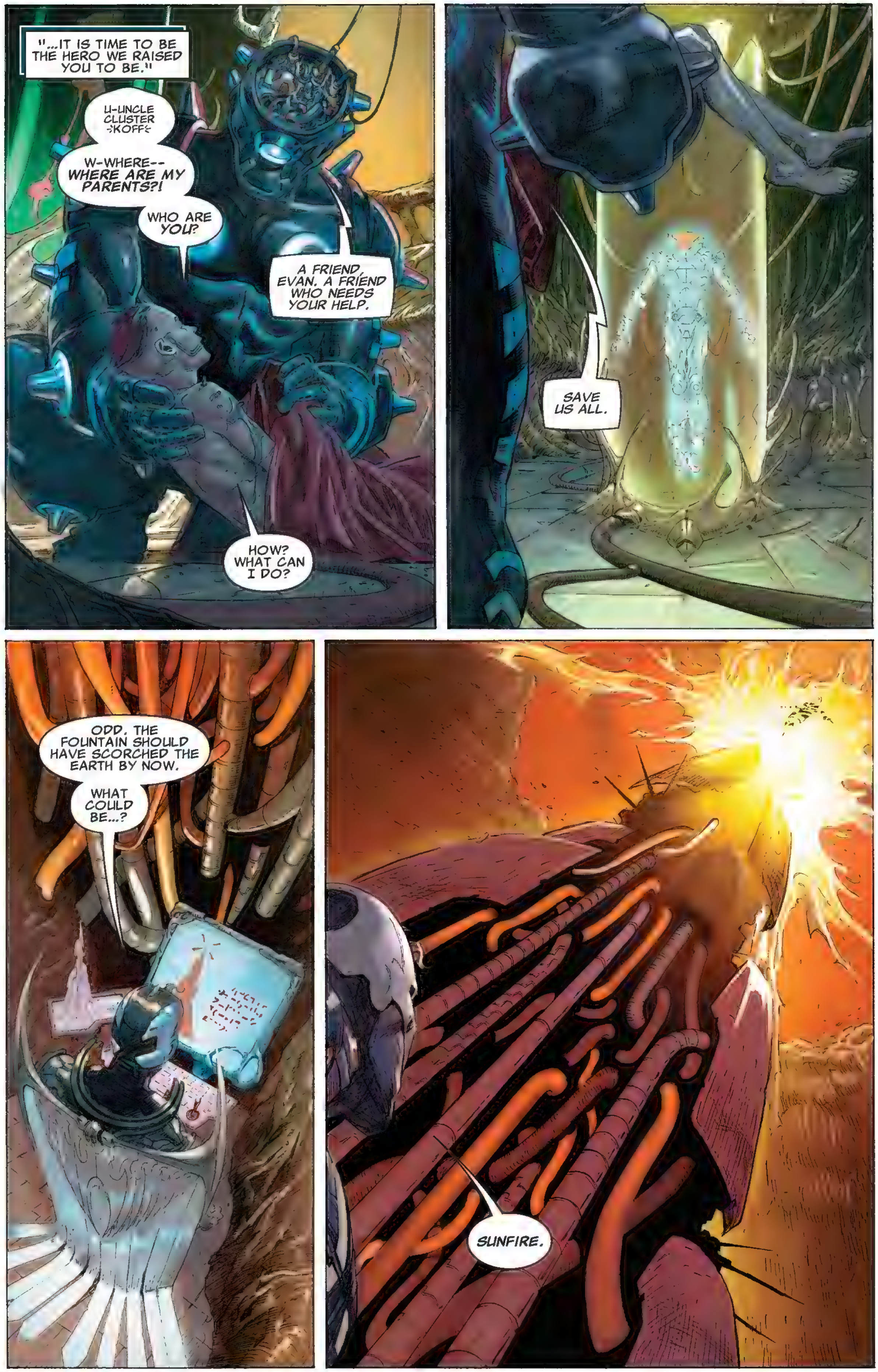

YOU IMAGINE THIS KNIFE WILL IMPEDE ME?
THAT YOUR WORDS WILL UNNERVE ME?
SNIKK
AFTER ALL I'VE ACCOMPLISHED, YOU STILL REFUSE TO SHOW ME THE SMALLEST RESPECT.
SNK SNK
SNK
SNK
SNK
SNK
YOU WANT ME ANGRY?
I'LL ACT ANGRY.
NO!
SHKK

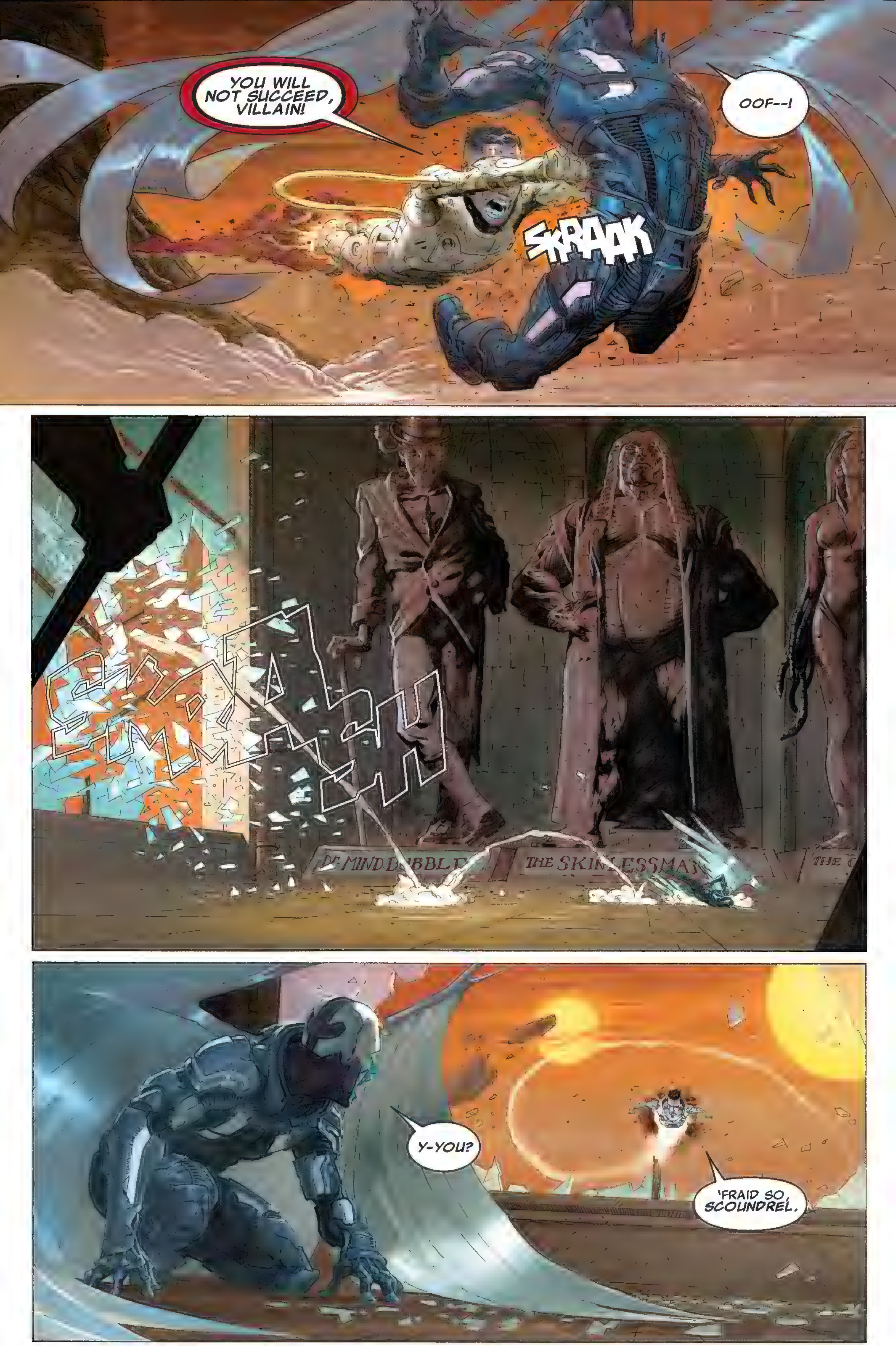

AKKABA METROPOLIS.
SHIP, DO YOU READ ME?
YES, DOCTOR MCCOY.
BE A DEAR AND POWER UP-- WE'RE JUMPING TO NEPTUNE STATION.
ONCE ARCHANGEL PLANTS THE LIFE SEED IN THE FOUNTAIN WE WILL WANT TO BE FAR AWAY.
ABANDONING ARCHANGEL?
HE IS THE CHOSEN. YOU ARE--
IN CHARGE NOW.
WE ARE NOT ABANDONING HIM. THESE ARE HIS INSTRUCTIONS.
DO AS YOU'RE TOLD, SHIP--
WHAT PESTILENCE CARRIES IN HER IS VERY PRECIOUS TO HIM.
THE HEIR OF ARCHANGEL MUST BE PROTECTED.
U-ULTIMATON...
I AM HERE.
HIT A SNAG.
NEED YOU... PLAY THE MESSAGE...
...LET HIM OUT.

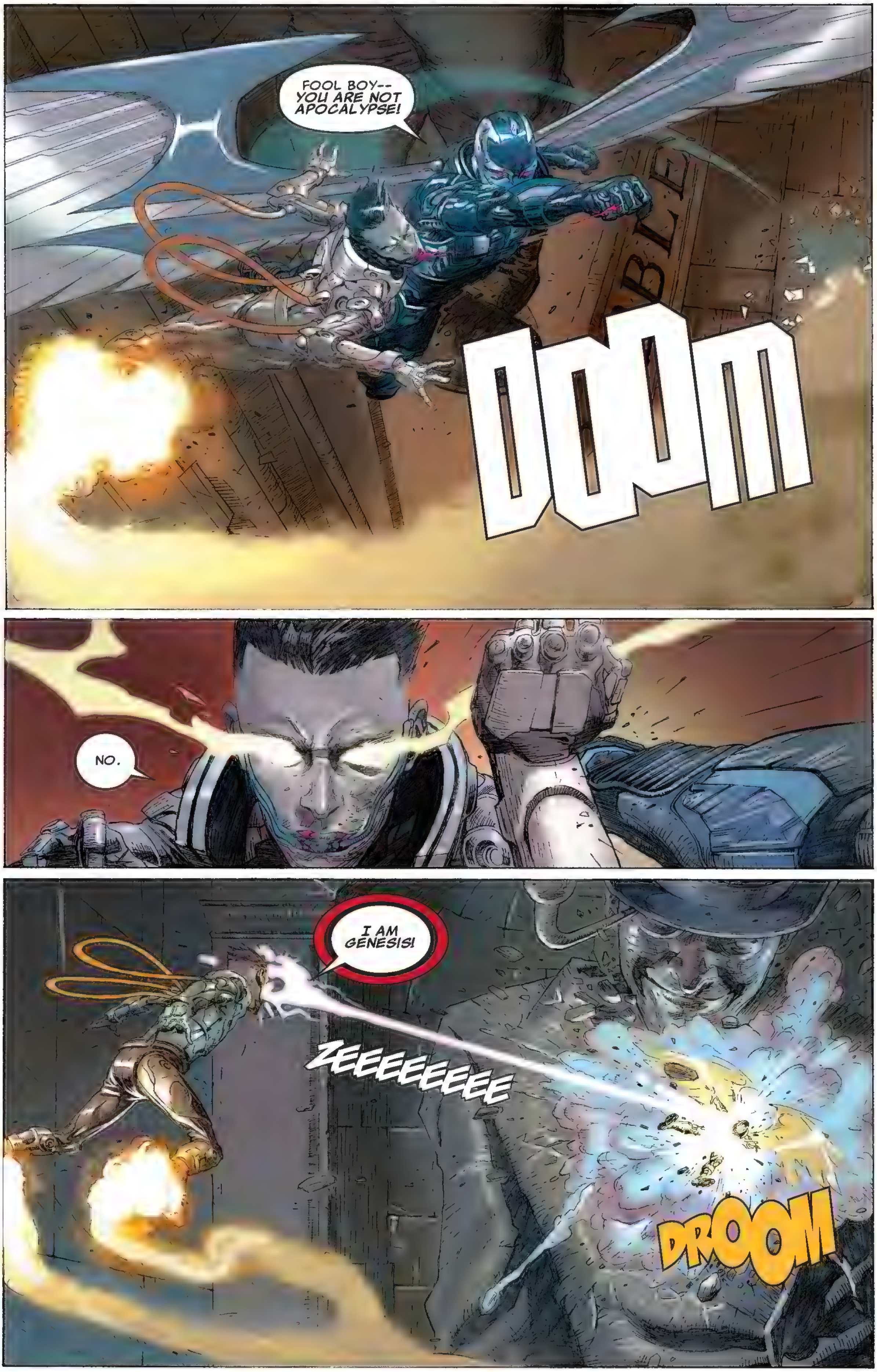

SUBJECT'S VIRTUAL LIFE HAS YET TO COMPLETE.
DO IT ANYWAY...
EN SABAH NUR
AGE
432 DAYS
"...AND PRAY IT WORKS."
GOD DAMN YOU. GOD DAMN YOU FOR TAKING WARREN FROM ME.
HE NEVER FELT ANYTHING FOR YOU.
HE THOUGHT YOU WERE A MUDDLE. A DISTRACTION.
I AGREE. YOU ARE A WEAK, CONFUSED WOMAN WITH NO TRUE IDENTITY.
NO.
I AM MORE THAN YOU COULD EVER KNOW!
YERAGHGH!

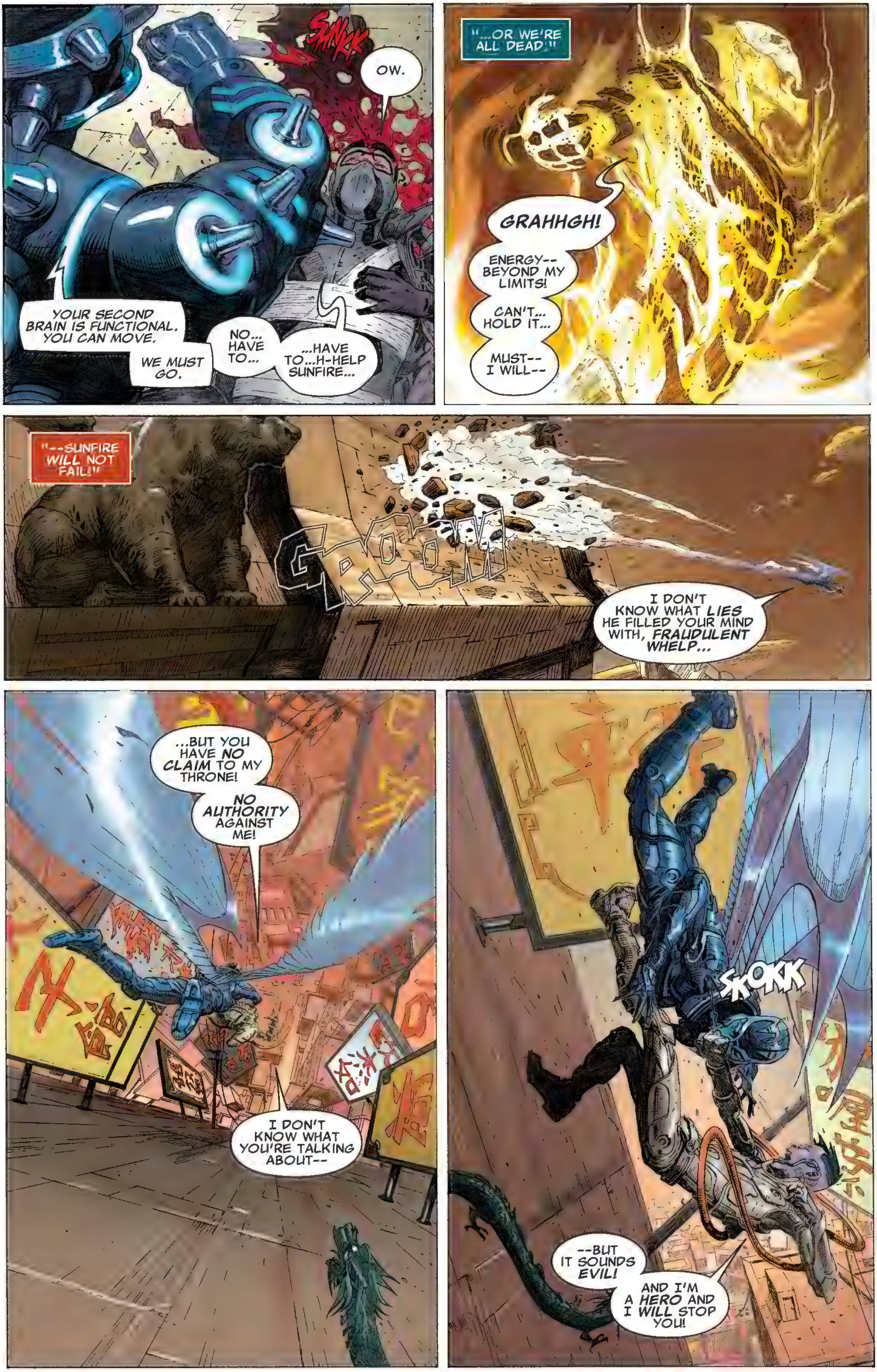

TWUMPP
NOW, ELIZABETH.
DO THIS.
YOU *CAN* DO THIS.
YOU CAN...
YOU *HAVE* GROWN.
NOT ENOUGH.
KROOOM

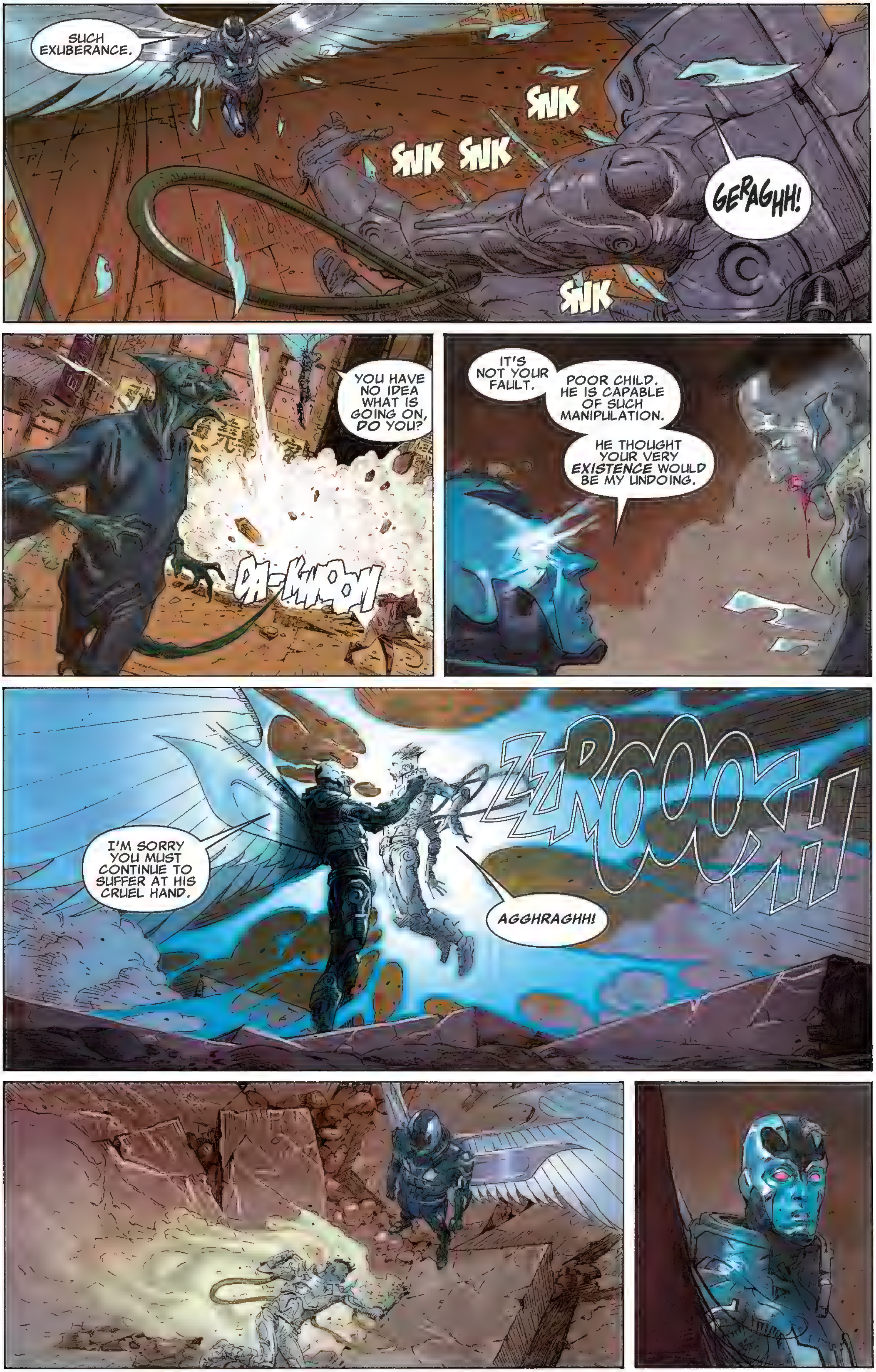

UNCLE CLUSTER! I DIDN'T SEE YOU AT THE GAME TODAY--
EVAN, LISTEN TO ME, WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
WHAT'S THE HUBBUB, CHARLIE?
YOUR ENTIRE WORLD IS ABOUT TO DISAPPEAR, EVAN.
GOD BLESS THE SABAHNURS
WHAT? N-NOW?
YOU *KNEW* THIS WOULD HAPPEN. IT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN PREPARING YOU FOR.
NEVER THOUGHT... NEVER *REALLY* THOUGHT...
MA--?! PA--!?
I DON'T WANT THIS!
I DON'T WANT TO GO!
YET, YOU MUST...

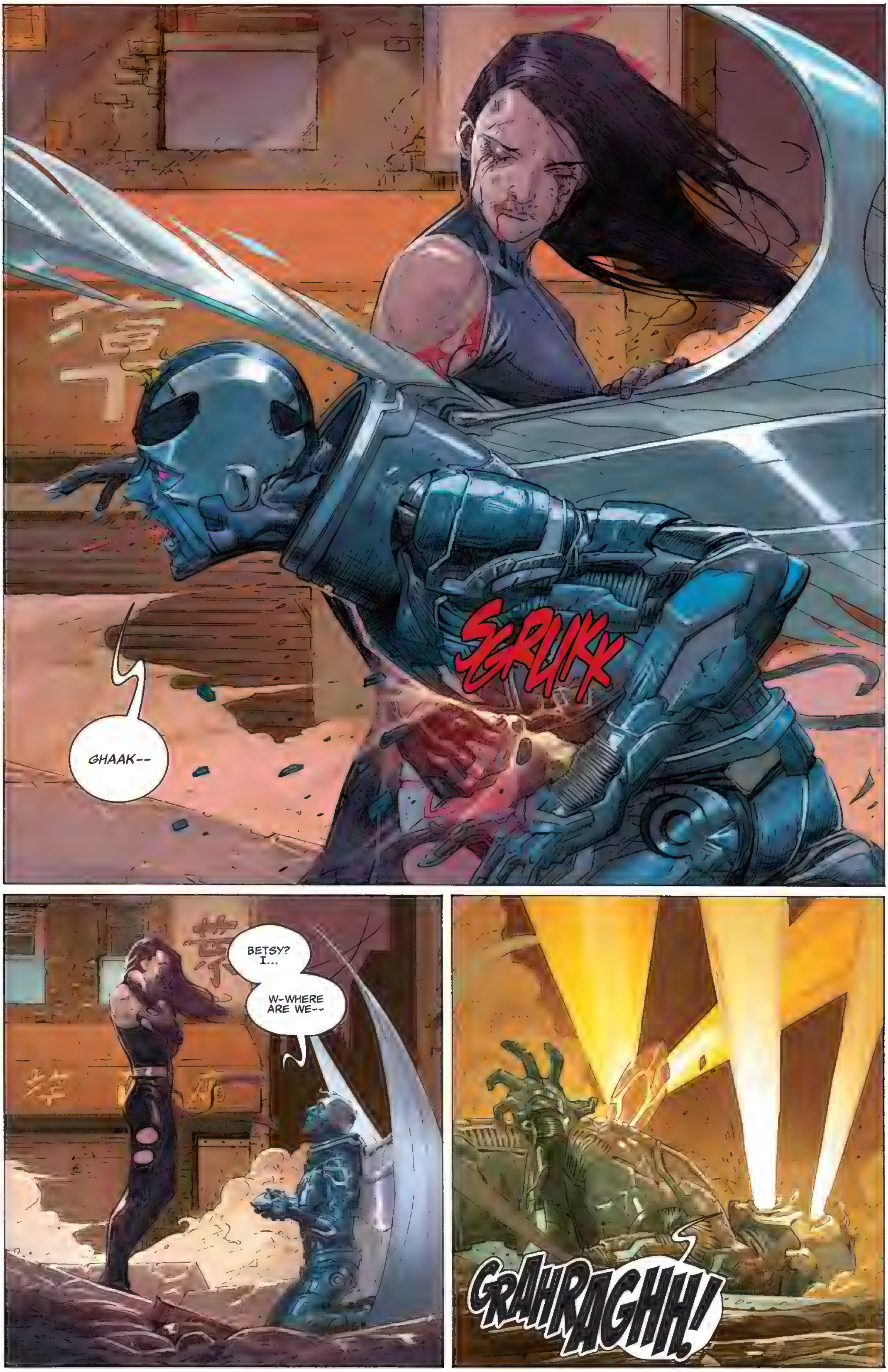

"...IT IS TIME TO BE THE HERO WE RAISED YOU TO BE."
U-UNCLE CLUSTER -KOFF-
W-WHERE-- WHERE ARE MY PARENTS?!
WHO ARE YOU?
A FRIEND, EVAN. A FRIEND WHO NEEDS YOUR HELP.
HOW? WHAT CAN I DO?
SAVE US ALL.
ODD. THE FOUNTAIN SHOULD HAVE SCORCHED THE EARTH BY NOW.
WHAT COULD BE...?
SUNFIRE.

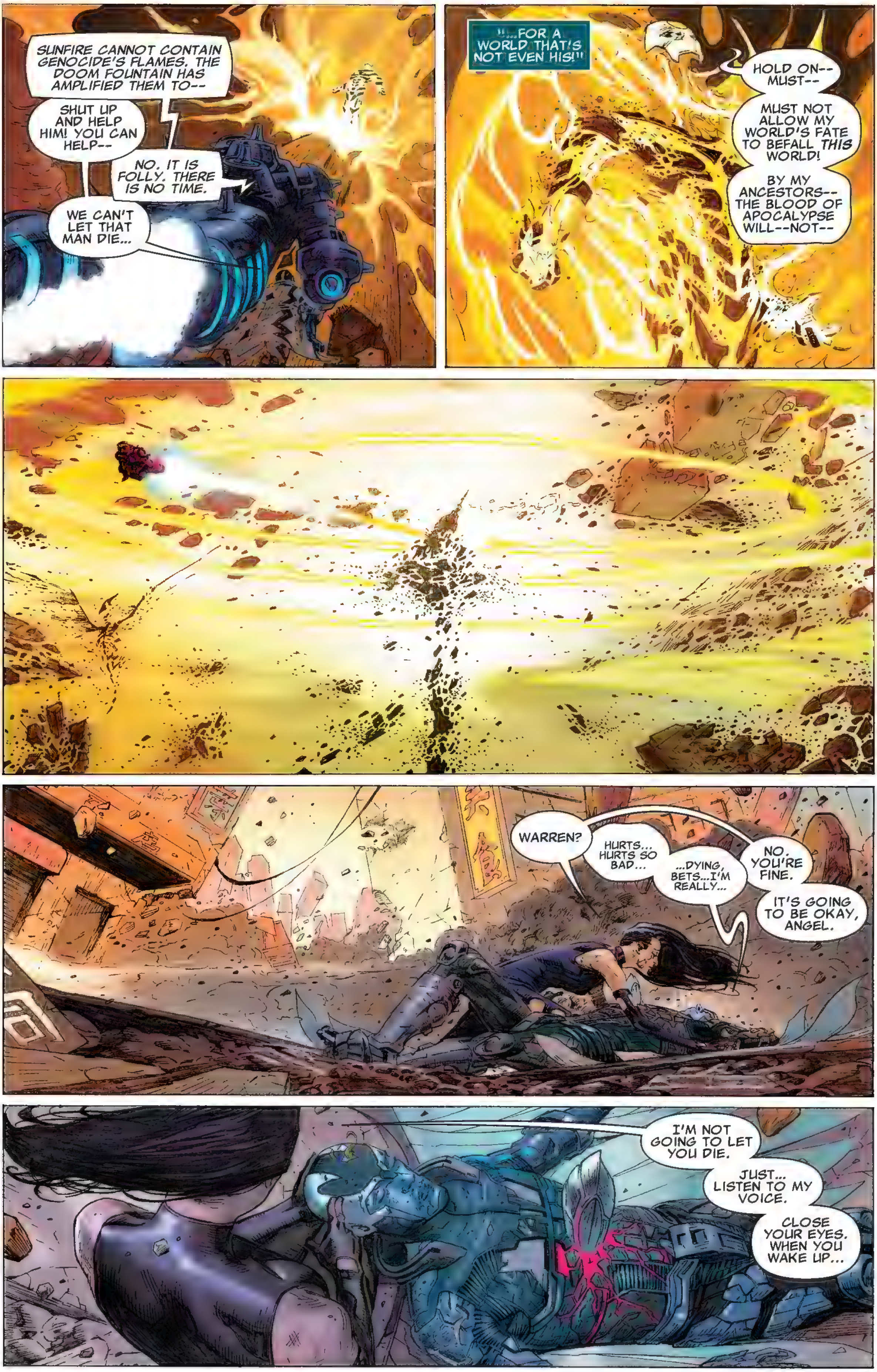

YOU WILL NOT SUCCEED, VILLAIN!
OOF--!
SKRAAK
SMASH
DR MINDBUBBLE
THE SKINLESSMAN
THE
Y-YOU?
'FRAID SO, SCOUNDREL.

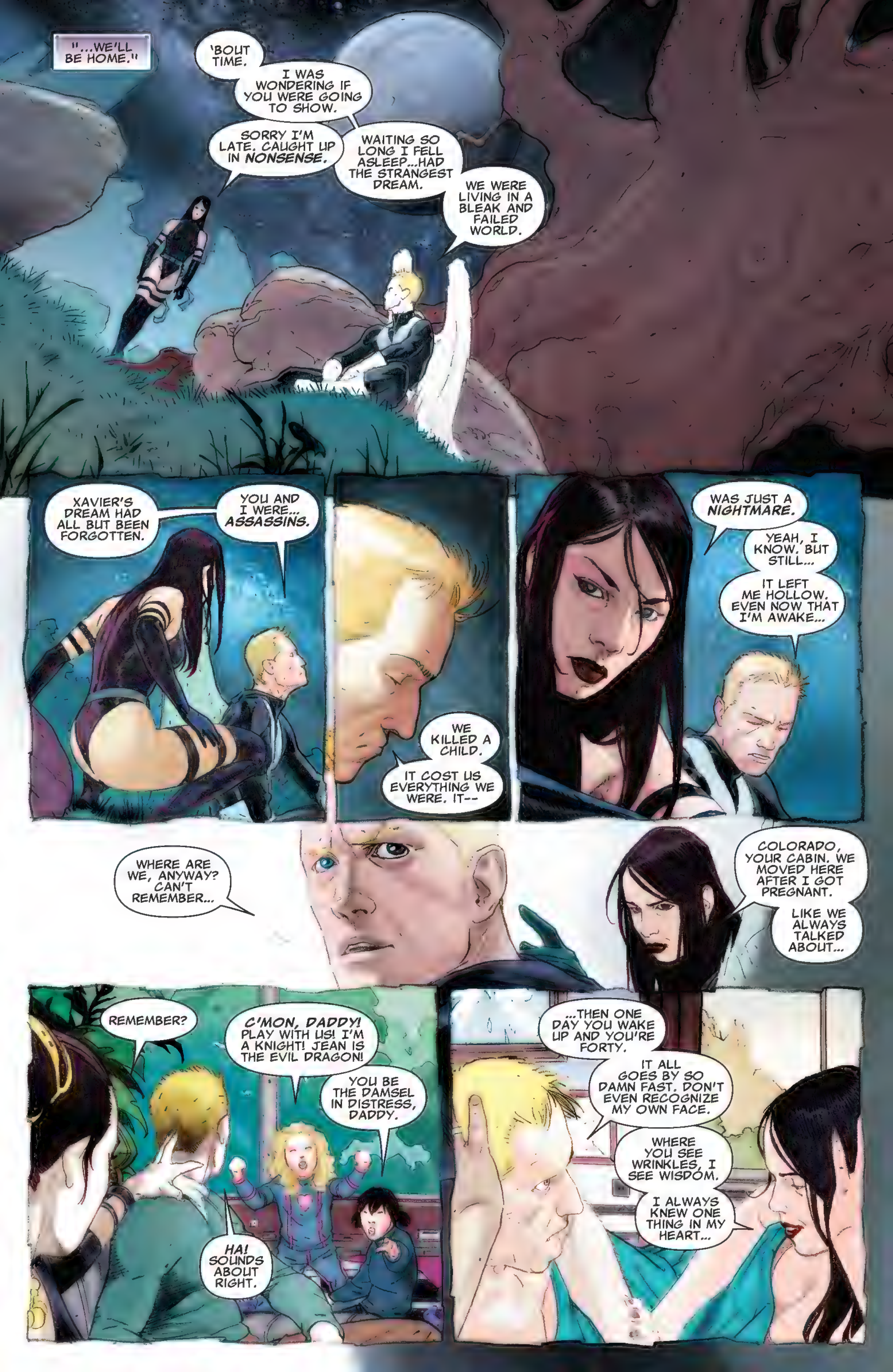

FOOL BOY-- YOU ARE NOT APOCALYPSE!
DOOM
NO.
I AM GENESIS!
ZEEEEEEEEE
DROOM

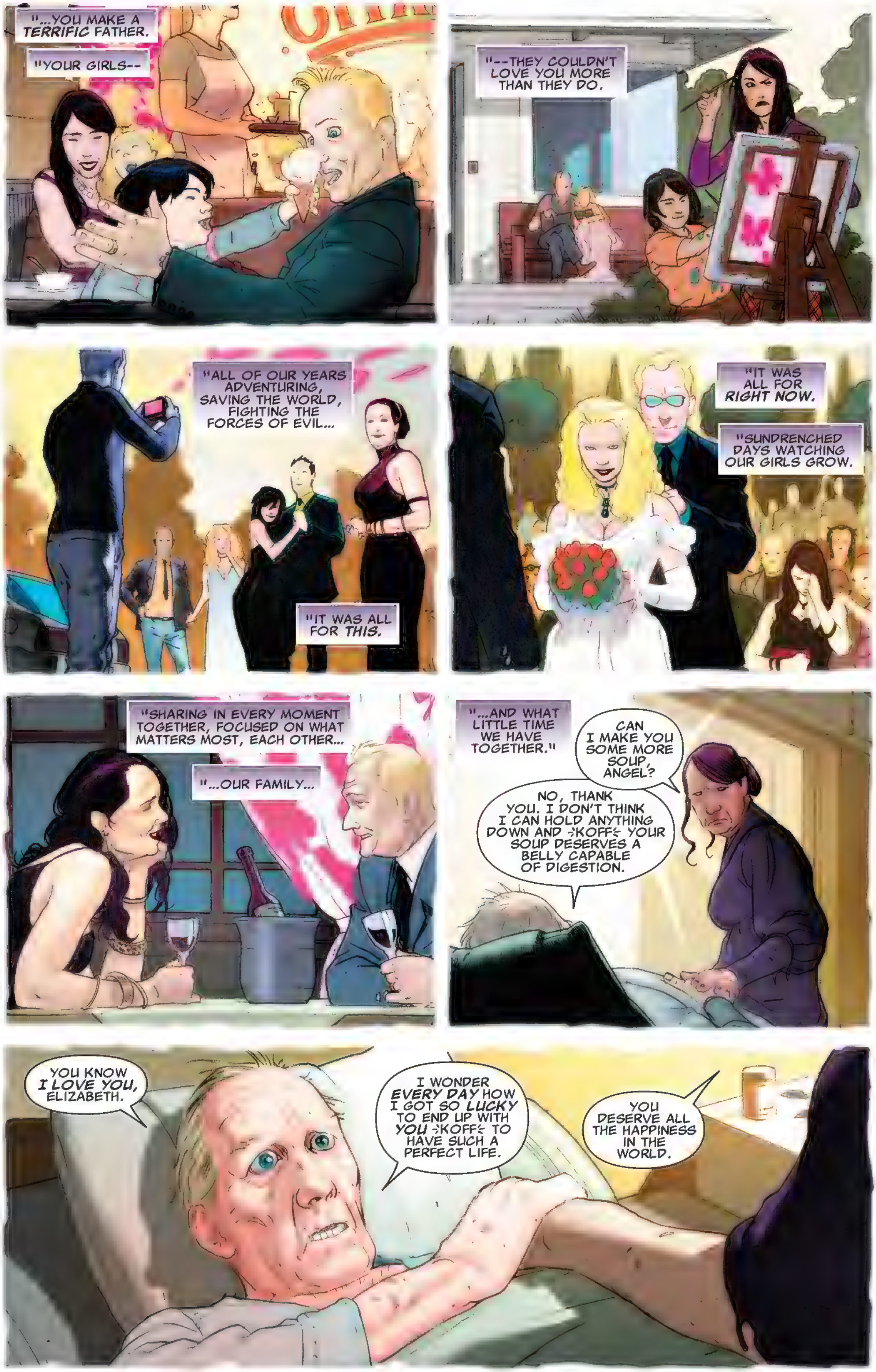

SNIKK
OW.
YOUR SECOND BRAIN IS FUNCTIONAL. YOU CAN MOVE.
WE MUST GO.
NO... HAVE TO...
...HAVE TO...H-HELP SUNFIRE...
"...OR WE'RE ALL DEAD."
GRAHHGH!
ENERGY-- BEYOND MY LIMITS!
CAN'T... HOLD IT...
MUST-- I WILL--
"--SUNFIRE WILL NOT FAIL!"
GROOM
I DON'T KNOW WHAT LIES HE FILLED YOUR MIND WITH, FRAUDULENT WHELP...
...BUT YOU HAVE NO CLAIM TO MY THRONE!
NO AUTHORITY AGAINST ME!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT--
SKOKK
--BUT IT SOUNDS EVIL!
AND I'M A HERO AND I WILL STOP YOU!

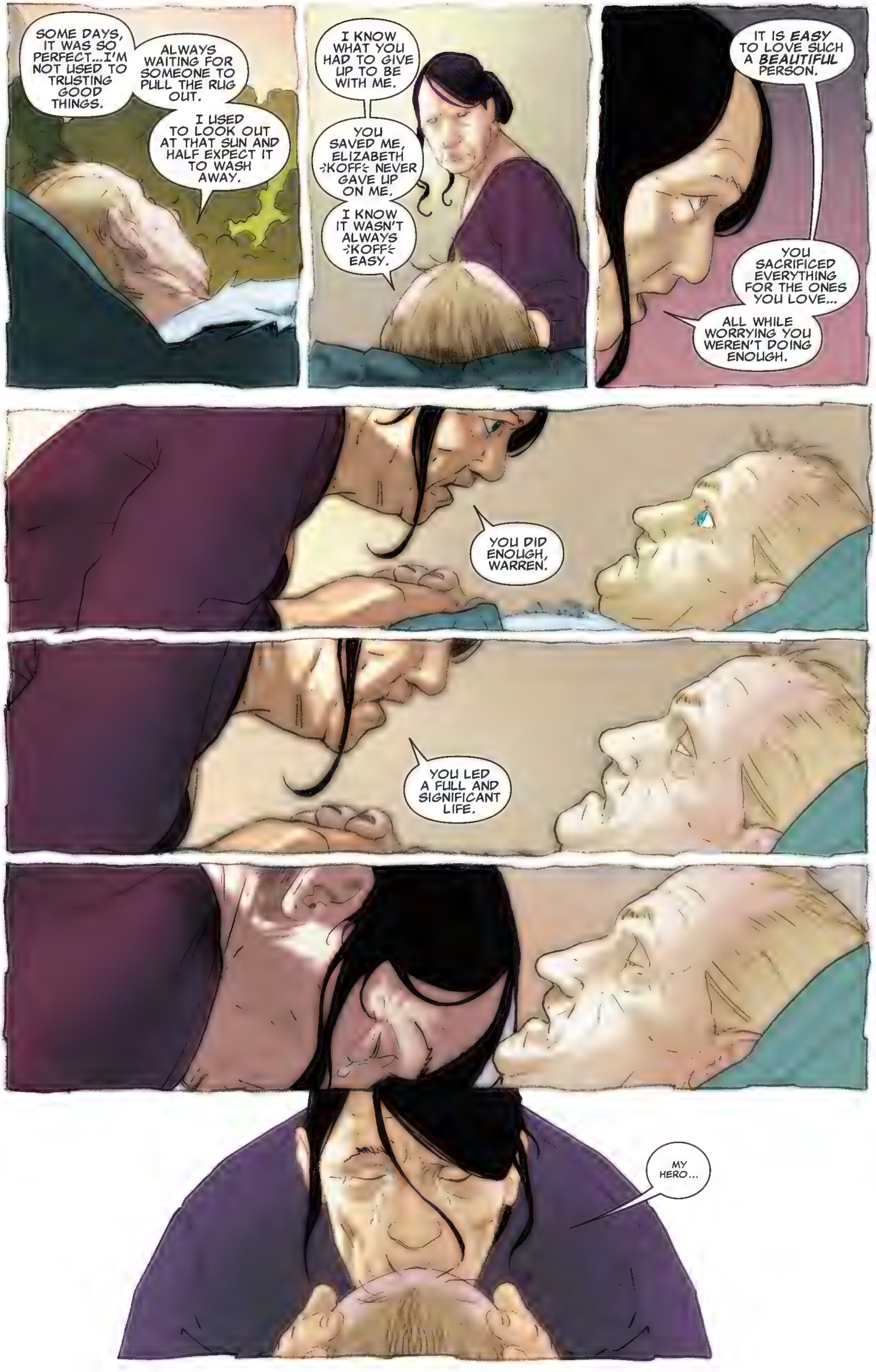

SUCH EXUBERANCE.
SNK
SNK SNK
GERAGHH!
SNK
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IS GOING ON, *DO* YOU?
DA-KOOM
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
POOR CHILD. HE IS CAPABLE OF SUCH MANIPULATION.
HE THOUGHT YOUR VERY *EXISTENCE* WOULD BE MY UNDOING.
ZZROOOOOOOWH
I'M SORRY YOU MUST CONTINUE TO SUFFER AT HIS CRUEL HAND.
AGGHRAGHH!

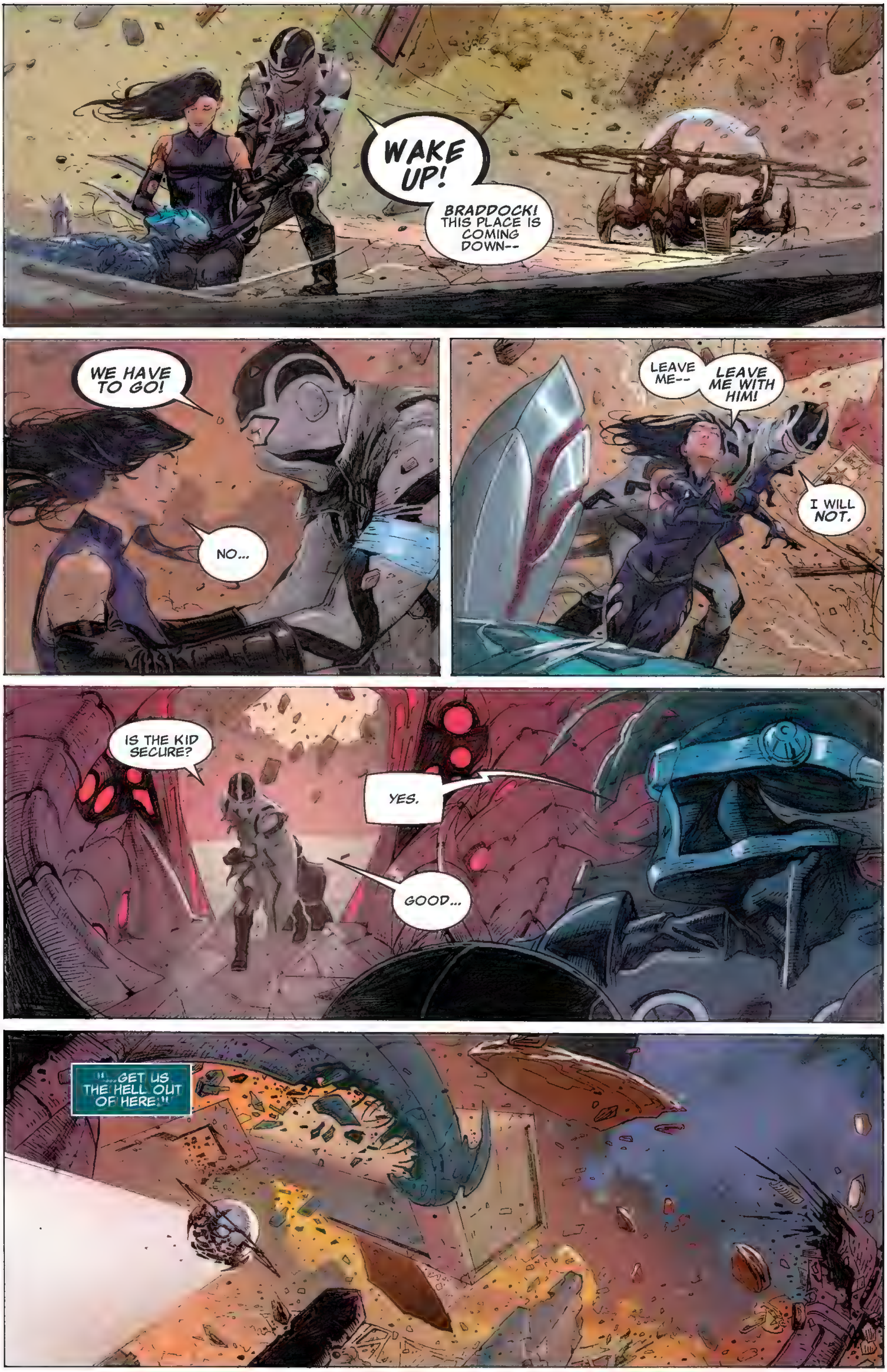

SCRUKK
GHAAK--
BETSY? I...
W-WHERE ARE WE--
GRAHRAGHH!

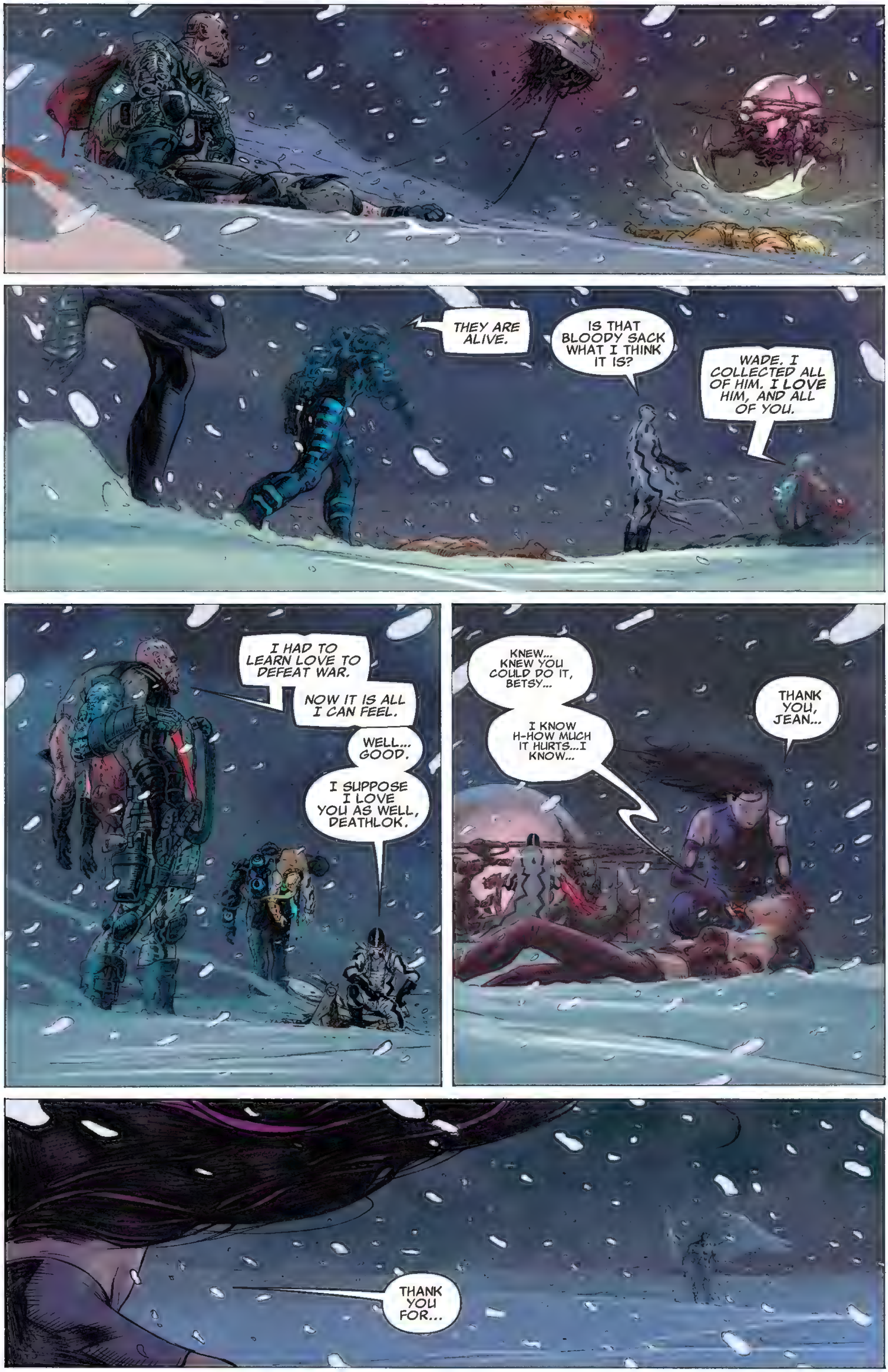

SUNFIRE CANNOT CONTAIN GENOCIDE'S FLAMES. THE DOOM FOUNTAIN HAS AMPLIFIED THEM TO--
SHUT UP AND HELP HIM! YOU CAN HELP--
NO. IT IS FOLLY. THERE IS NO TIME.
WE CAN'T LET THAT MAN DIE...
"...FOR A WORLD THAT'S NOT EVEN HIS!"
HOLD ON-- MUST--
MUST NOT ALLOW MY WORLD'S FATE TO BEFALL *THIS* WORLD!
BY MY ANCESTORS-- THE BLOOD OF APOCALYPSE WILL--NOT--
WARREN?
HURTS... HURTS SO BAD...
...DYING, BETS...I'M REALLY...
NO. YOU'RE FINE.
IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY, ANGEL.
I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU DIE.
JUST... LISTEN TO MY VOICE.
CLOSE YOUR EYES. WHEN YOU WAKE UP...

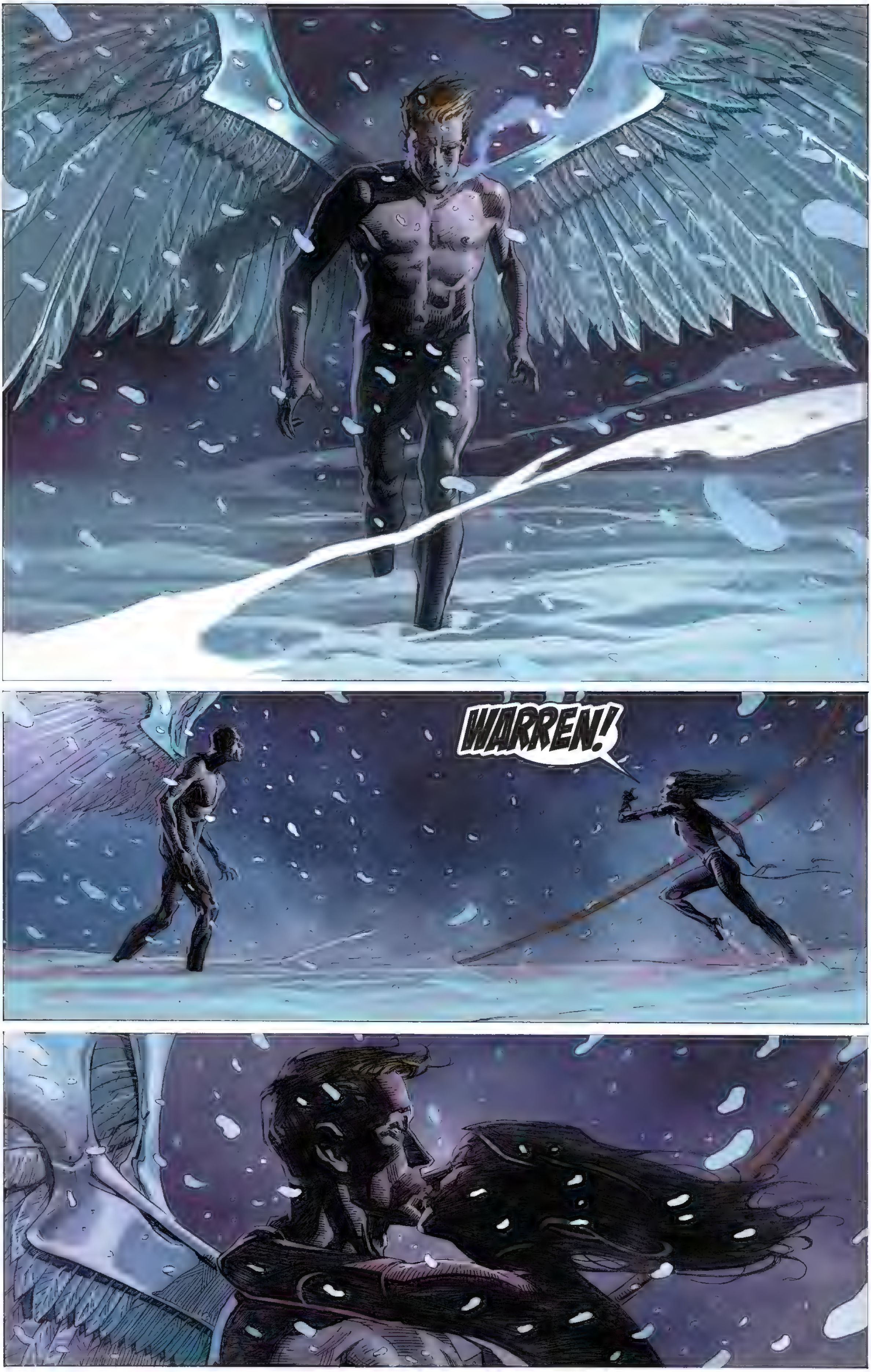

"...WE'LL BE HOME."
'BOUT TIME.
I WAS WONDERING IF YOU WERE GOING TO SHOW.
SORRY I'M LATE. CAUGHT UP IN *NONSENSE.*
WAITING SO LONG I FELL ASLEEP...HAD THE STRANGEST DREAM.
WE WERE LIVING IN A BLEAK AND FAILED WORLD.
XAVIER'S DREAM HAD ALL BUT BEEN FORGOTTEN.
YOU AND I WERE... *ASSASSINS.*
WE KILLED A CHILD.
IT COST US EVERYTHING WE WERE. IT--
WAS JUST A *NIGHTMARE.*
YEAH, I KNOW. BUT STILL...
IT LEFT ME HOLLOW. EVEN NOW THAT I'M AWAKE...
WHERE ARE WE, ANYWAY? CAN'T REMEMBER...
COLORADO, YOUR CABIN. WE MOVED HERE AFTER I GOT PREGNANT.
LIKE WE ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT...
REMEMBER?
C'MON, DADDY! PLAY WITH US! I'M A KNIGHT! JEAN IS THE EVIL DRAGON!
YOU BE THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS, DADDY.
HA! SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT.
...THEN ONE DAY YOU WAKE UP AND YOU'RE FORTY.
IT ALL GOES BY SO DAMN FAST. DON'T EVEN RECOGNIZE MY OWN FACE.
WHERE YOU SEE WRINKLES, I SEE WISDOM.
I ALWAYS KNEW ONE THING IN MY HEART...

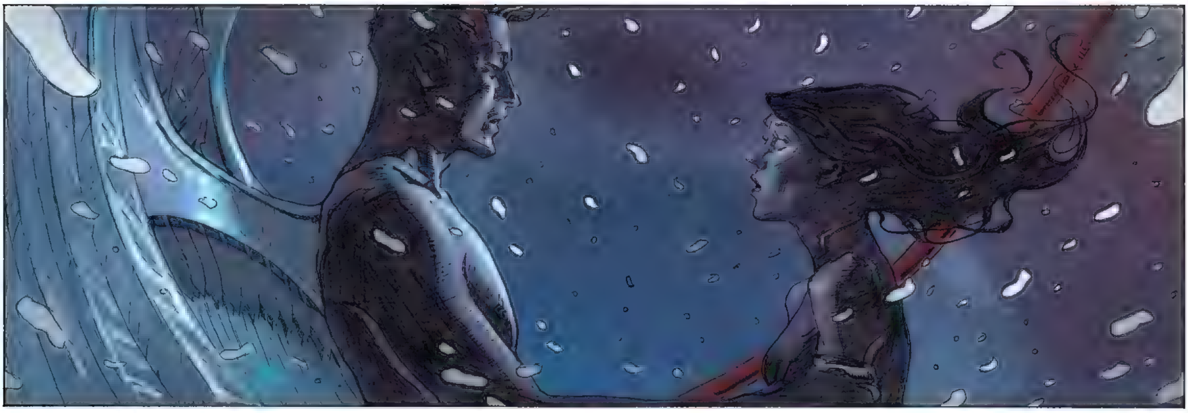

"...YOU MAKE A *TERRIFIC* FATHER.
"YOUR GIRLS--
"--THEY COULDN'T LOVE YOU MORE THAN THEY DO.
"ALL OF OUR YEARS ADVENTURING, SAVING THE WORLD, FIGHTING THE FORCES OF EVIL...
"IT WAS ALL FOR *THIS.*
"IT WAS ALL FOR *RIGHT NOW.*
"SUNDRENCHED DAYS WATCHING OUR GIRLS GROW.
"SHARING IN EVERY MOMENT TOGETHER, FOCUSED ON WHAT MATTERS MOST, EACH OTHER...
"...OUR FAMILY...
"...AND WHAT LITTLE TIME WE HAVE TOGETHER."
CAN I MAKE YOU SOME MORE SOUP, ANGEL?
NO, THANK YOU. I DON'T THINK I CAN HOLD ANYTHING DOWN AND *KOFF* YOUR SOUP DESERVES A BELLY CAPABLE OF DIGESTION.
YOU KNOW *I LOVE YOU,* ELIZABETH.
I WONDER *EVERY DAY* HOW I GOT SO *LUCKY* TO END UP WITH *YOU* *KOFF* TO HAVE SUCH A PERFECT LIFE.
YOU DESERVE ALL THE HAPPINESS IN THE WORLD.

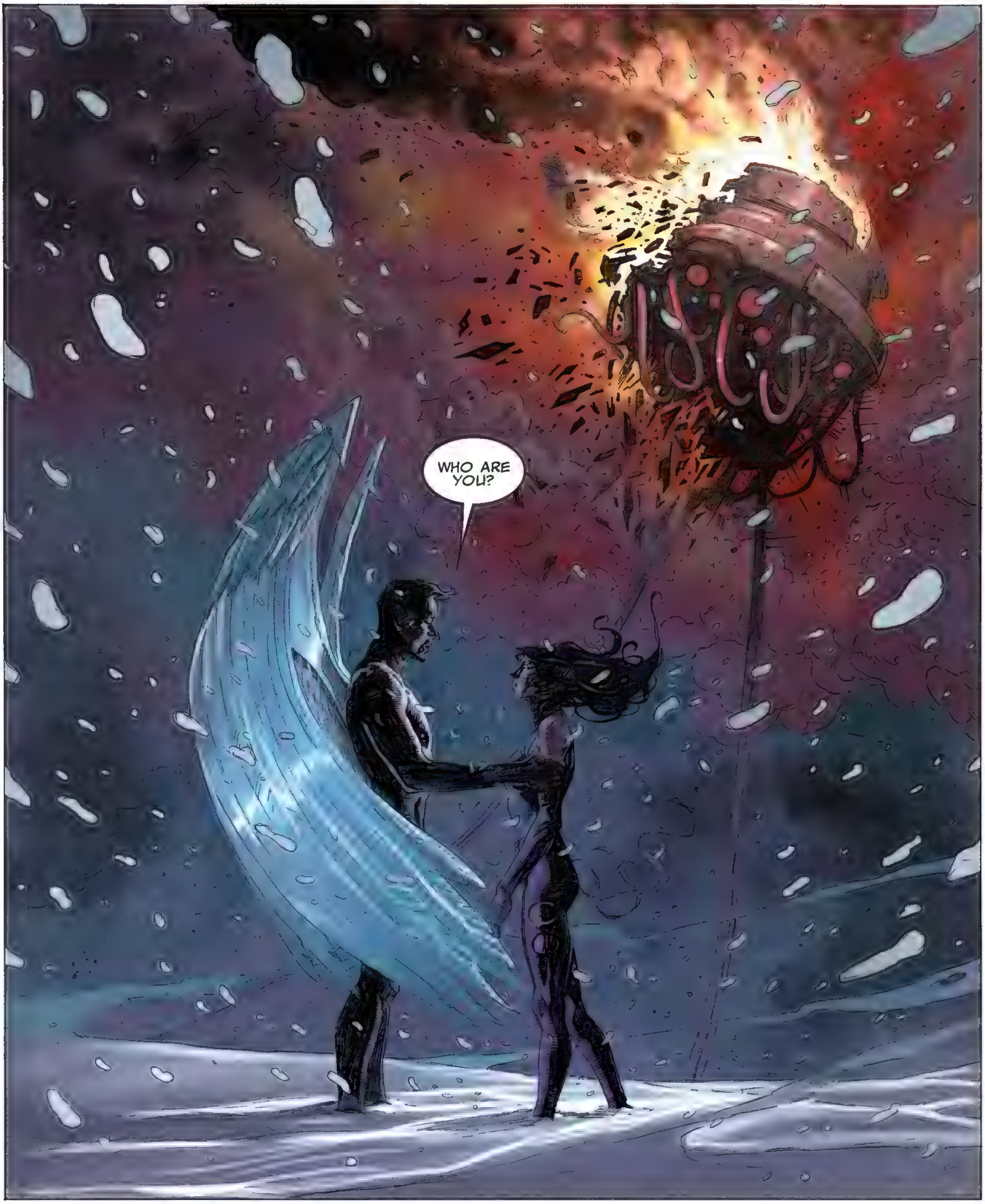

SOME DAYS, IT WAS SO PERFECT...I'M NOT USED TO TRUSTING GOOD THINGS.
ALWAYS WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO PULL THE RUG OUT.
I USED TO LOOK OUT AT THAT SUN AND HALF EXPECT IT TO WASH AWAY.
I KNOW WHAT YOU HAD TO GIVE UP TO BE WITH ME.
YOU SAVED ME, ELIZABETH *KOFF* NEVER GAVE UP ON ME.
I KNOW IT WASN'T ALWAYS *KOFF* EASY.
IT IS *EASY* TO LOVE SUCH A *BEAUTIFUL* PERSON.
YOU SACRIFICED EVERYTHING FOR THE ONES YOU LOVE...
ALL WHILE WORRYING YOU WEREN'T DOING ENOUGH.
YOU DID ENOUGH, WARREN.
YOU LED A FULL AND SIGNIFICANT LIFE.
MY HERO...

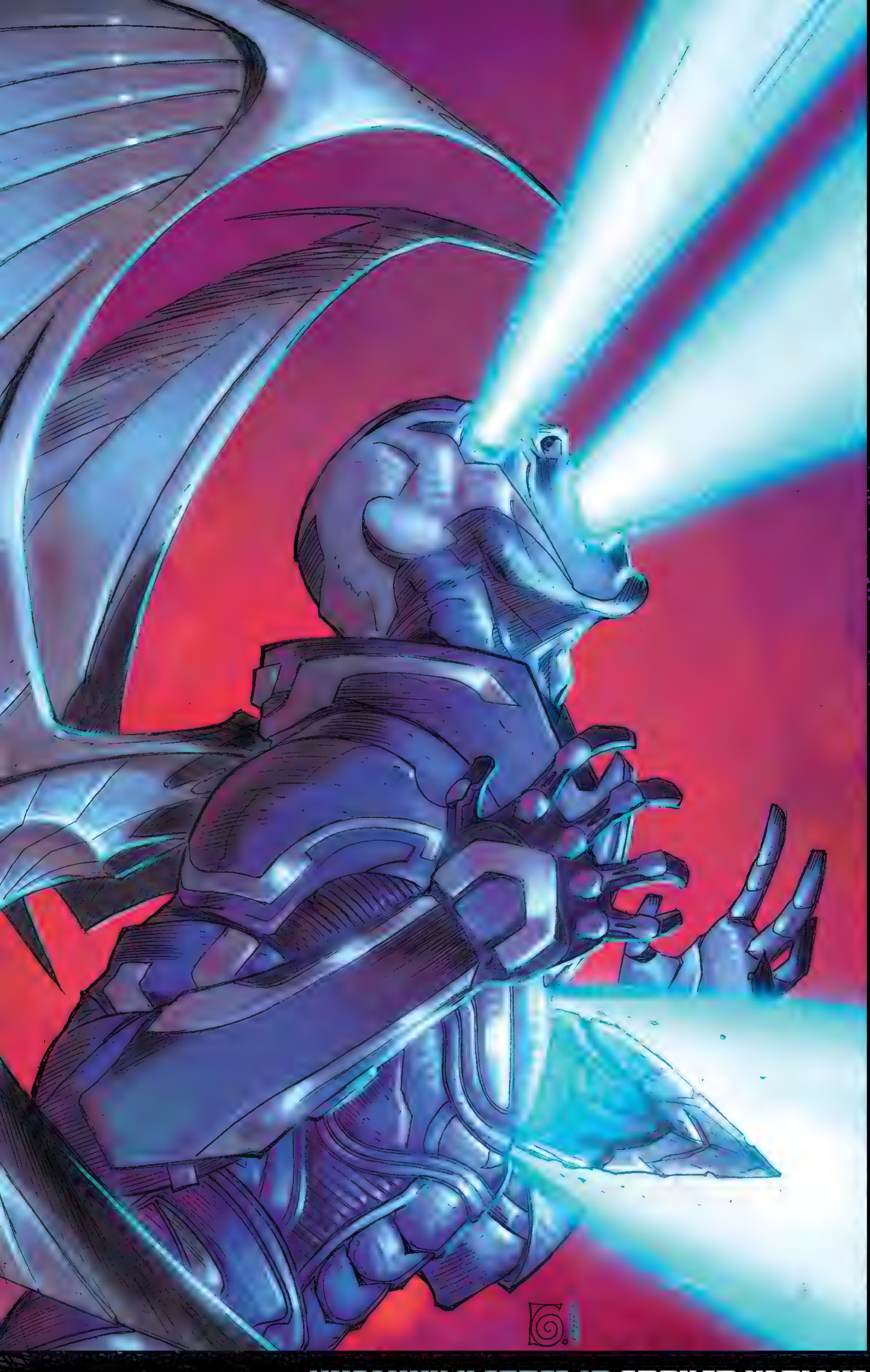

WAKE UP!
BRADDOCK! THIS PLACE IS COMING DOWN--
WE HAVE TO GO!
NO...
LEAVE ME--
LEAVE ME WITH HIM!
I WILL NOT.
IS THE KID SECURE?
YES.
GOOD...
"...GET US THE HELL OUT OF HERE!!"


THEY ARE ALIVE.
IS THAT BLOODY SACK WHAT I THINK IT IS?
WADE. I COLLECTED ALL OF HIM. I LOVE HIM, AND ALL OF YOU.
I HAD TO LEARN LOVE TO DEFEAT WAR.
NOW IT IS ALL I CAN FEEL.
WELL... GOOD.
I SUPPOSE I LOVE YOU AS WELL, DEATHLOK.
KNEW... KNEW YOU COULD DO IT, BETSY...
I KNOW H-HOW MUCH IT HURTS...I KNOW...
THANK YOU, JEAN...
THANK YOU FOR...


WARREN!



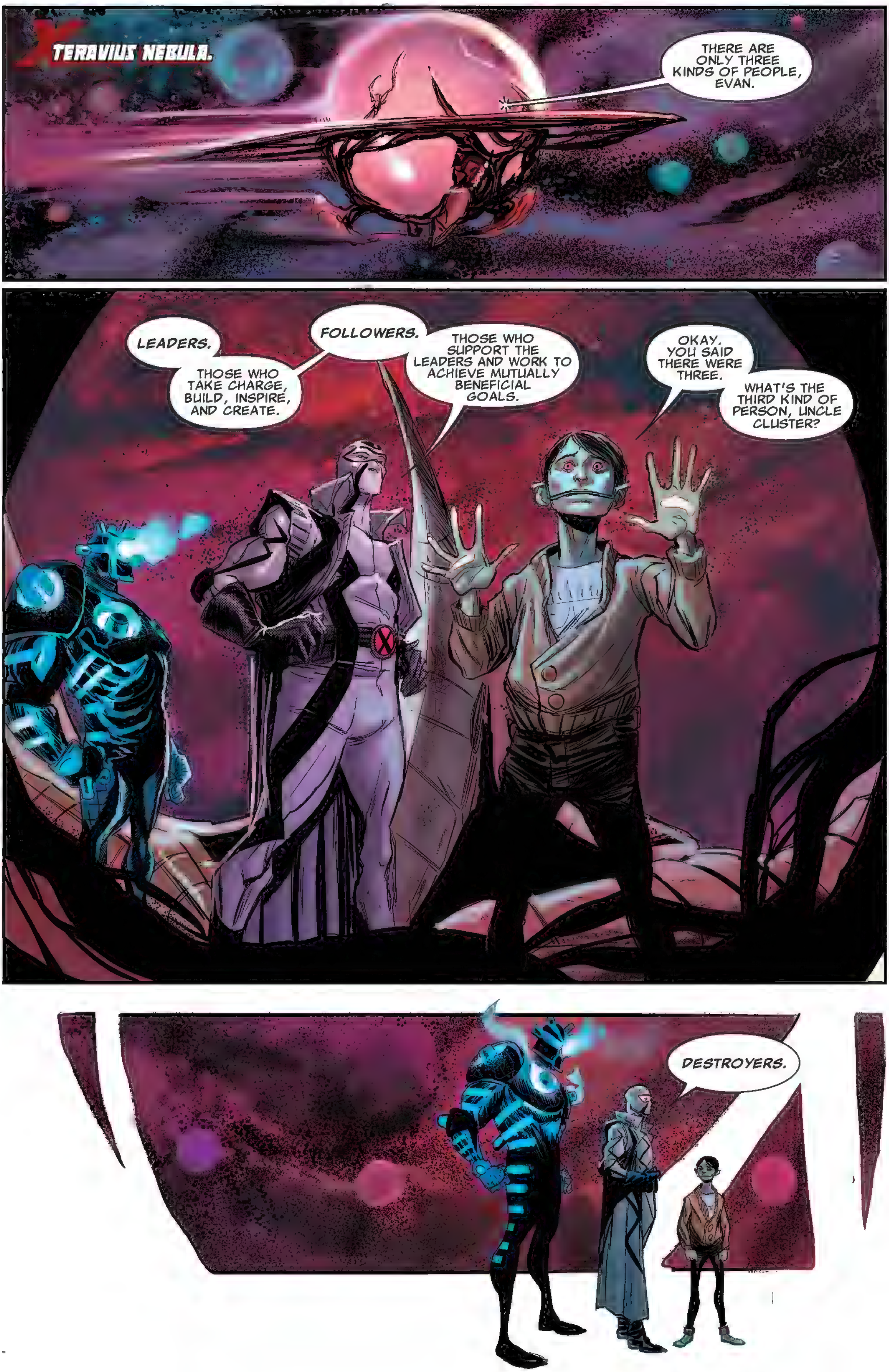

WHO ARE YOU?

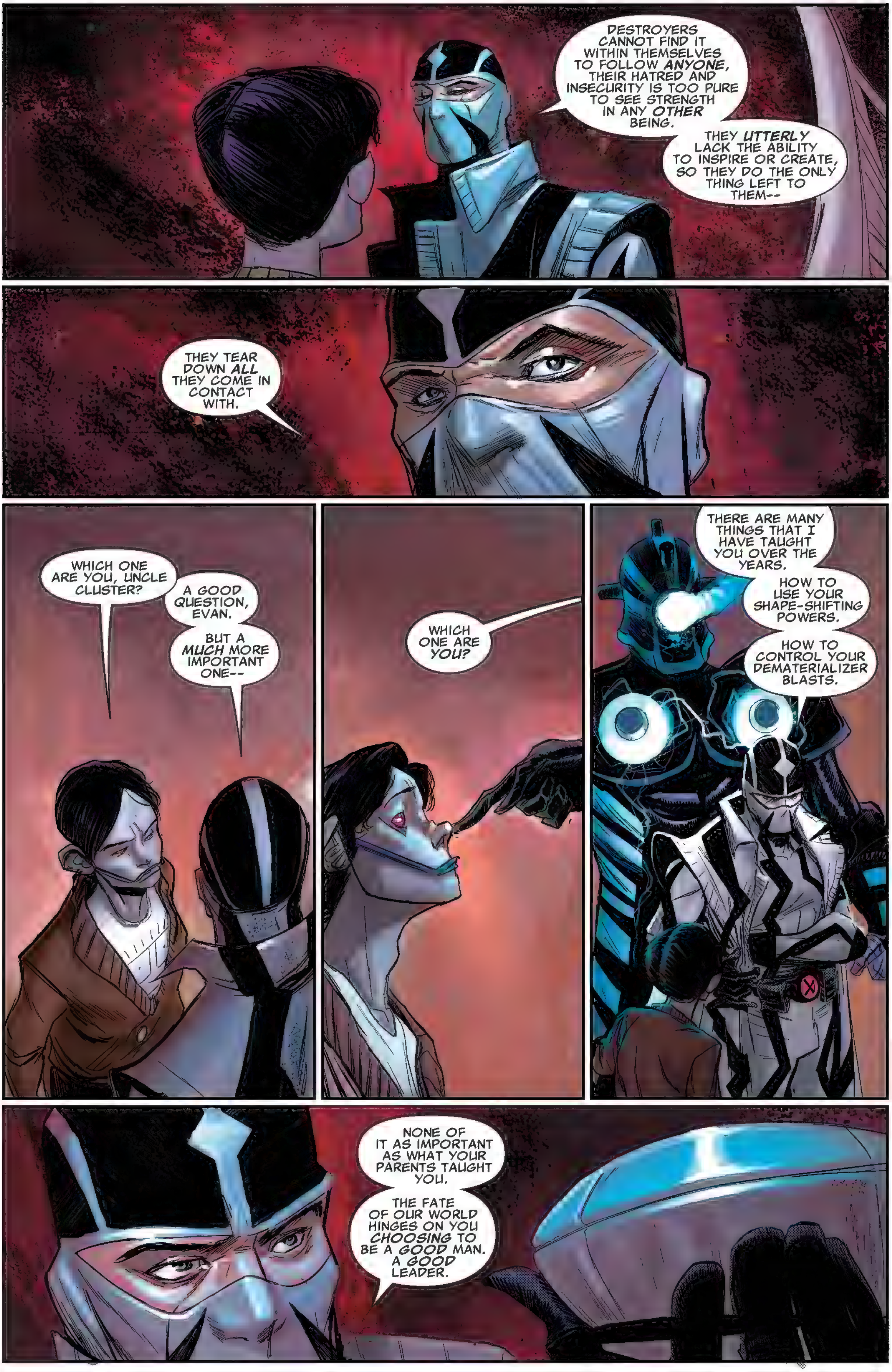


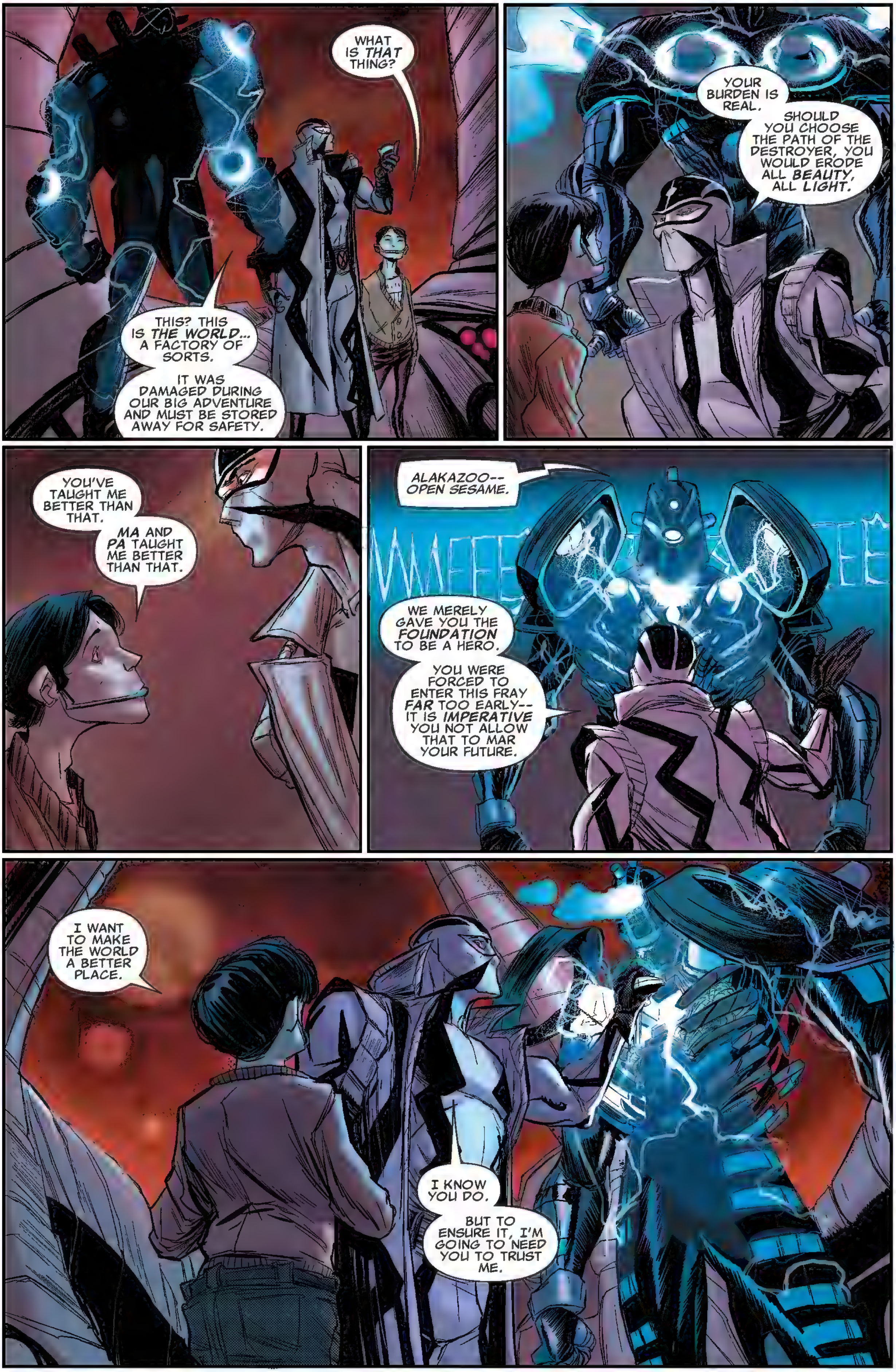
UNCANNY X-FORCE 18 SPOILER VARIANT
ART BY RON GARNEY & CHRIS SOTOMAYOR

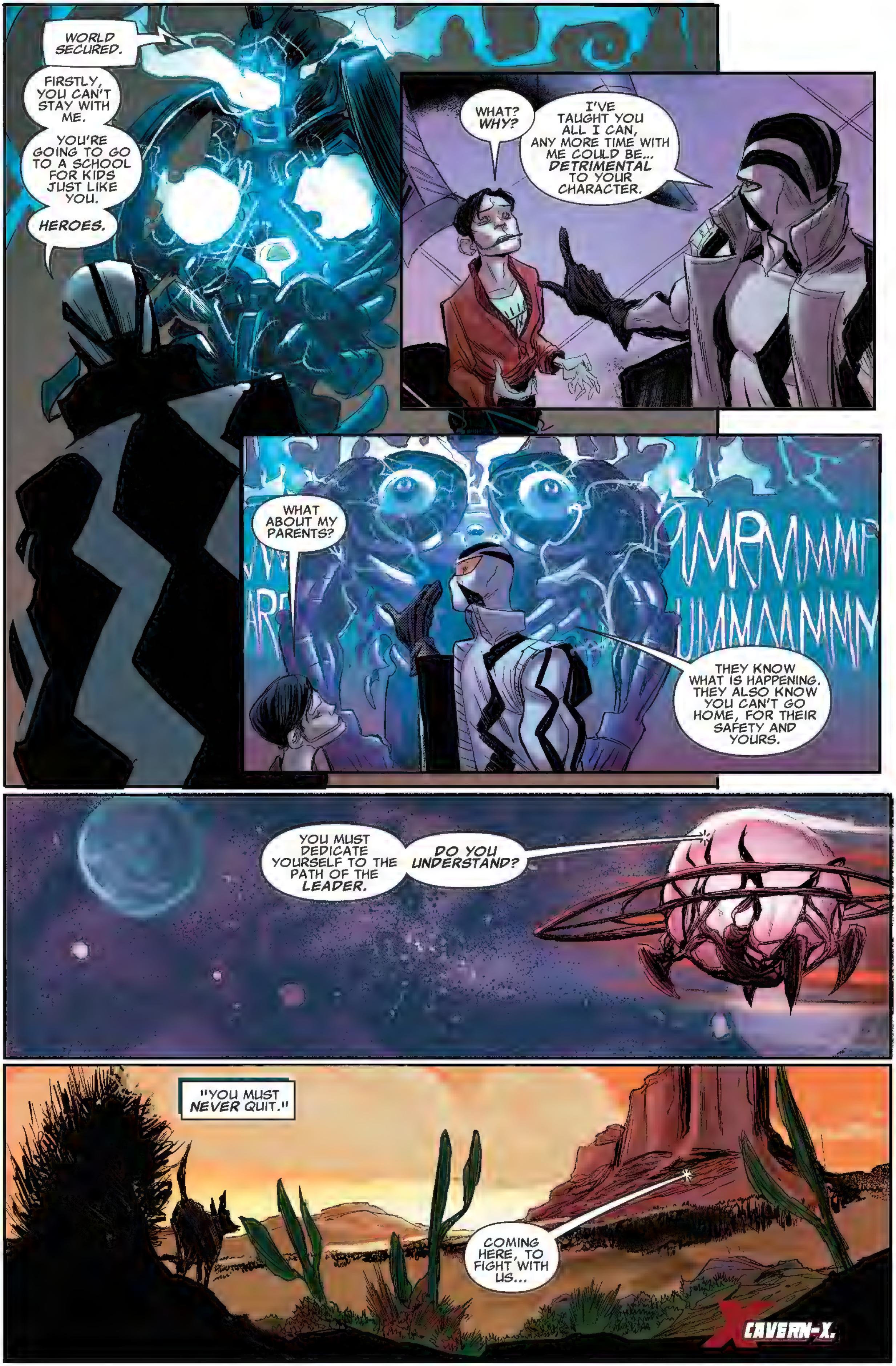
19

LIVE WITH THIS

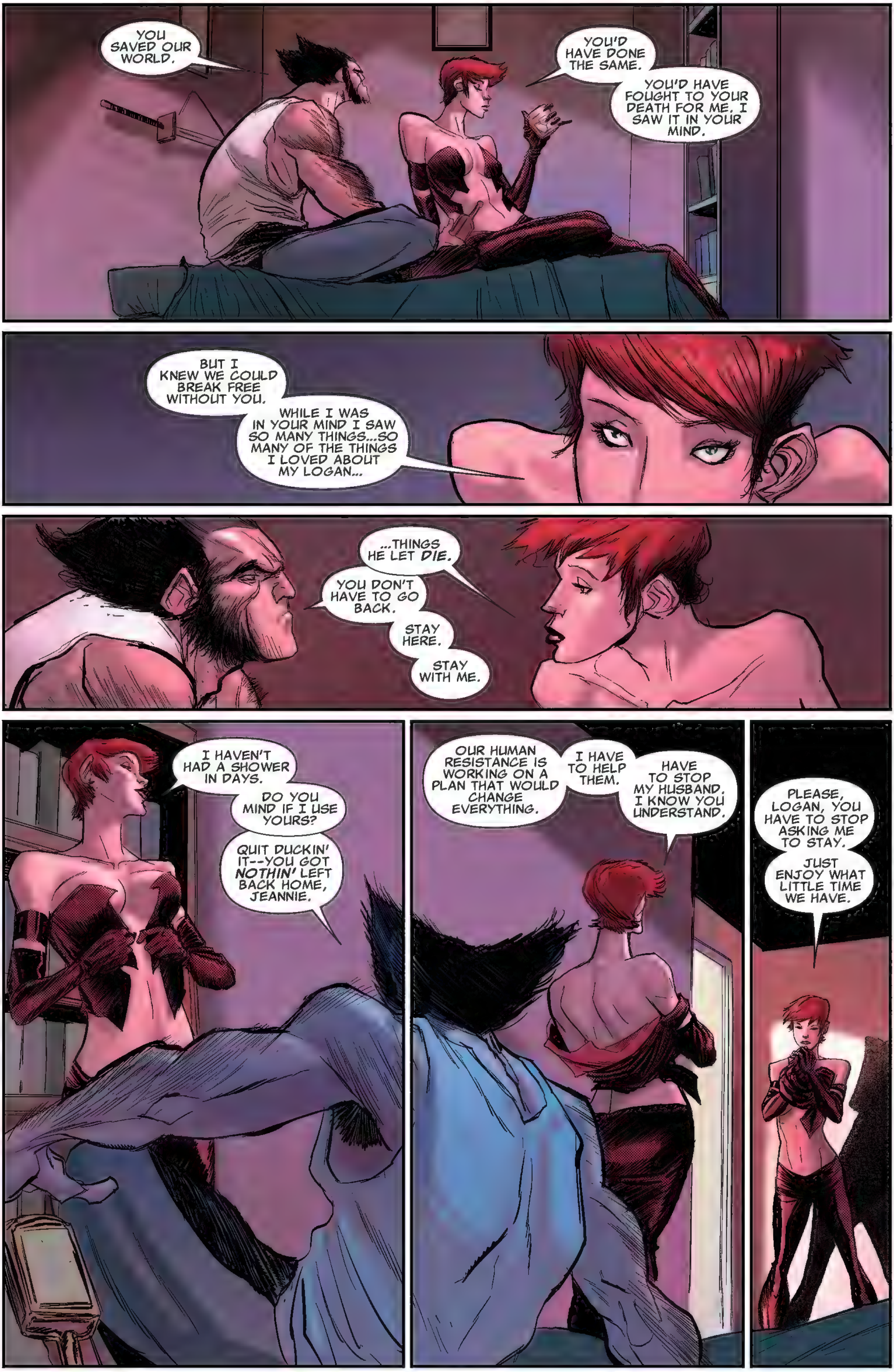

TERAVIUS NEBULA.
THERE ARE ONLY THREE KINDS OF PEOPLE, EVAN.
LEADERS.
THOSE WHO TAKE CHARGE, BUILD, INSPIRE, AND CREATE.
FOLLOWERS.
THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE LEADERS AND WORK TO ACHIEVE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL GOALS.
OKAY. YOU SAID THERE WERE THREE.
WHAT'S THE THIRD KIND OF PERSON, UNCLE CLUSTER?
DESTROYERS.

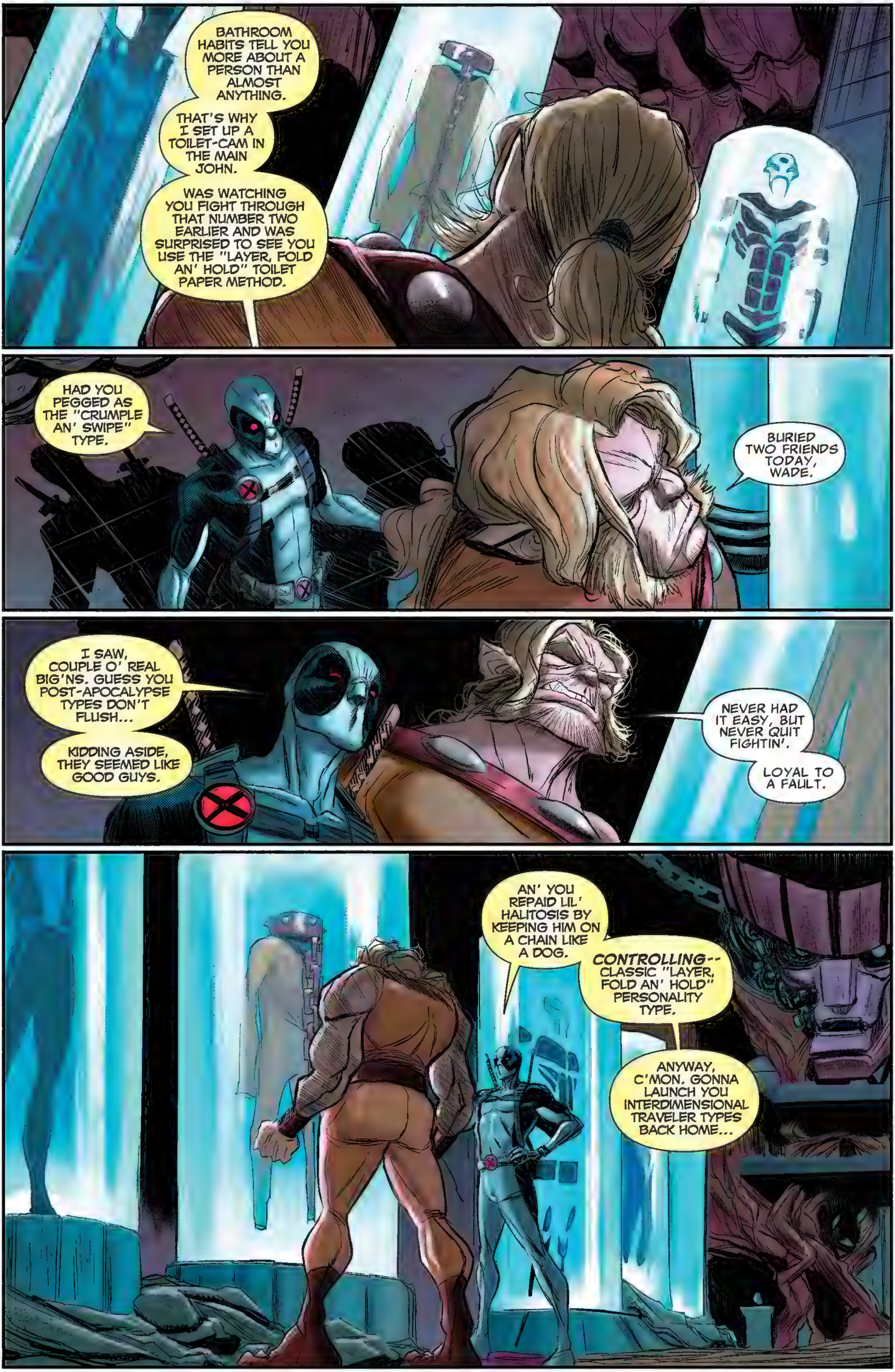

DESTROYERS CANNOT FIND IT WITHIN THEMSELVES TO FOLLOW *ANYONE*, THEIR HATRED AND INSECURITY IS TOO PURE TO SEE STRENGTH IN ANY *OTHER* BEING.
THEY *UTTERLY* LACK THE ABILITY TO INSPIRE OR CREATE, SO THEY DO THE ONLY THING LEFT TO THEM--
THEY TEAR DOWN *ALL* THEY COME IN CONTACT WITH.
WHICH ONE ARE YOU, UNCLE CLUSTER?
A GOOD QUESTION, EVAN.
BUT A *MUCH* MORE IMPORTANT ONE--
WHICH ONE ARE *YOU?*
THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT I HAVE TAUGHT YOU OVER THE YEARS.
HOW TO USE YOUR SHAPE-SHIFTING POWERS.
HOW TO CONTROL YOUR DEMATERIALIZER BLASTS.
NONE OF IT AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOUR PARENTS TAUGHT YOU.
THE FATE OF OUR WORLD HINGES ON YOU *CHOOSING* TO BE A *GOOD* MAN. A *GOOD* LEADER.

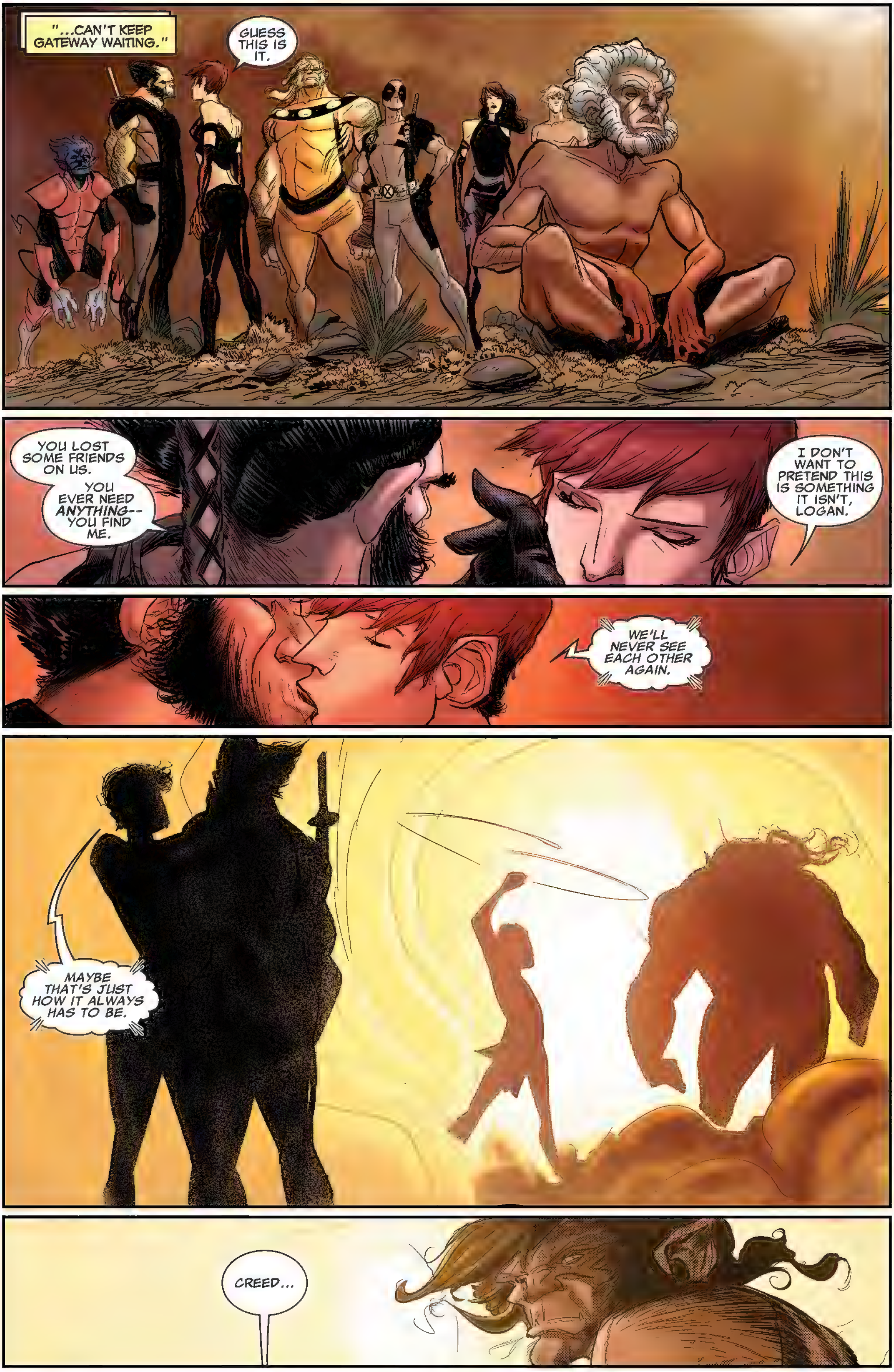

WHAT IS *THAT* THING?
THIS? THIS IS *THE WORLD*... A FACTORY OF SORTS.
IT WAS DAMAGED DURING OUR BIG ADVENTURE AND MUST BE STORED AWAY FOR SAFETY.
YOUR BURDEN IS REAL.
SHOULD YOU CHOOSE THE PATH OF THE DESTROYER, YOU WOULD ERODE ALL *BEAUTY*, ALL *LIGHT*.
YOU'VE TAUGHT ME BETTER THAN THAT.
MA AND *PA* TAUGHT ME BETTER THAN THAT.
ALAKAZOO-- OPEN SESAME.
WE MERELY GAVE YOU THE ***FOUNDATION*** TO BE A HERO.
YOU WERE FORCED TO ENTER THIS FRAY ***FAR*** TOO EARLY-- IT IS *IMPERATIVE* YOU NOT ALLOW THAT TO MAR YOUR FUTURE.
I WANT TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.
I KNOW YOU DO.
BUT TO ENSURE IT, I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO TRUST ME.

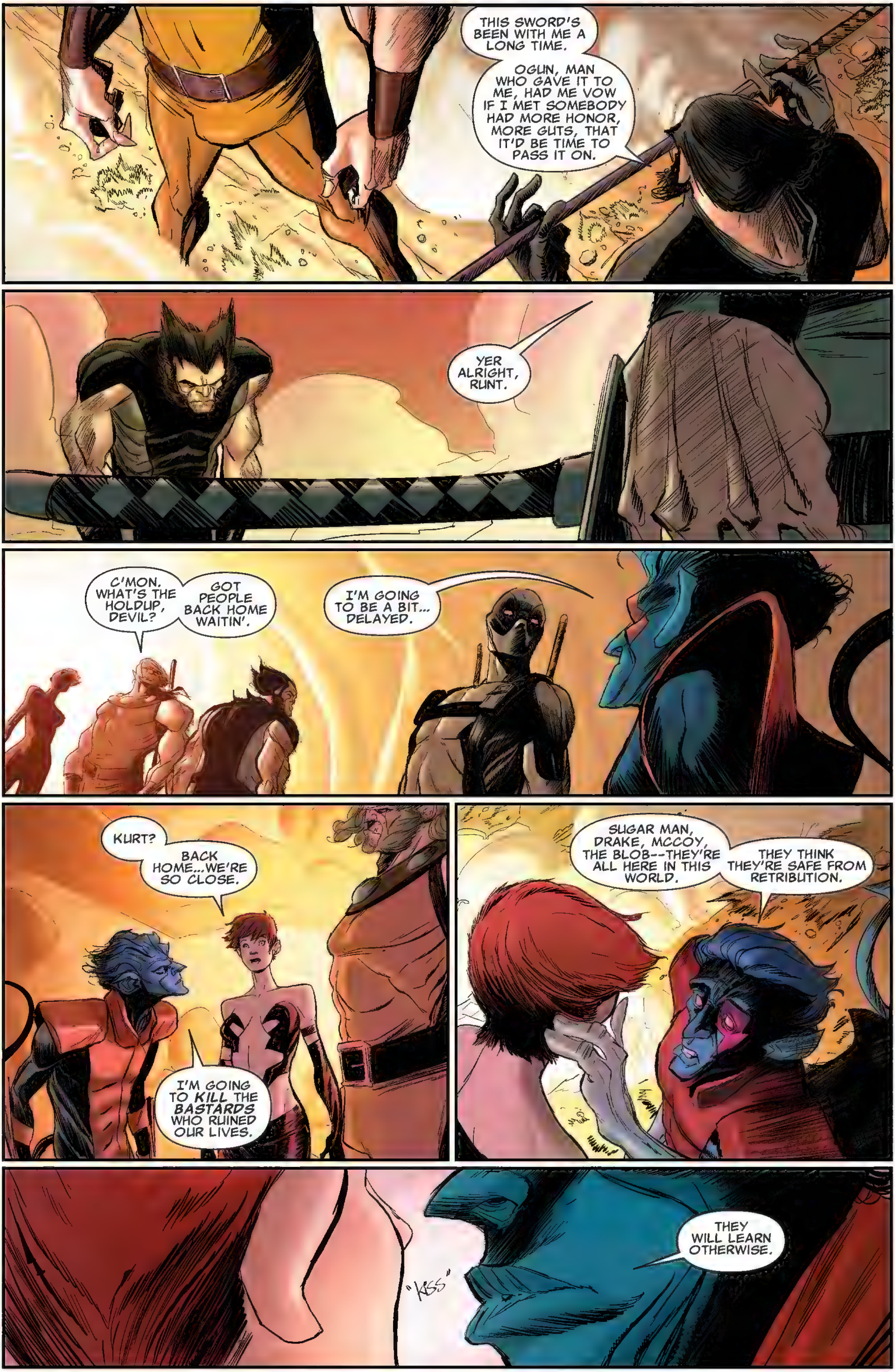

WORLD SECURED.
FIRSTLY, YOU CAN'T STAY WITH ME.
YOU'RE GOING TO GO TO A SCHOOL FOR KIDS JUST LIKE YOU.
HEROES.
WHAT? *WHY?*
I'VE TAUGHT YOU ALL I CAN, ANY MORE TIME WITH ME COULD BE... *DETRIMENTAL* TO YOUR CHARACTER.
WHAT ABOUT MY PARENTS?
AMRMMMP
UMMAANNN
THEY KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING. THEY ALSO KNOW YOU CAN'T GO HOME, FOR THEIR SAFETY AND YOURS.
YOU MUST DEDICATE YOURSELF TO THE PATH OF THE *LEADER.*
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
"YOU MUST *NEVER* QUIT."
COMING HERE, TO FIGHT WITH US...

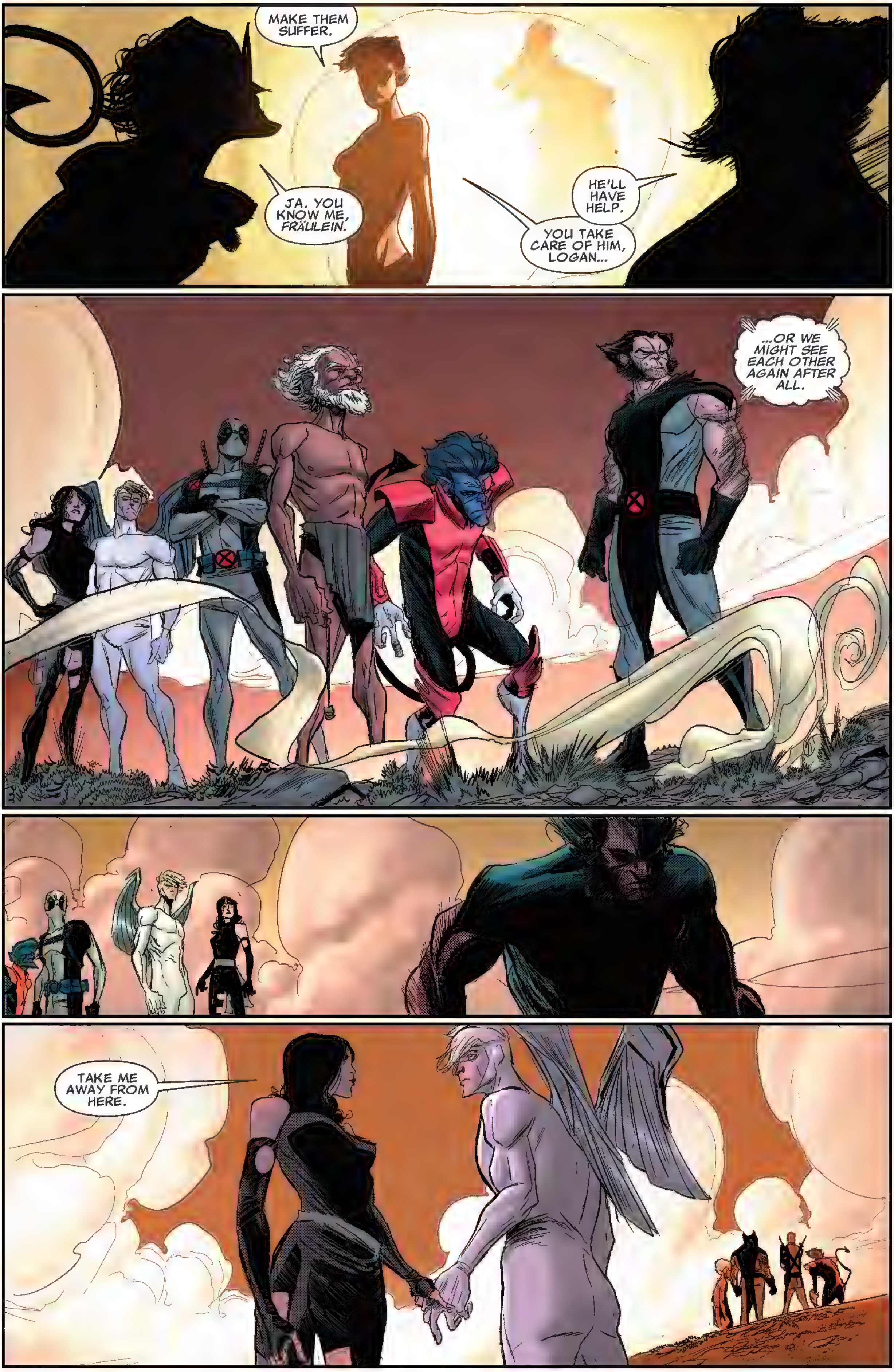
CAVERN-X.

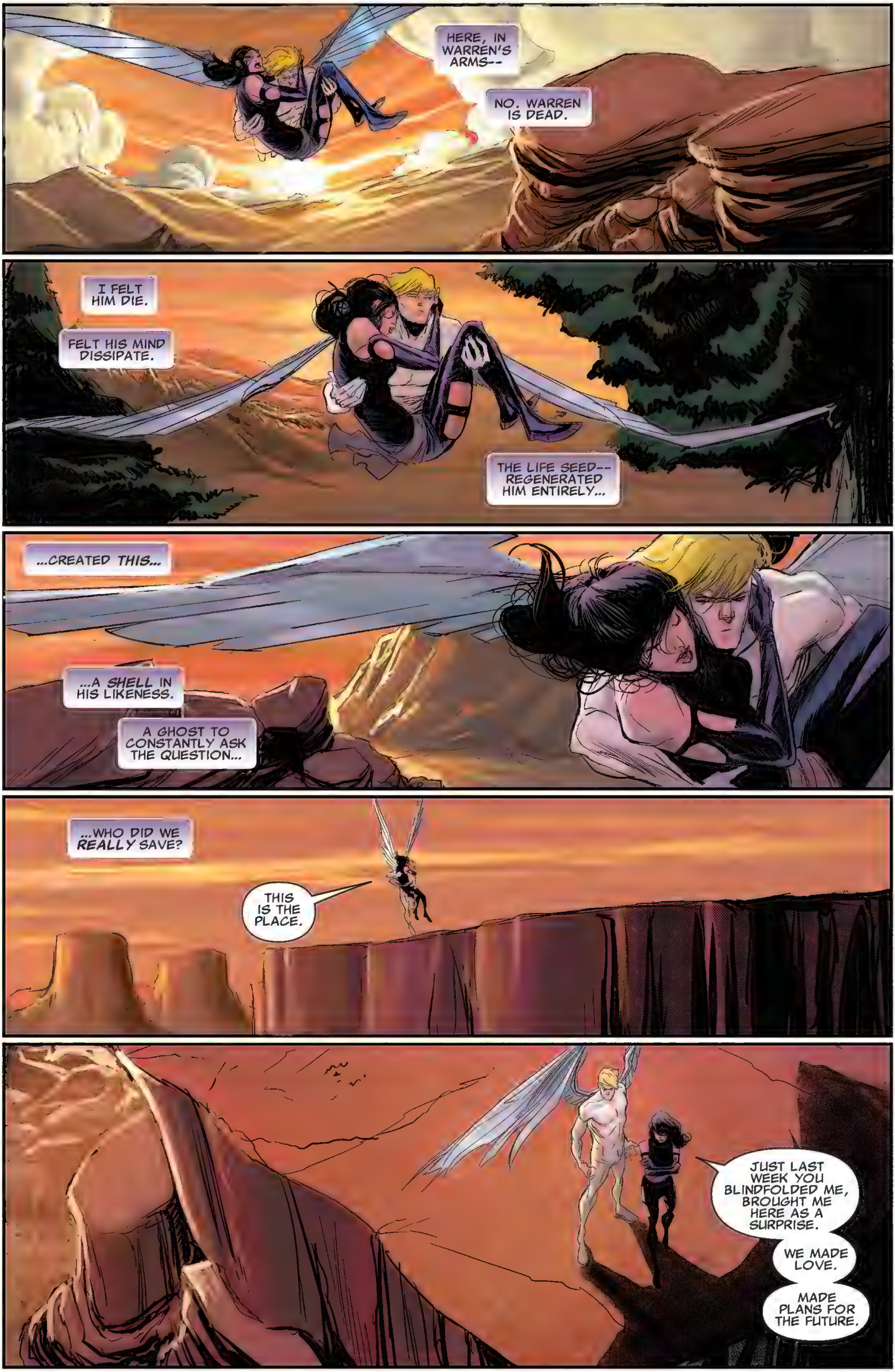

YOU SAVED OUR WORLD.
YOU'D HAVE DONE THE SAME.
YOU'D HAVE FOUGHT TO YOUR DEATH FOR ME. I SAW IT IN YOUR MIND.
BUT I KNEW WE COULD BREAK FREE WITHOUT YOU.
WHILE I WAS IN YOUR MIND I SAW SO MANY THINGS...SO MANY OF THE THINGS I LOVED ABOUT MY LOGAN...
...THINGS HE LET *DIE.*
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO BACK.
STAY HERE.
STAY WITH ME.
I HAVEN'T HAD A SHOWER IN DAYS.
DO YOU MIND IF I USE YOURS?
QUIT DUCKIN' IT--YOU GOT *NOTHIN'* LEFT BACK HOME, JEANNIE.
OUR HUMAN RESISTANCE IS WORKING ON A PLAN THAT WOULD CHANGE EVERYTHING.
I HAVE TO HELP THEM.
HAVE TO STOP MY HUSBAND. I KNOW YOU UNDERSTAND.
PLEASE, LOGAN, YOU HAVE TO STOP ASKING ME TO STAY.
JUST ENJOY WHAT LITTLE TIME WE HAVE.

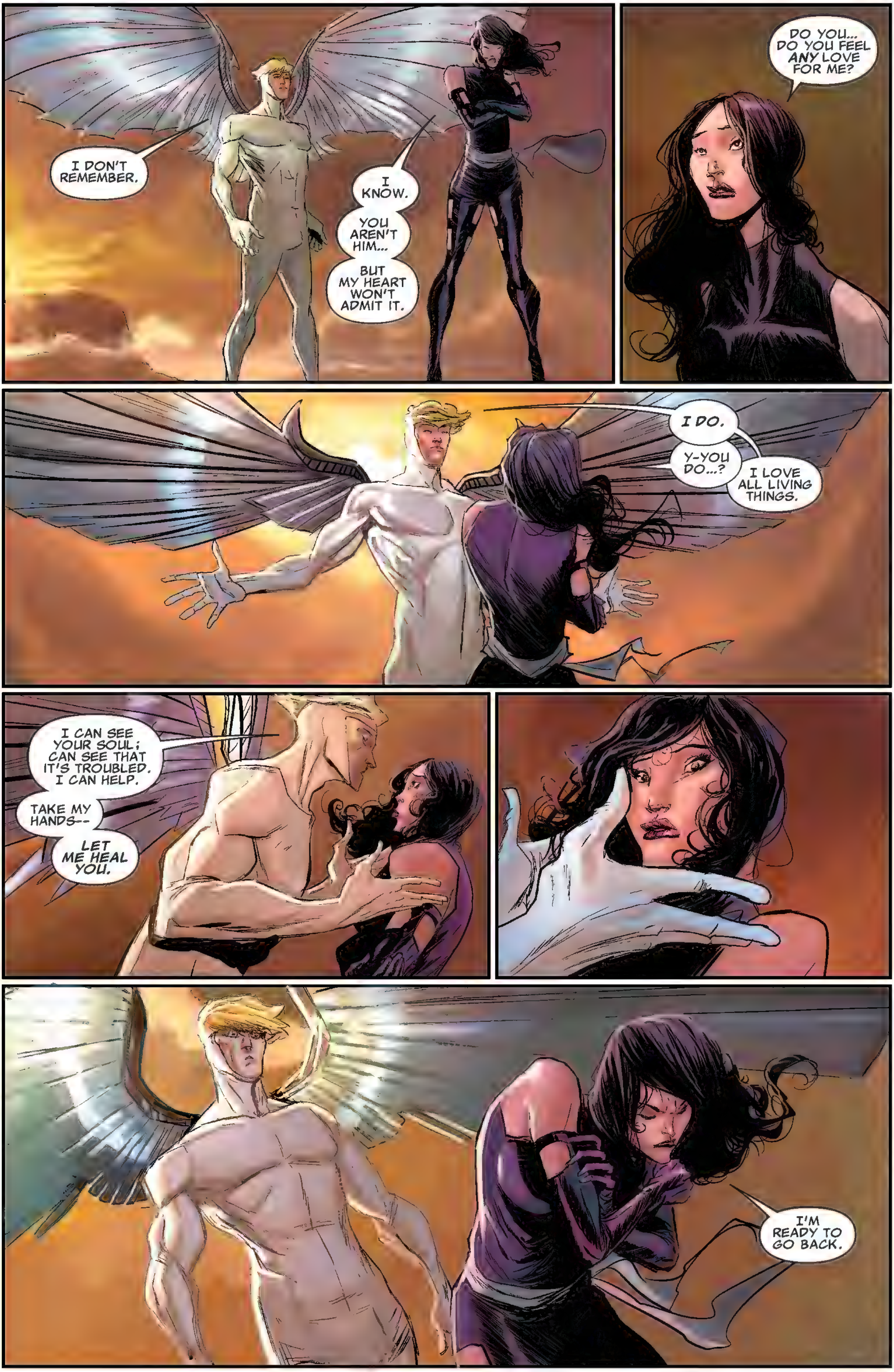

BATHROOM HABITS TELL YOU MORE ABOUT A PERSON THAN ALMOST ANYTHING.
THAT'S WHY I SET UP A TOILET-CAM IN THE MAIN JOHN.
WAS WATCHING YOU FIGHT THROUGH THAT NUMBER TWO EARLIER AND WAS SURPRISED TO SEE YOU USE THE "LAYER, FOLD AN' HOLD" TOILET PAPER METHOD.
HAD YOU PEGGED AS THE "CRUMPLE AN' SWIPE" TYPE.
BURIED TWO FRIENDS TODAY, WADE.
I SAW, COUPLE O' REAL BIG'NS. GUESS YOU POST-APOCALYPSE TYPES DON'T FLUSH...
KIDDING ASIDE, THEY SEEMED LIKE GOOD GUYS.
NEVER HAD IT EASY, BUT NEVER QUIT FIGHTIN'.
LOYAL TO A FAULT.
AN' YOU REPAID LIL' HALITOSIS BY KEEPING HIM ON A CHAIN LIKE A DOG.
CONTROLLING-- CLASSIC "LAYER, FOLD AN' HOLD" PERSONALITY TYPE.
ANYWAY, C'MON. GONNA LAUNCH YOU INTERDIMENSIONAL TRAVELER TYPES BACK HOME...

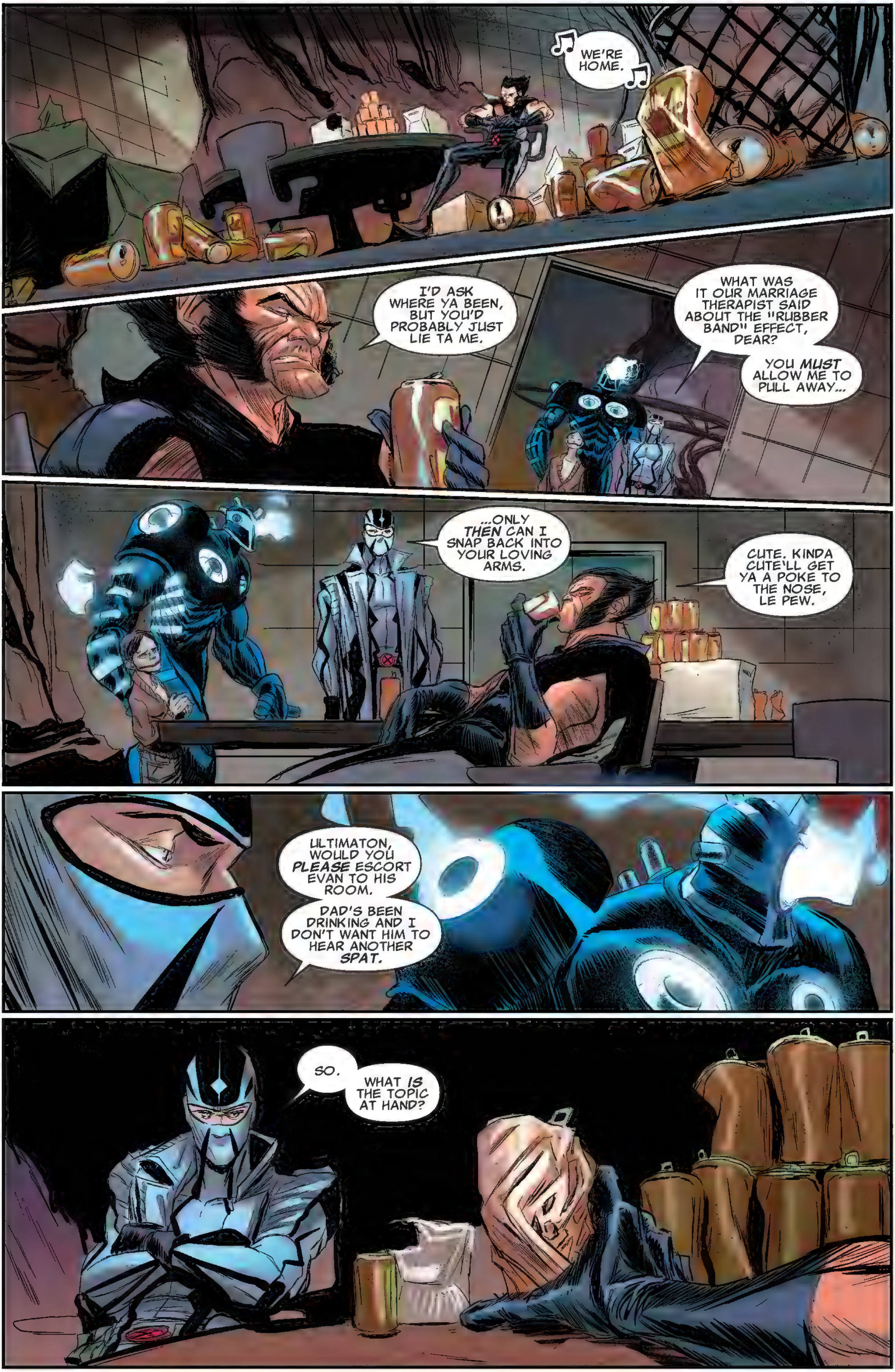

"...CAN'T KEEP GATEWAY WAITING."
GUESS THIS IS IT.
YOU LOST SOME FRIENDS ON US.
YOU EVER NEED ANYTHING-- YOU FIND ME.
I DON'T WANT TO PRETEND THIS IS SOMETHING IT ISN'T, LOGAN.
WE'LL NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.
MAYBE THAT'S JUST HOW IT ALWAYS HAS TO BE.
CREED...

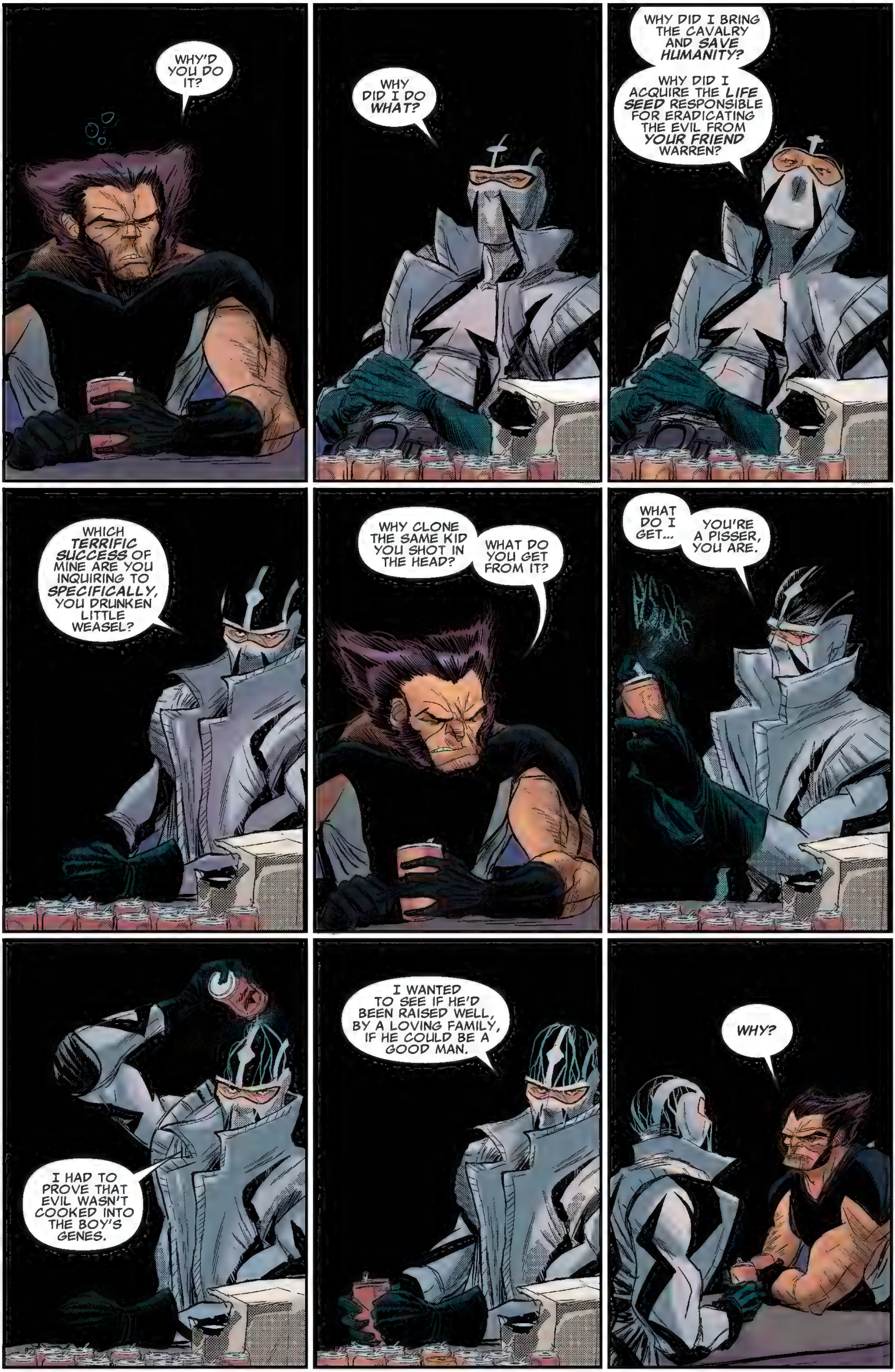

THIS SWORD'S BEEN WITH ME A LONG TIME.
OGUN, MAN WHO GAVE IT TO ME, HAD ME VOW IF I MET SOMEBODY HAD MORE HONOR, MORE GUTS, THAT IT'D BE TIME TO PASS IT ON.
YER ALRIGHT, RUNT.
C'MON. WHAT'S THE HOLDUP, DEVIL?
GOT PEOPLE BACK HOME WAITIN'.
I'M GOING TO BE A BIT... DELAYED.
KURT?
BACK HOME...WE'RE SO CLOSE.
I'M GOING TO *KILL* THE *BASTARDS* WHO RUINED OUR LIVES.
SUGAR MAN, DRAKE, MCCOY, THE BLOB--THEY'RE ALL HERE IN THIS WORLD.
THEY THINK THEY'RE SAFE FROM RETRIBUTION.
"KISS"
THEY WILL LEARN OTHERWISE.

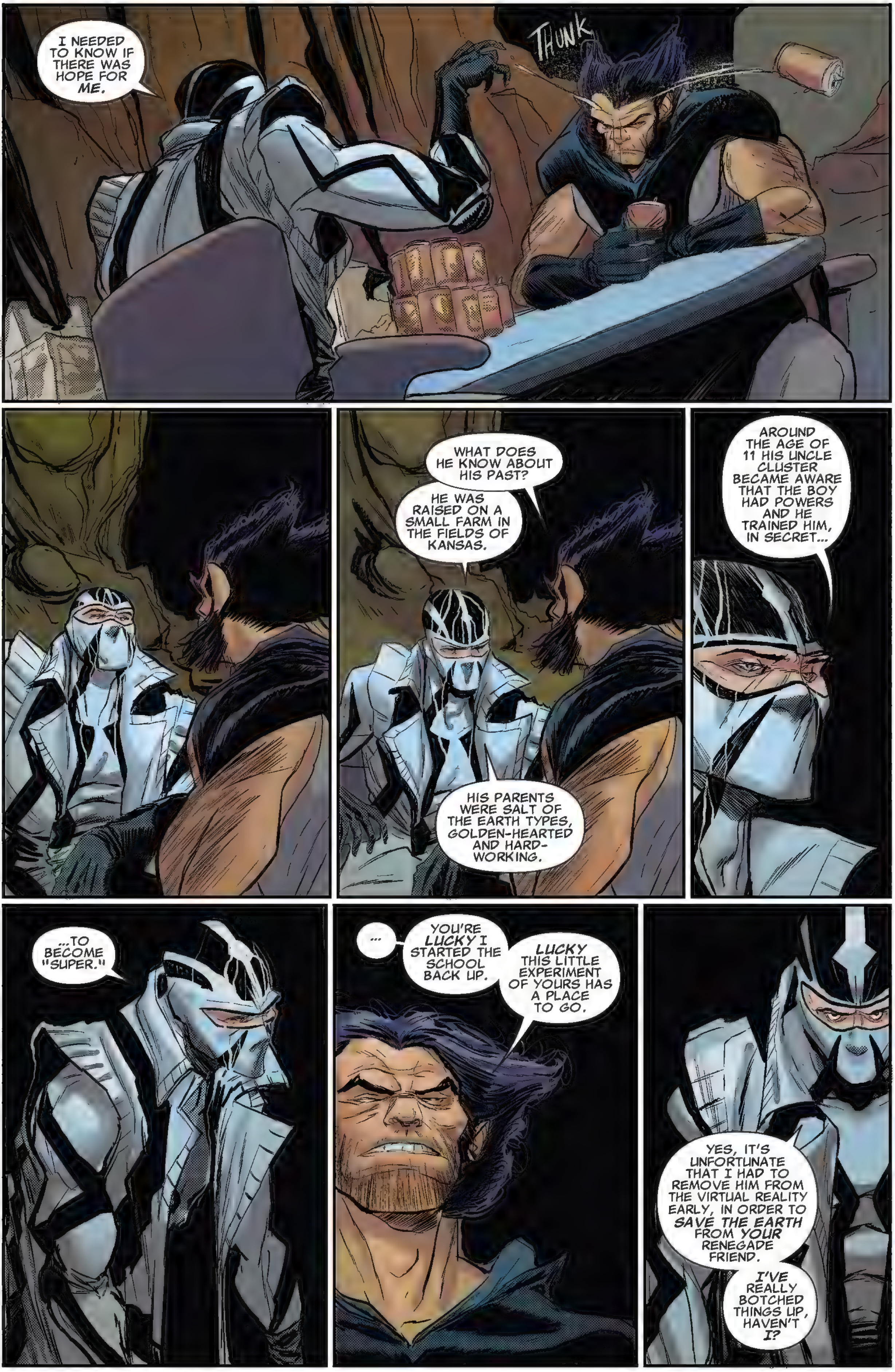

MAKE THEM SUFFER.
JA. YOU KNOW ME, FRÄULEIN.
YOU TAKE CARE OF HIM, LOGAN...
HE'LL HAVE HELP.
...OR WE MIGHT SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN AFTER ALL.
TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE.

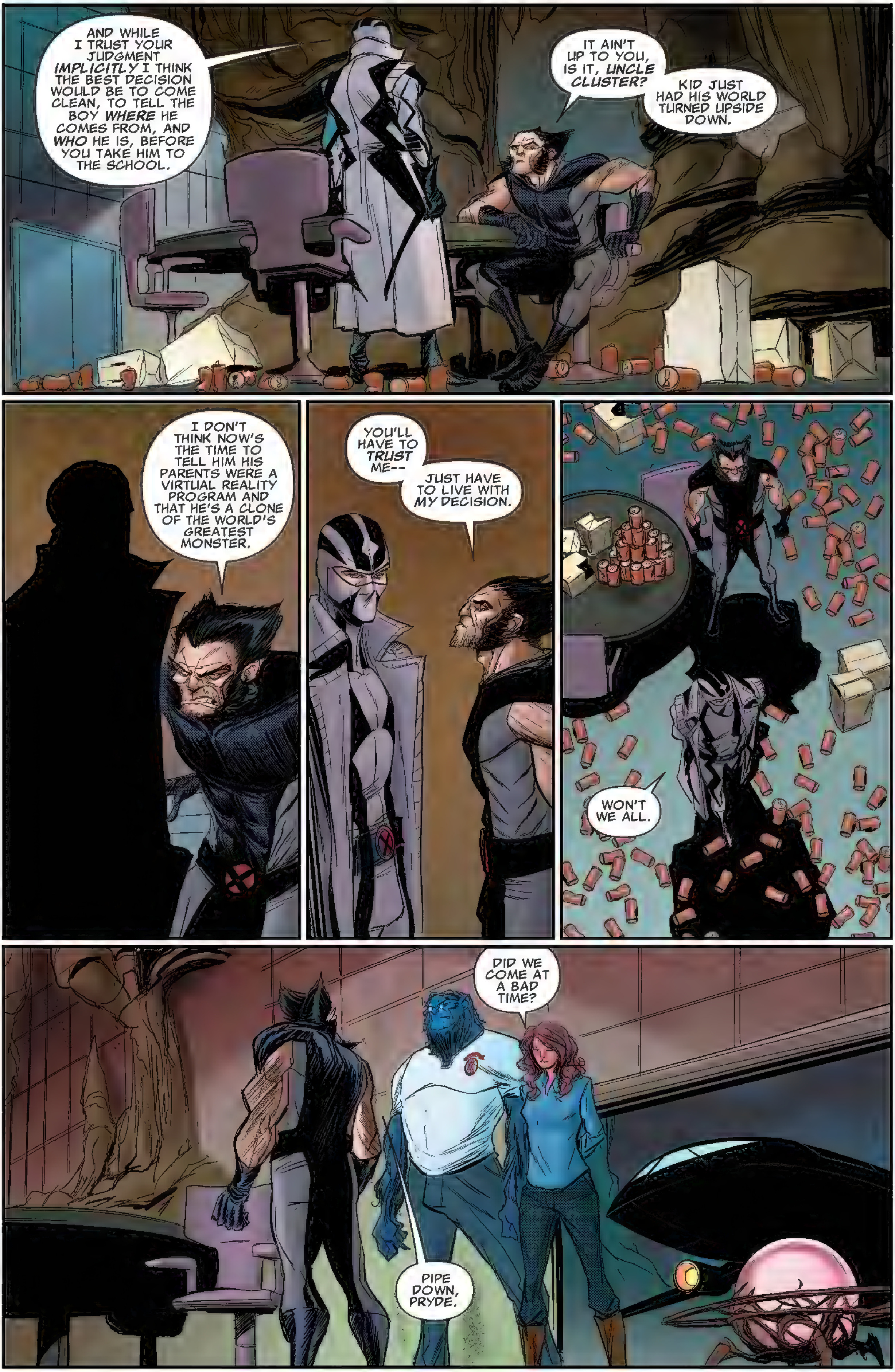

HERE, IN WARREN'S ARMS--
NO. WARREN IS DEAD.
I FELT HIM DIE.
FELT HIS MIND DISSIPATE.
THE LIFE SEED--REGENERATED HIM ENTIRELY...
...CREATED THIS...
...A *SHELL* IN HIS LIKENESS.
A GHOST TO CONSTANTLY ASK THE QUESTION...
...WHO DID WE *REALLY* SAVE?
THIS IS THE PLACE.
JUST LAST WEEK YOU BLINDFOLDED ME, BROUGHT ME HERE AS A SURPRISE.
WE MADE LOVE.
MADE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

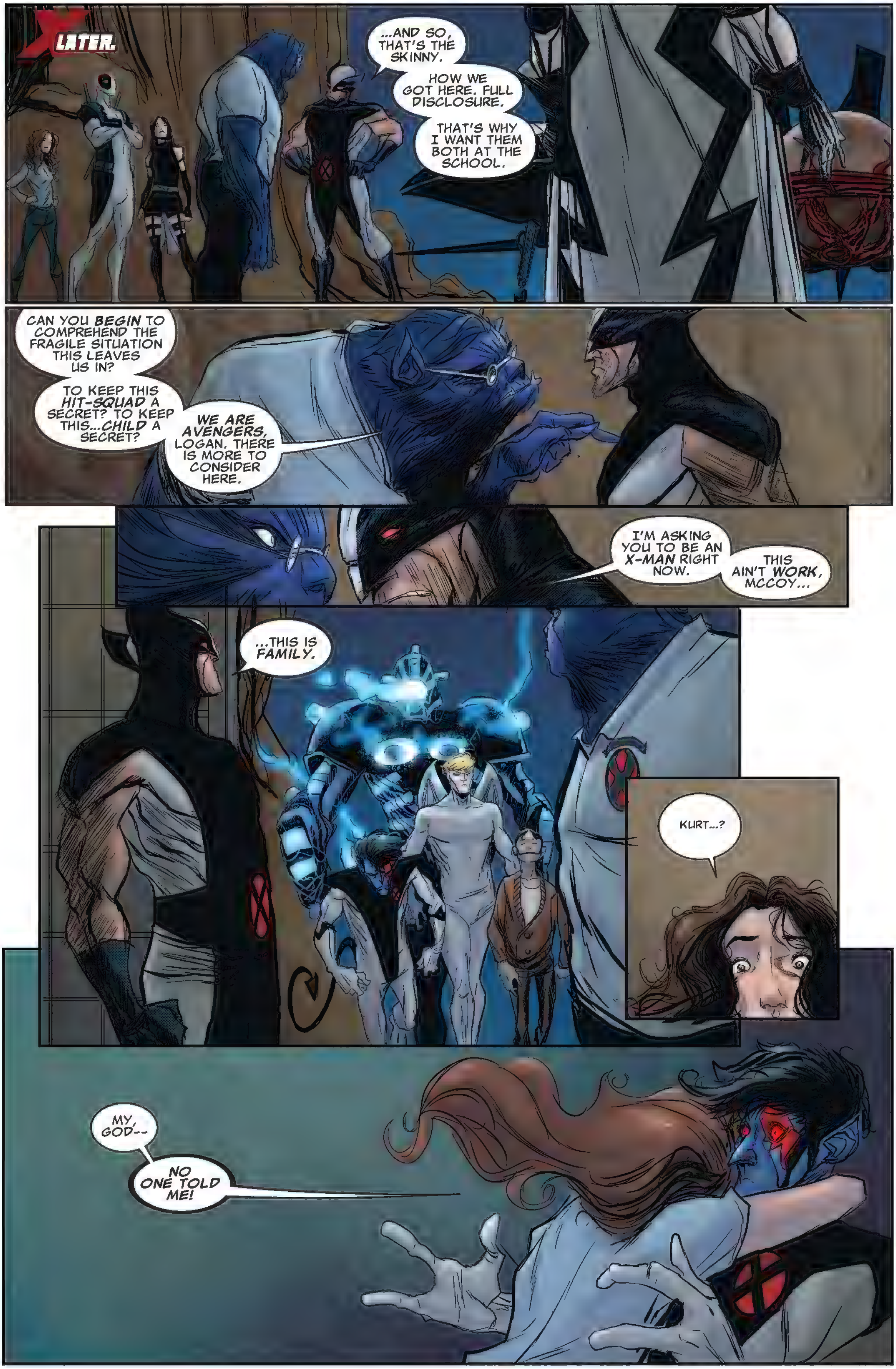

I DON'T REMEMBER.
I KNOW.
YOU AREN'T HIM...
BUT MY HEART WON'T ADMIT IT.
DO YOU... DO YOU FEEL *ANY* LOVE FOR ME?
I DO.
Y-YOU DO...?
I LOVE ALL LIVING THINGS.
I CAN SEE YOUR SOUL; CAN SEE THAT IT'S TROUBLED. I CAN HELP.
TAKE MY HANDS--
LET ME HEAL YOU.
I'M READY TO GO BACK.

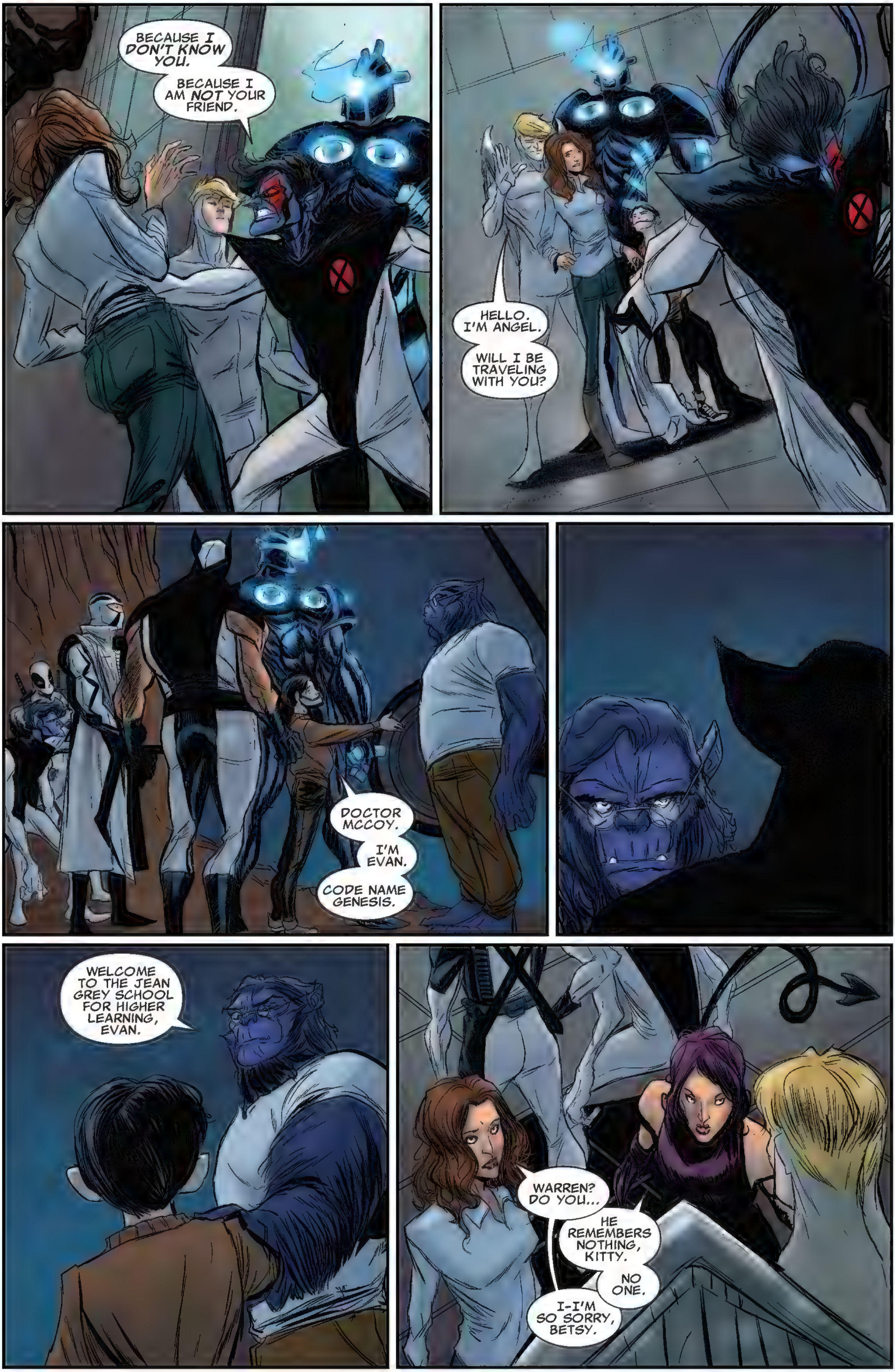

♫ WE'RE HOME. ♫
I'D ASK WHERE YA BEEN, BUT YOU'D PROBABLY JUST LIE TA ME.
WHAT WAS IT OUR MARRIAGE THERAPIST SAID ABOUT THE "RUBBER BAND" EFFECT, DEAR?
YOU *MUST* ALLOW ME TO PULL AWAY...
...ONLY *THEN* CAN I SNAP BACK INTO YOUR LOVING ARMS.
CUTE. KINDA CUTE'LL GET YA A POKE TO THE NOSE, LE PEW.
ULTIMATON, WOULD YOU *PLEASE* ESCORT EVAN TO HIS ROOM.
DAD'S BEEN DRINKING AND I DON'T WANT HIM TO HEAR ANOTHER *SPAT.*
SO.
WHAT *IS* THE TOPIC AT HAND?

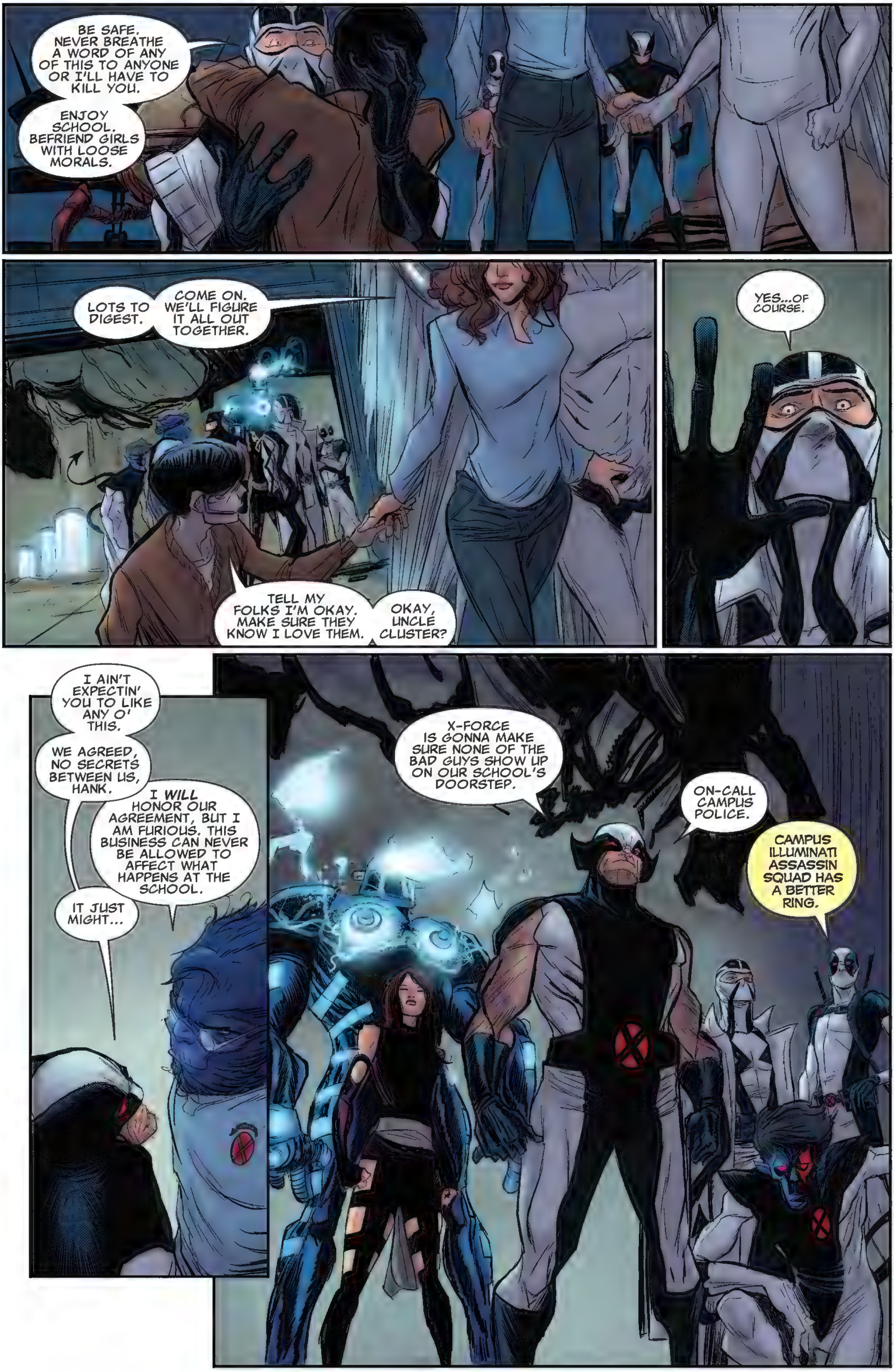

WHY'D YOU DO IT?
WHY DID I DO *WHAT?*
WHY DID I BRING THE CAVALRY AND *SAVE HUMANITY?*
WHY DID I ACQUIRE THE ***LIFE SEED*** RESPONSIBLE FOR ERADICATING THE EVIL FROM ***YOUR FRIEND*** WARREN?
WHICH ***TERRIFIC SUCCESS*** OF MINE ARE YOU INQUIRING TO ***SPECIFICALLY***, YOU DRUNKEN LITTLE WEASEL?
WHY CLONE THE SAME KID YOU SHOT IN THE HEAD?
WHAT DO YOU GET FROM IT?
WHAT DO I GET...
YOU'RE A PISSER, YOU ARE.
I HAD TO PROVE THAT EVIL WASN'T COOKED INTO THE BOY'S GENES.
I WANTED TO SEE IF HE'D BEEN RAISED WELL, BY A LOVING FAMILY, IF HE COULD BE A GOOD MAN.
WHY?

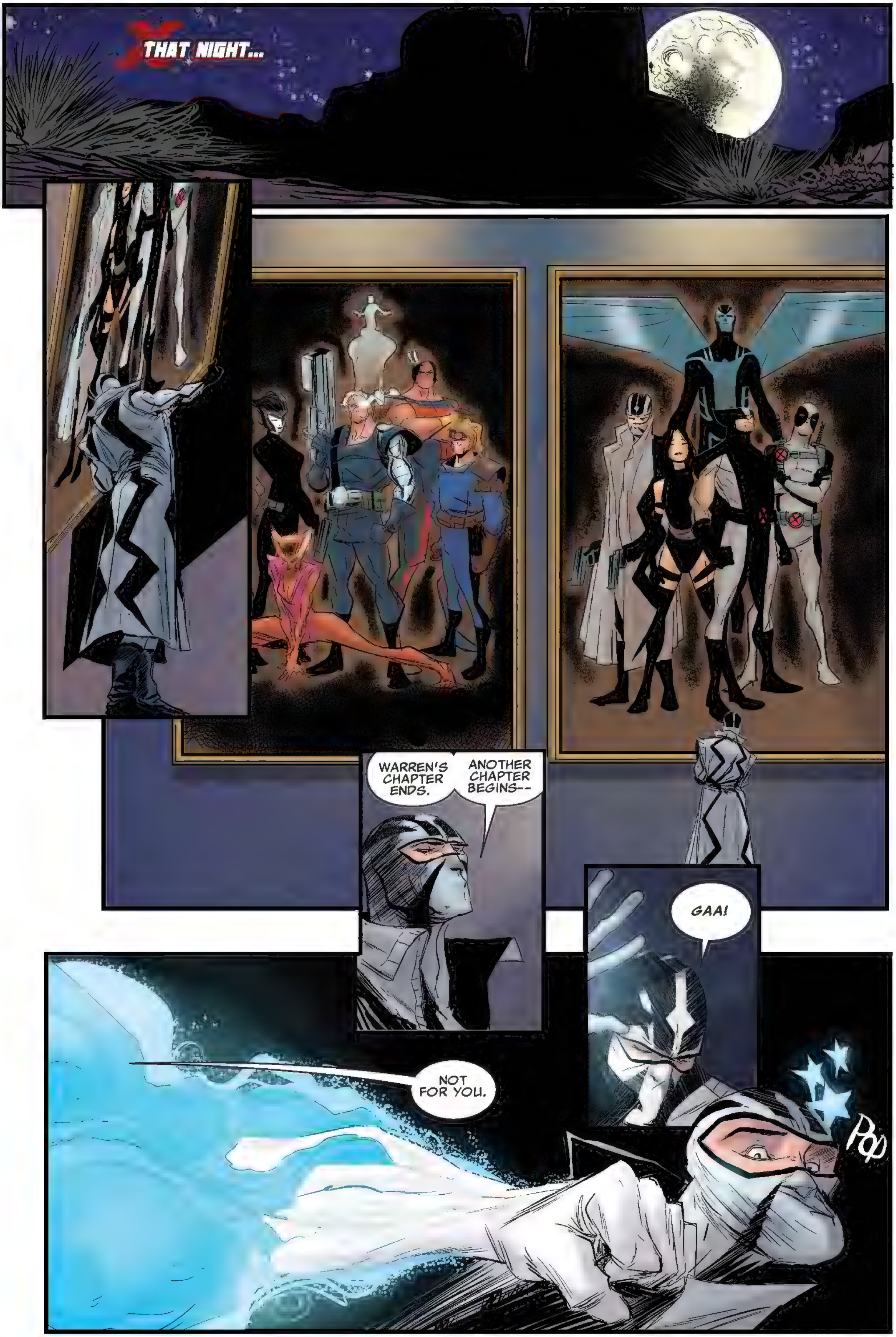

I NEEDED TO KNOW IF THERE WAS HOPE FOR *ME.*
THUNK
WHAT DOES HE KNOW ABOUT HIS PAST?
HE WAS RAISED ON A SMALL FARM IN THE FIELDS OF KANSAS.
HIS PARENTS WERE SALT OF THE EARTH TYPES, GOLDEN-HEARTED AND HARD-WORKING.
AROUND THE AGE OF 11 HIS UNCLE CLUSTER BECAME AWARE THAT THE BOY HAD POWERS AND HE TRAINED HIM, IN SECRET...
...TO BECOME "SUPER."
...
YOU'RE *LUCKY* I STARTED THE SCHOOL BACK UP.
LUCKY THIS LITTLE EXPERIMENT OF YOURS HAS A PLACE TO GO.
YES, IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT I HAD TO REMOVE HIM FROM THE VIRTUAL REALITY EARLY, IN ORDER TO *SAVE THE EARTH* FROM *YOUR* RENEGADE FRIEND.
I'VE REALLY BOTCHED THINGS UP, HAVEN'T *I?*

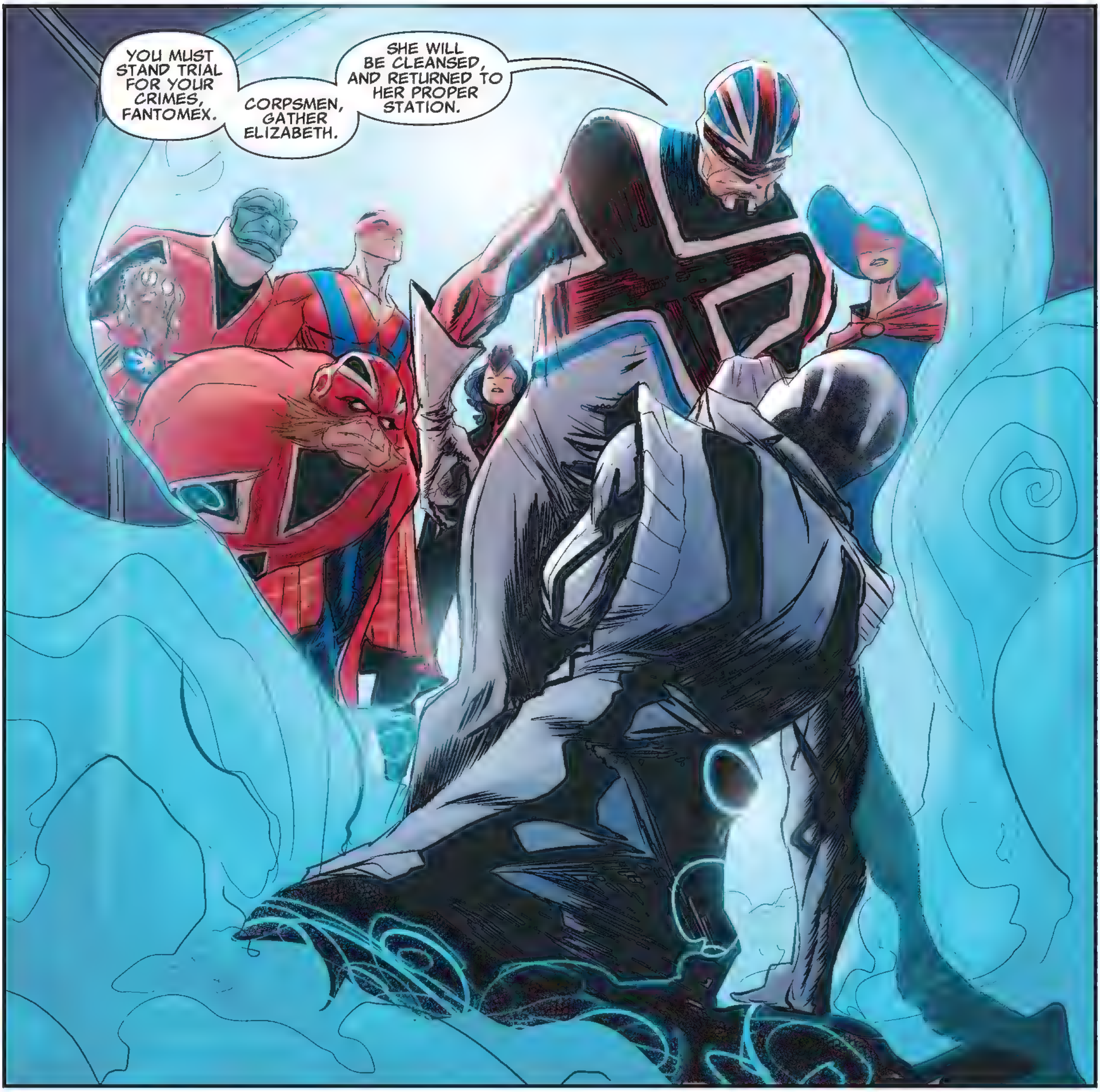

AND WHILE I TRUST YOUR JUDGMENT *IMPLICITLY* I THINK THE BEST DECISION WOULD BE TO COME CLEAN, TO TELL THE BOY *WHERE* HE COMES FROM, AND *WHO* HE IS, BEFORE YOU TAKE HIM TO THE SCHOOL.
IT AIN'T UP TO YOU, IS IT, *UNCLE CLUSTER?*
KID JUST HAD HIS WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.
I DON'T THINK NOW'S THE TIME TO TELL HIM HIS PARENTS WERE A VIRTUAL REALITY PROGRAM AND THAT HE'S A CLONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST MONSTER.
YOU'LL HAVE TO *TRUST* ME--
JUST HAVE TO LIVE WITH *MY* DECISION.
WON'T WE ALL.
DID WE COME AT A BAD TIME?
PIPE DOWN, PRYDE.

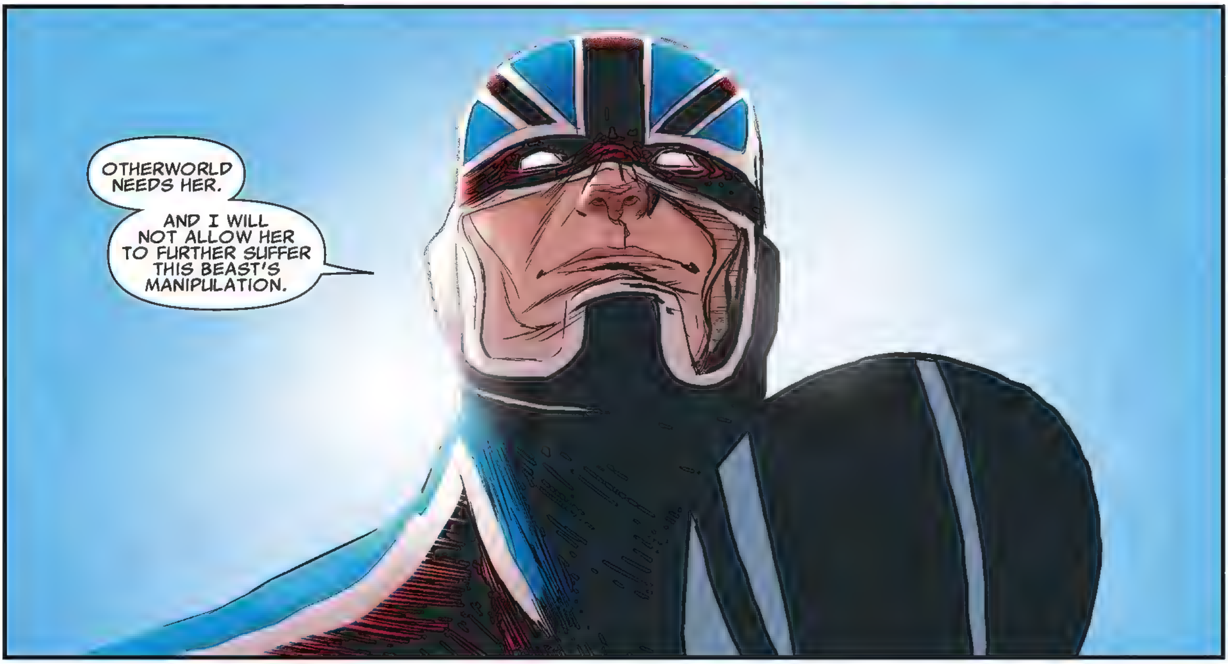

LATER.
...AND SO, THAT'S THE SKINNY.
HOW WE GOT HERE. FULL DISCLOSURE.
THAT'S WHY I WANT THEM BOTH AT THE SCHOOL.
CAN YOU BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THE FRAGILE SITUATION THIS LEAVES US IN?
TO KEEP THIS HIT-SQUAD A SECRET? TO KEEP THIS...CHILD A SECRET?
WE ARE AVENGERS, LOGAN. THERE IS MORE TO CONSIDER HERE.
I'M ASKING YOU TO BE AN X-MAN RIGHT NOW.
THIS AIN'T WORK, MCCOY...
...THIS IS FAMILY.
KURT...?
MY, GOD--
NO ONE TOLD ME!

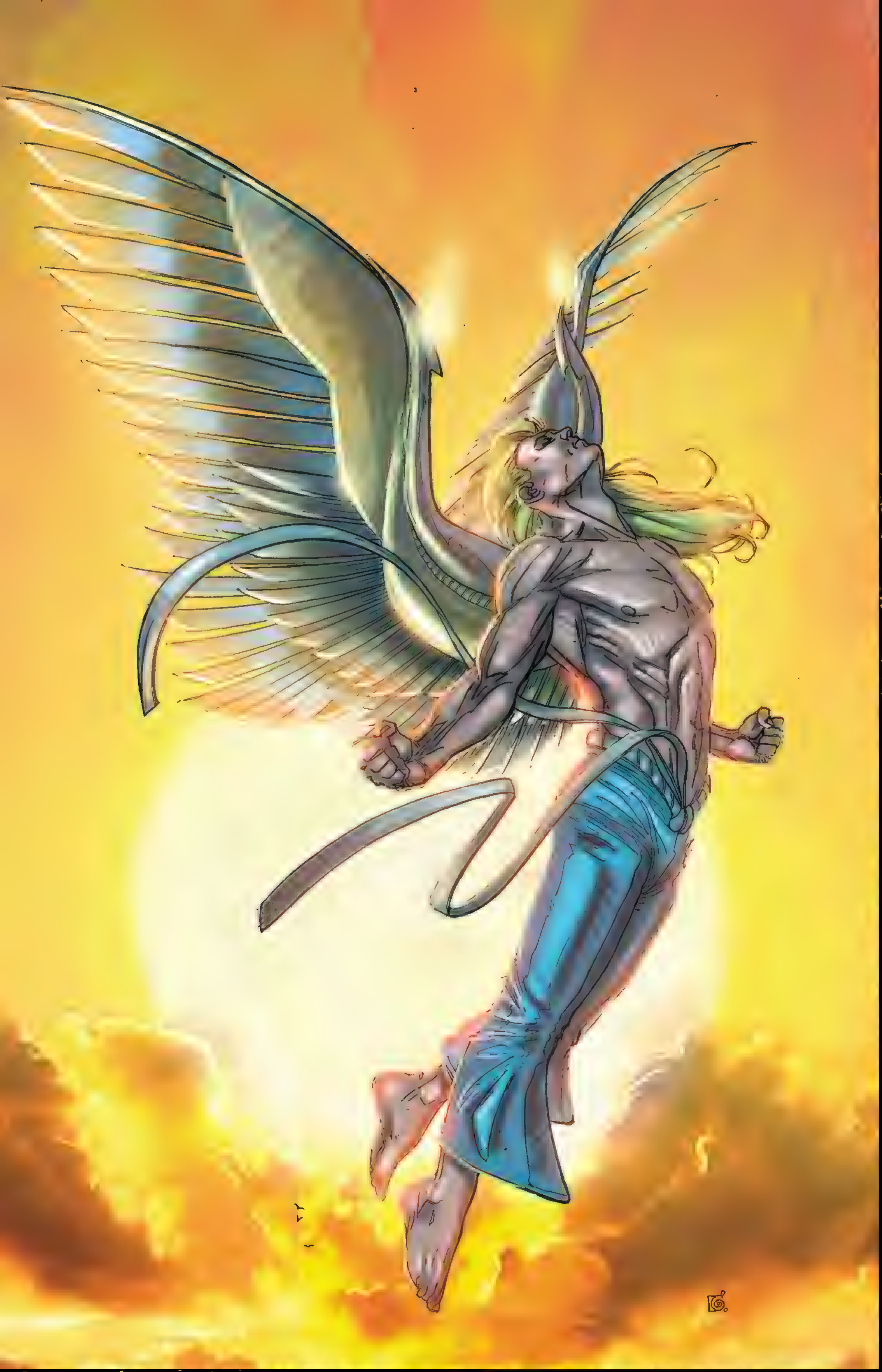

BECAUSE I *DON'T KNOW* YOU.
BECAUSE I AM *NOT* YOUR FRIEND.
HELLO. I'M ANGEL.
WILL I BE TRAVELING WITH YOU?
DOCTOR MCCOY.
I'M EVAN.
CODE NAME GENESIS.
WELCOME TO THE JEAN GREY SCHOOL FOR HIGHER LEARNING, EVAN.
WARREN? DO YOU...
HE REMEMBERS NOTHING, KITTY.
NO ONE.
I-I'M SO SORRY, BETSY.


BE SAFE. NEVER BREATHE A WORD OF ANY OF THIS TO ANYONE OR I'LL HAVE TO KILL YOU.
ENJOY SCHOOL. BEFRIEND GIRLS WITH LOOSE MORALS.
LOTS TO DIGEST.
COME ON. WE'LL FIGURE IT ALL OUT TOGETHER.
TELL MY FOLKS I'M OKAY. MAKE SURE THEY KNOW I LOVE THEM.
OKAY, UNCLE CLUSTER?
YES...OF COURSE.
I AIN'T EXPECTIN' YOU TO LIKE ANY O' THIS.
WE AGREED, NO SECRETS BETWEEN US, HANK.
I *WILL* HONOR OUR AGREEMENT, BUT I AM FURIOUS. THIS BUSINESS CAN NEVER BE ALLOWED TO AFFECT WHAT HAPPENS AT THE SCHOOL.
IT JUST MIGHT...
X-FORCE IS GONNA MAKE SURE NONE OF THE BAD GUYS SHOW UP ON OUR SCHOOL'S DOORSTEP.
ON-CALL CAMPUS POLICE.
CAMPUS ILLUMINATI ASSASSIN SQUAD HAS A BETTER RING.


THAT NIGHT...
WARREN'S CHAPTER ENDS.
ANOTHER CHAPTER BEGINS--
GAA!
NOT FOR YOU.
POP


YOU MUST STAND TRIAL FOR YOUR CRIMES, FANTOMEX.
CORPSMEN, GATHER ELIZABETH.
SHE WILL BE CLEANSED, AND RETURNED TO HER PROPER STATION.


OTHERWORLD NEEDS HER.
AND I WILL NOT ALLOW HER TO FURTHER SUFFER THIS BEAST'S MANIPULATION.

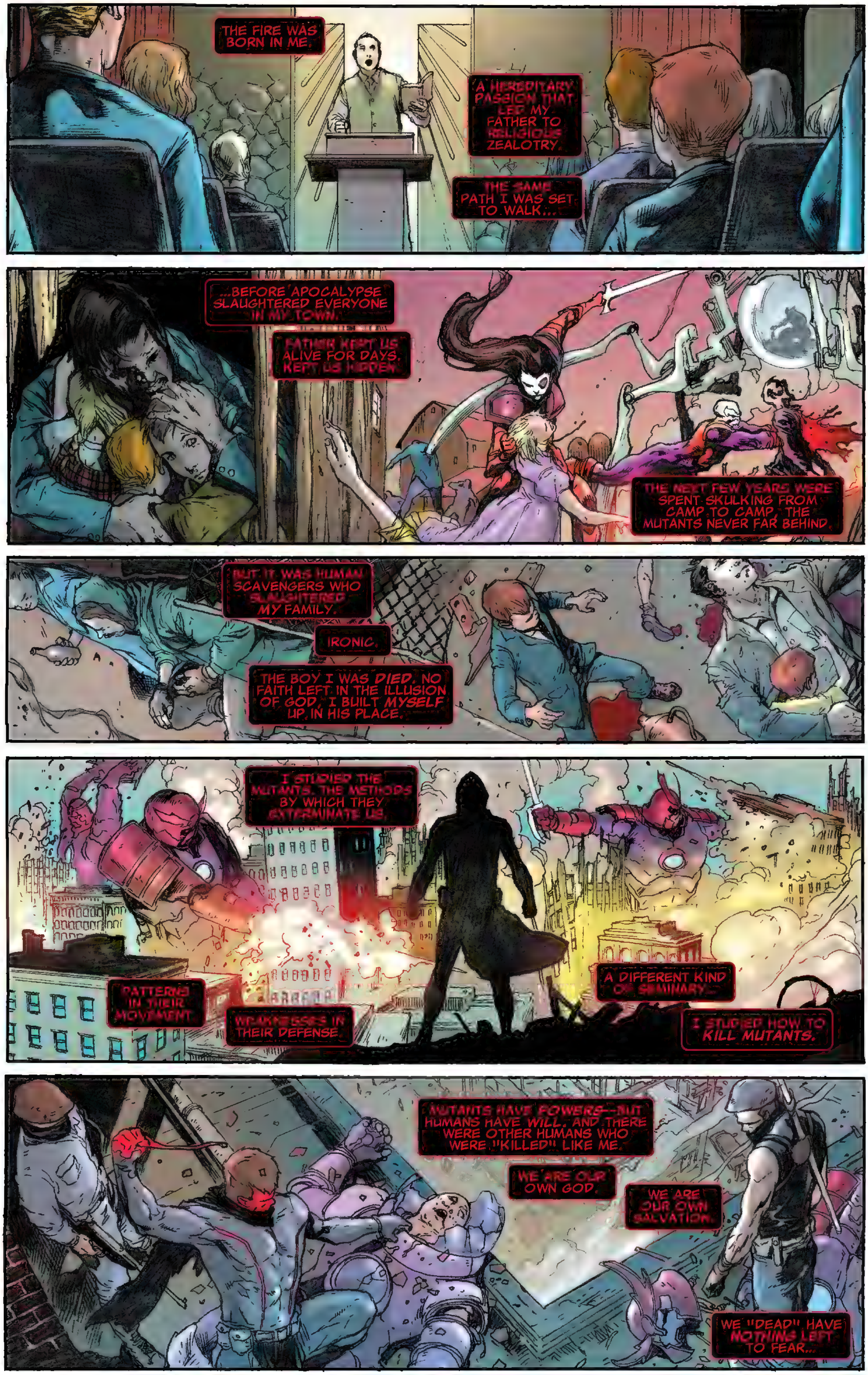


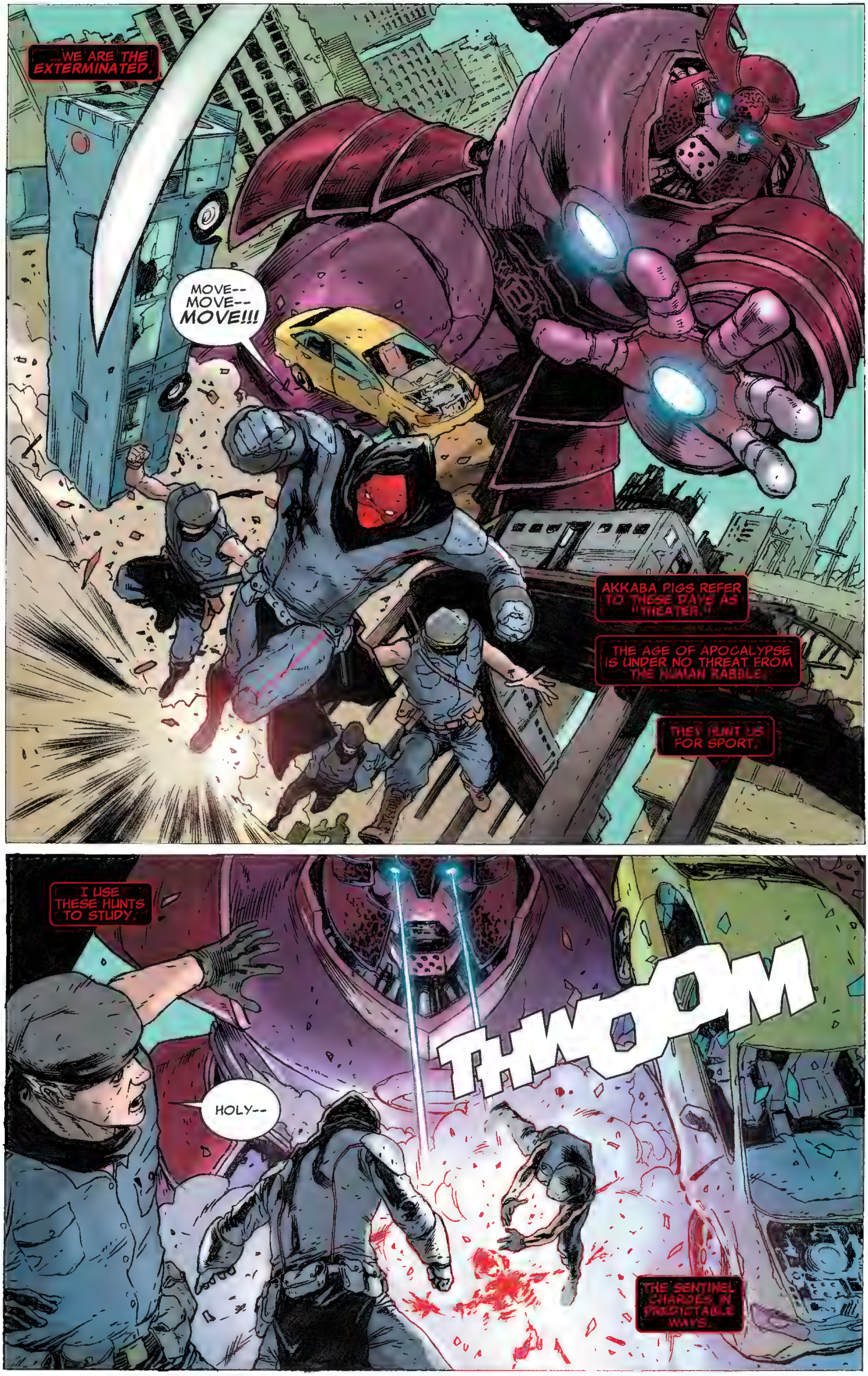
UNCANNY X-FORCE 19 SPOILER VARIANT

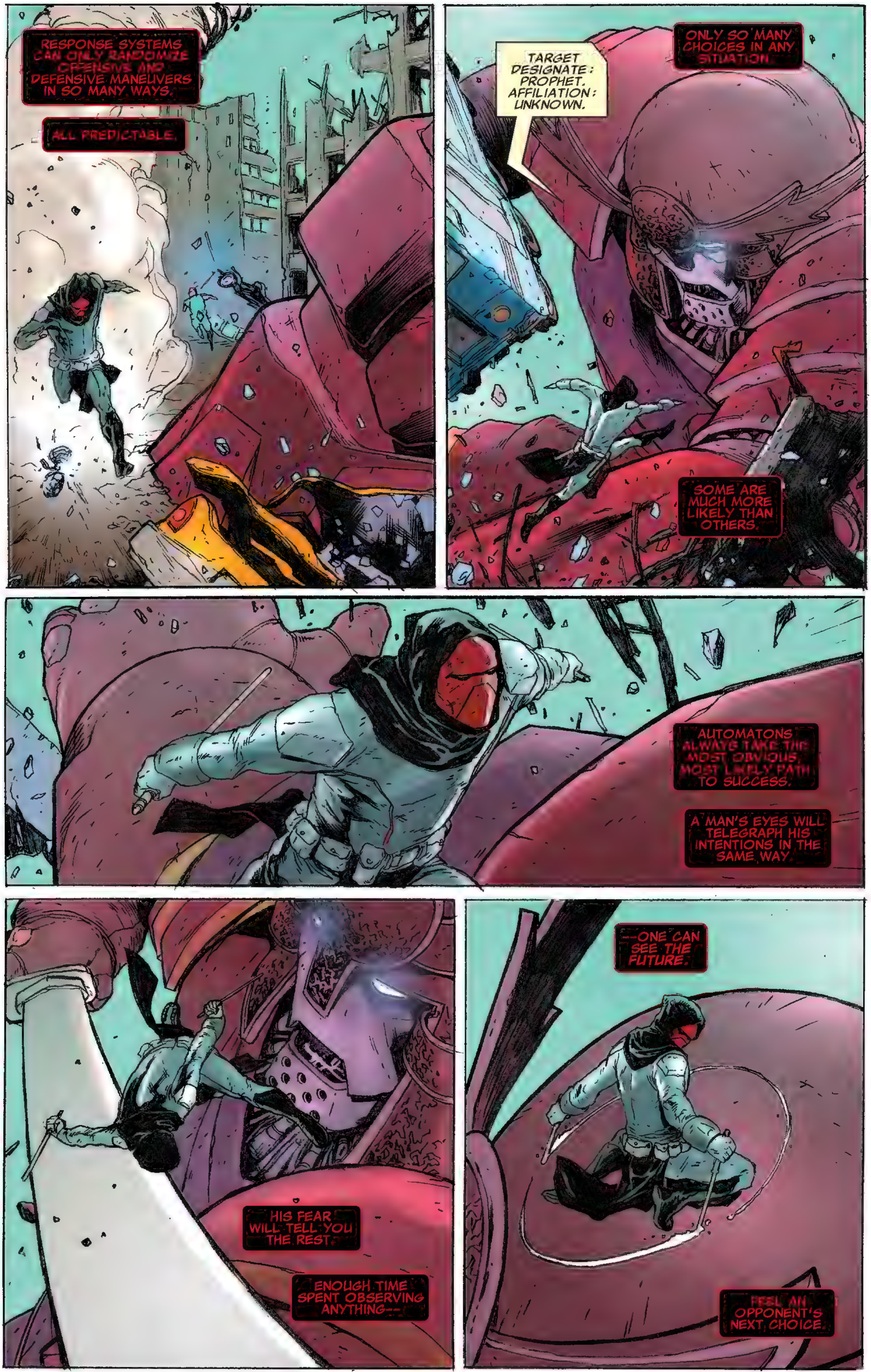
ART BY RON GARNEY & CHRIS SOTOMAYOR

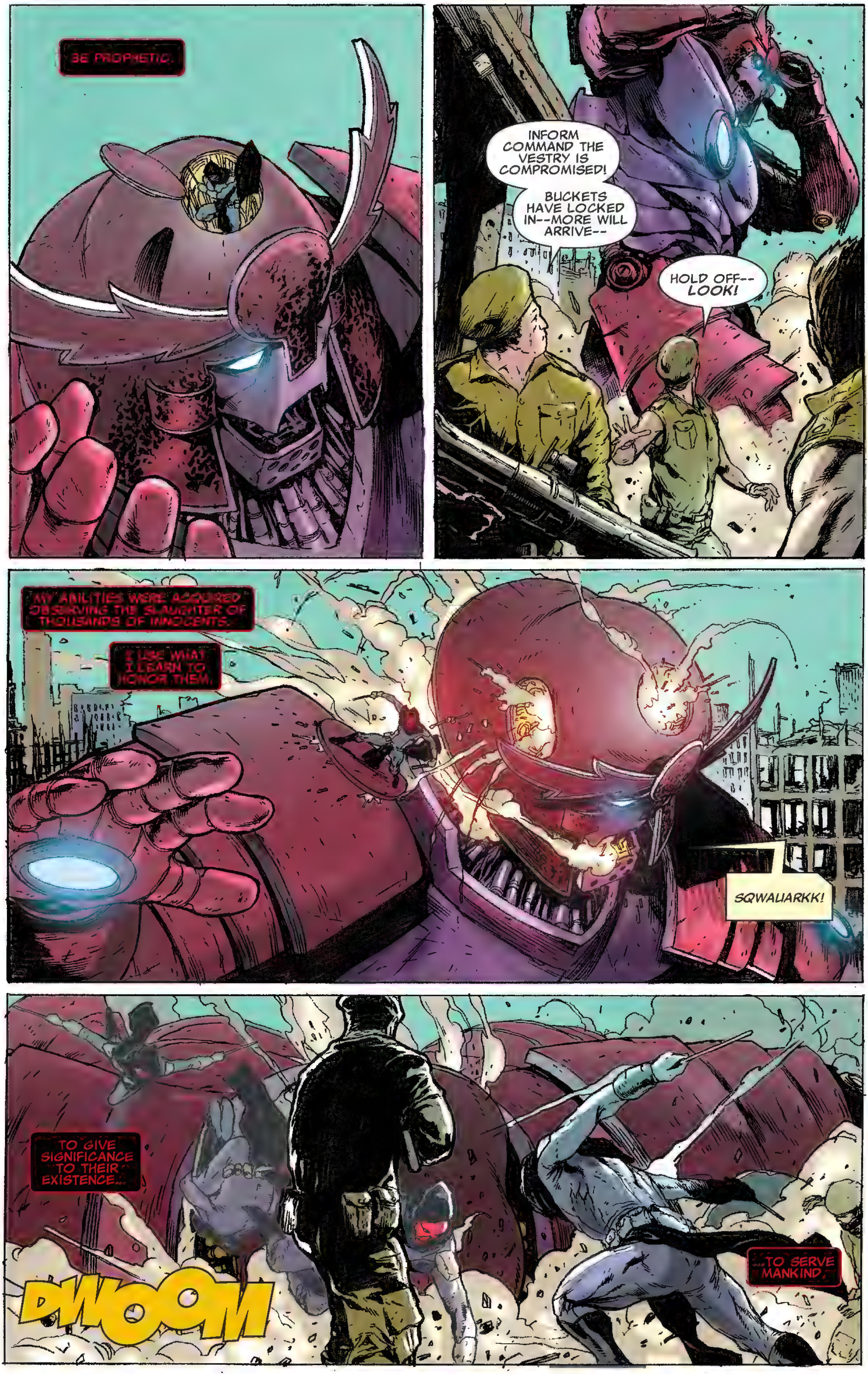
Mike Deodato Jr.
+ White

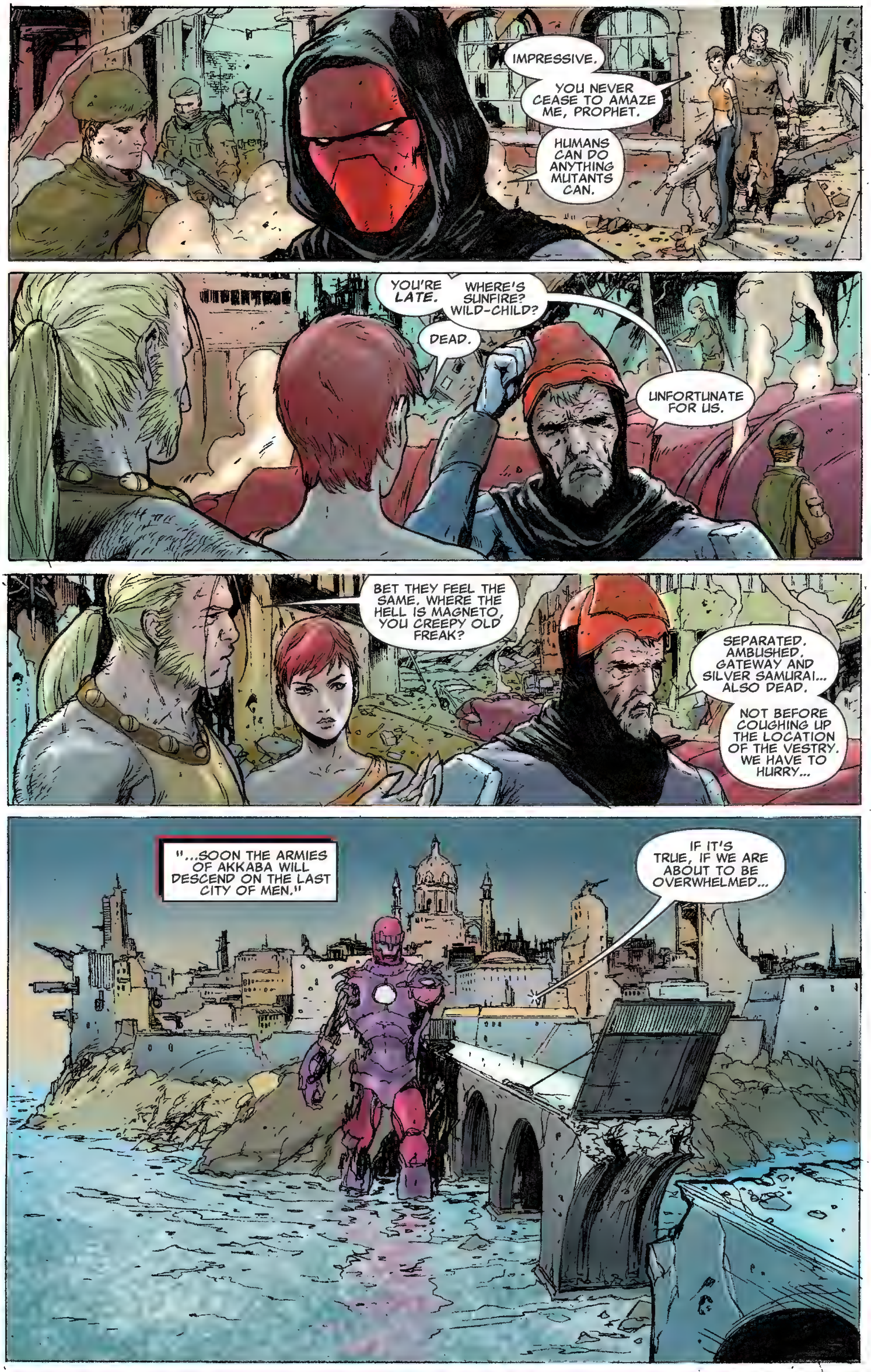
19.1 GHOST REUNION

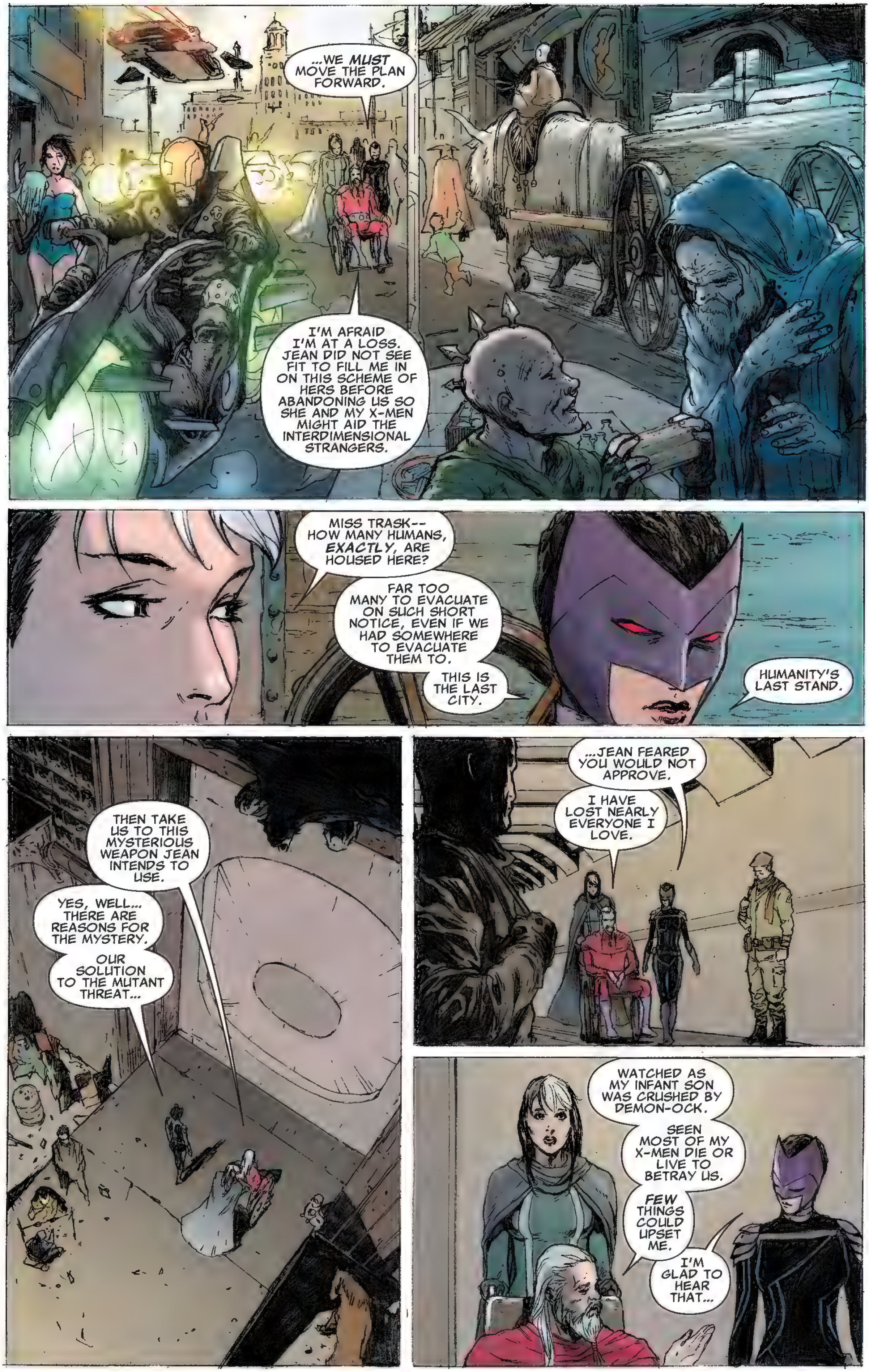

THE FIRE WAS BORN IN ME.
A HEREDITARY PASSION THAT LED MY FATHER TO RELIGIOUS ZEALOTRY.
THE SAME PATH I WAS SET TO WALK...
...BEFORE APOCALYPSE SLAUGHTERED EVERYONE IN MY TOWN.
FATHER KEPT US ALIVE FOR DAYS. KEPT US HIDDEN.
THE NEXT FEW YEARS WERE SPENT SKULKING FROM CAMP TO CAMP, THE MUTANTS NEVER FAR BEHIND.
BUT IT WAS HUMAN SCAVENGERS WHO SLAUGHTERED *MY* FAMILY.
IRONIC.
THE BOY I WAS *DIED*. NO FAITH LEFT IN THE ILLUSION OF GOD, I BUILT *MYSELF* UP IN HIS PLACE.
I STUDIED THE MUTANTS. THE METHODS BY WHICH THEY EXTERMINATE US.
PATTERNS IN THEIR MOVEMENT.
WEAKNESSES IN THEIR DEFENSE.
A DIFFERENT KIND OF SEMINARY...
I STUDIED HOW TO *KILL MUTANTS.*
MUTANTS HAVE *POWERS*--BUT HUMANS HAVE *WILL*. AND THERE WERE OTHER HUMANS WHO WERE "KILLED" LIKE ME.
WE ARE OUR OWN GOD.
WE ARE OUR OWN SALVATION.
WE "DEAD" HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO FEAR...

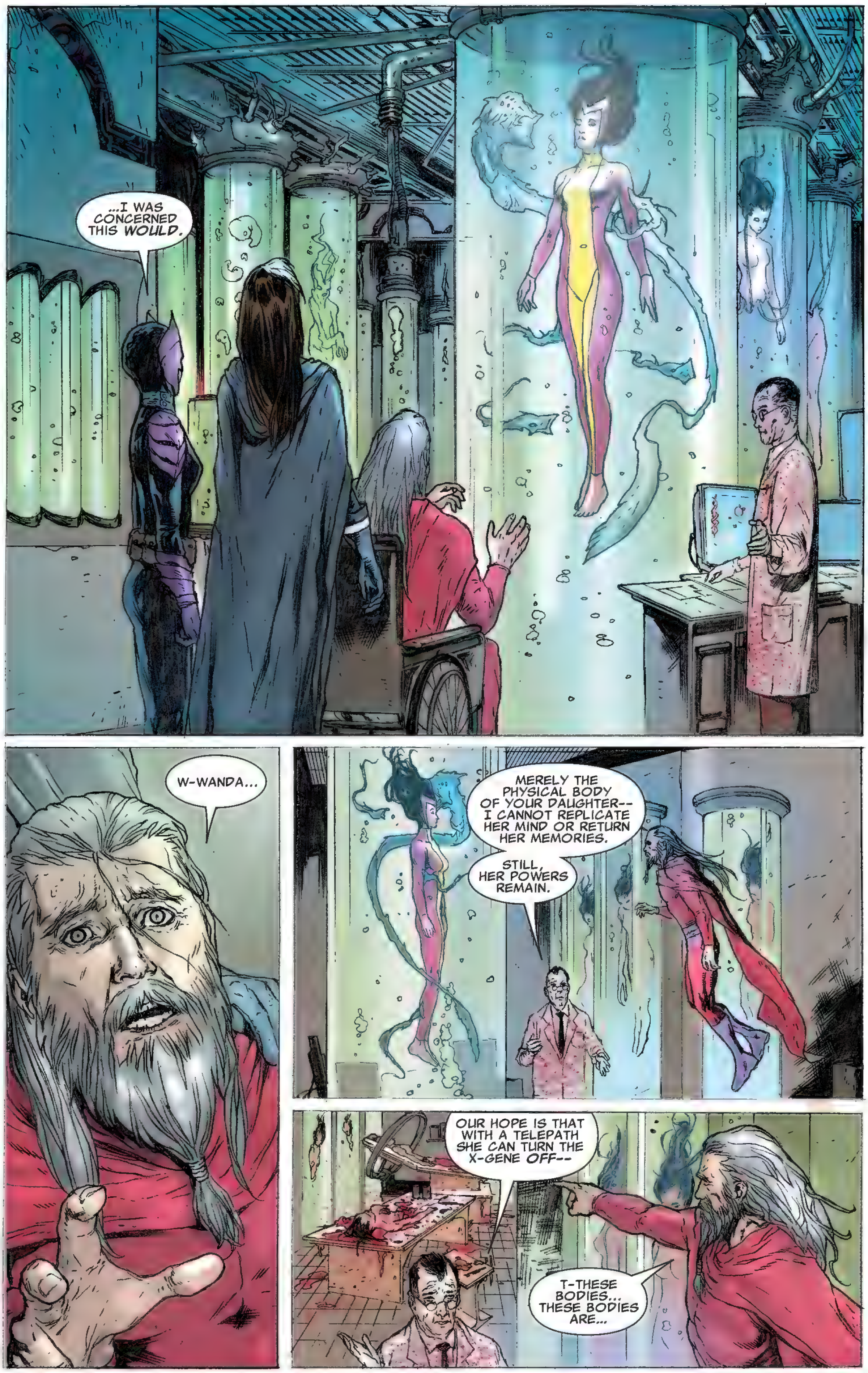

...WE ARE THE EXTERMINATED.
MOVE-- MOVE-- MOVE!!!
AKKABA PIGS REFER TO THESE DAYS AS "THEATER."
THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE IS UNDER NO THREAT FROM THE HUMAN RABBLE.
THEY HUNT US FOR SPORT.
I USE THESE HUNTS TO STUDY.
THWOOM
HOLY--
THE SENTINEL CHARGES IN PREDICTABLE WAYS.

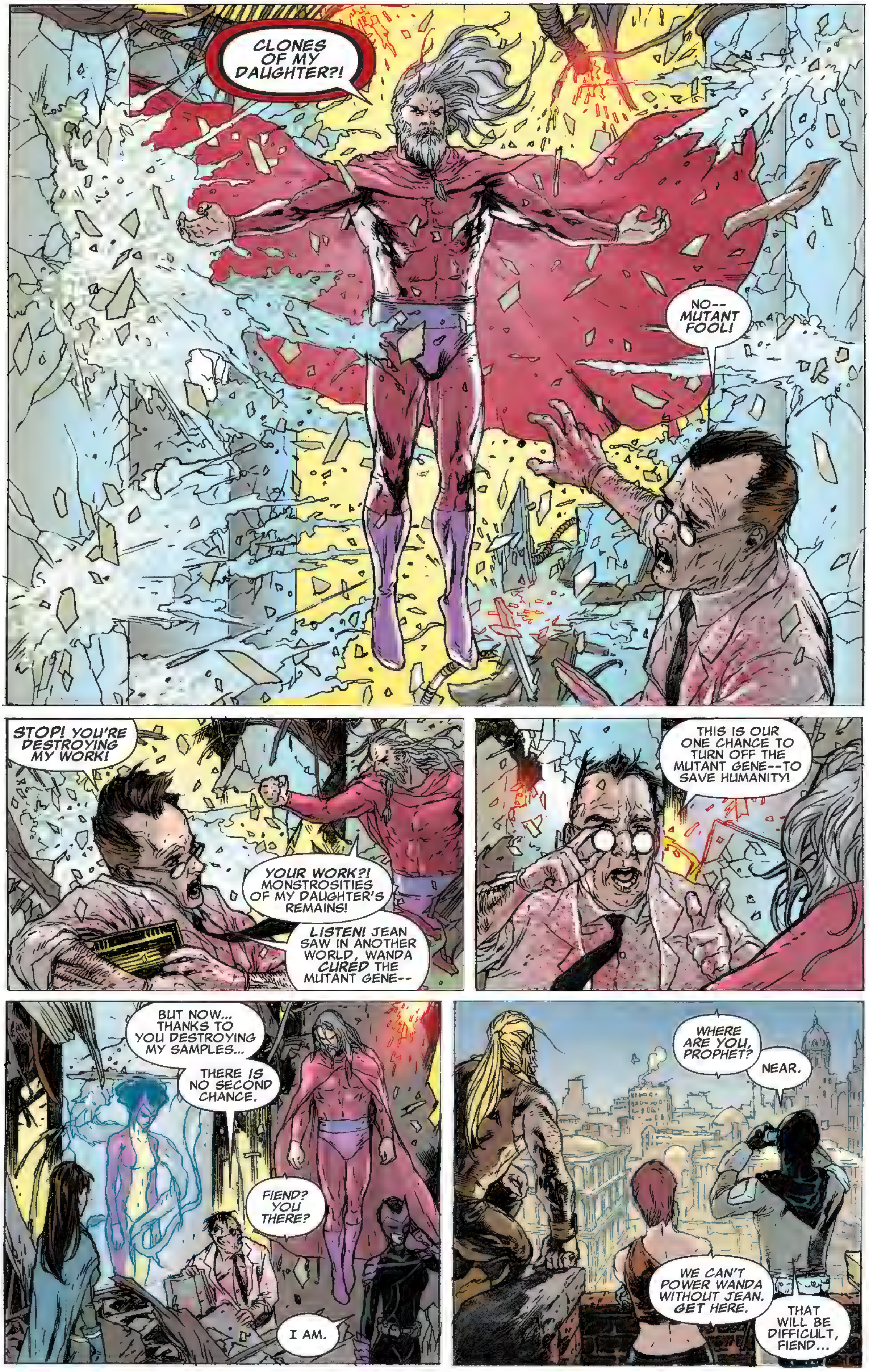

RESPONSE SYSTEMS CAN ONLY RANDOMIZE OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE MANEUVERS IN SO MANY WAYS.
ALL PREDICTABLE.
ONLY SO MANY CHOICES IN ANY SITUATION.
TARGET DESIGNATE: PROPHET. AFFILIATION: UNKNOWN.
SOME ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN OTHERS.
AUTOMATONS ALWAYS TAKE THE MOST OBVIOUS, MOST LIKELY PATH TO SUCCESS.
A MAN'S EYES WILL TELEGRAPH HIS INTENTIONS IN THE SAME WAY.
HIS FEAR WILL TELL YOU THE REST.
ENOUGH TIME SPENT OBSERVING ANYTHING--
--ONE CAN SEE THE FUTURE.
FEEL AN OPPONENT'S NEXT CHOICE.

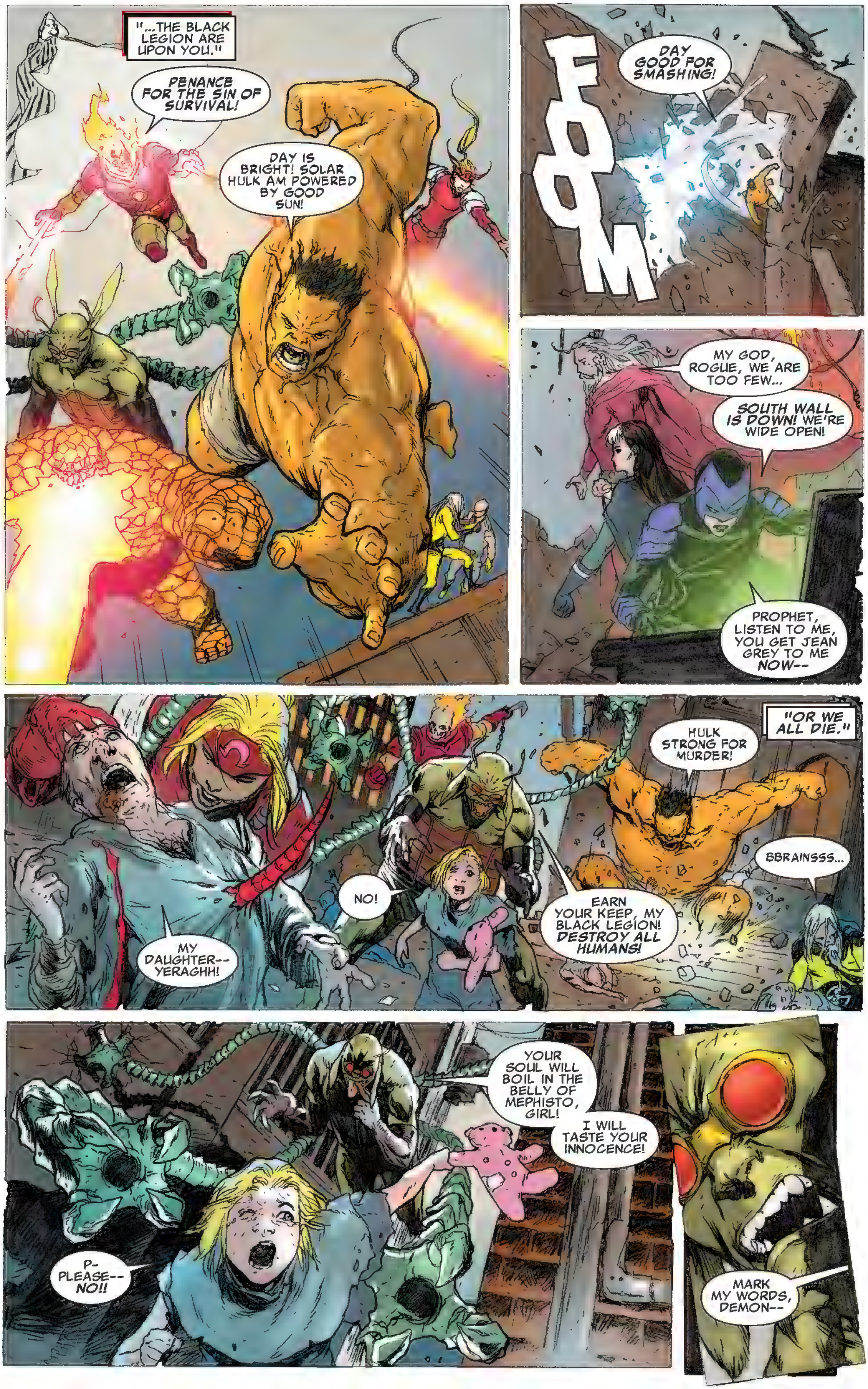

BE PROPHETIC.
INFORM COMMAND THE VESTRY IS COMPROMISED!
BUCKETS HAVE LOCKED IN--MORE WILL ARRIVE--
HOLD OFF-- LOOK!
MY ABILITIES WERE ACQUIRED OBSERVING THE SLAUGHTER OF THOUSANDS OF INNOCENTS.
I USE WHAT I LEARN TO HONOR THEM.
SQWAUARKK!
TO GIVE SIGNIFICANCE TO THEIR EXISTENCE...
DWOOM
...TO SERVE MANKIND.

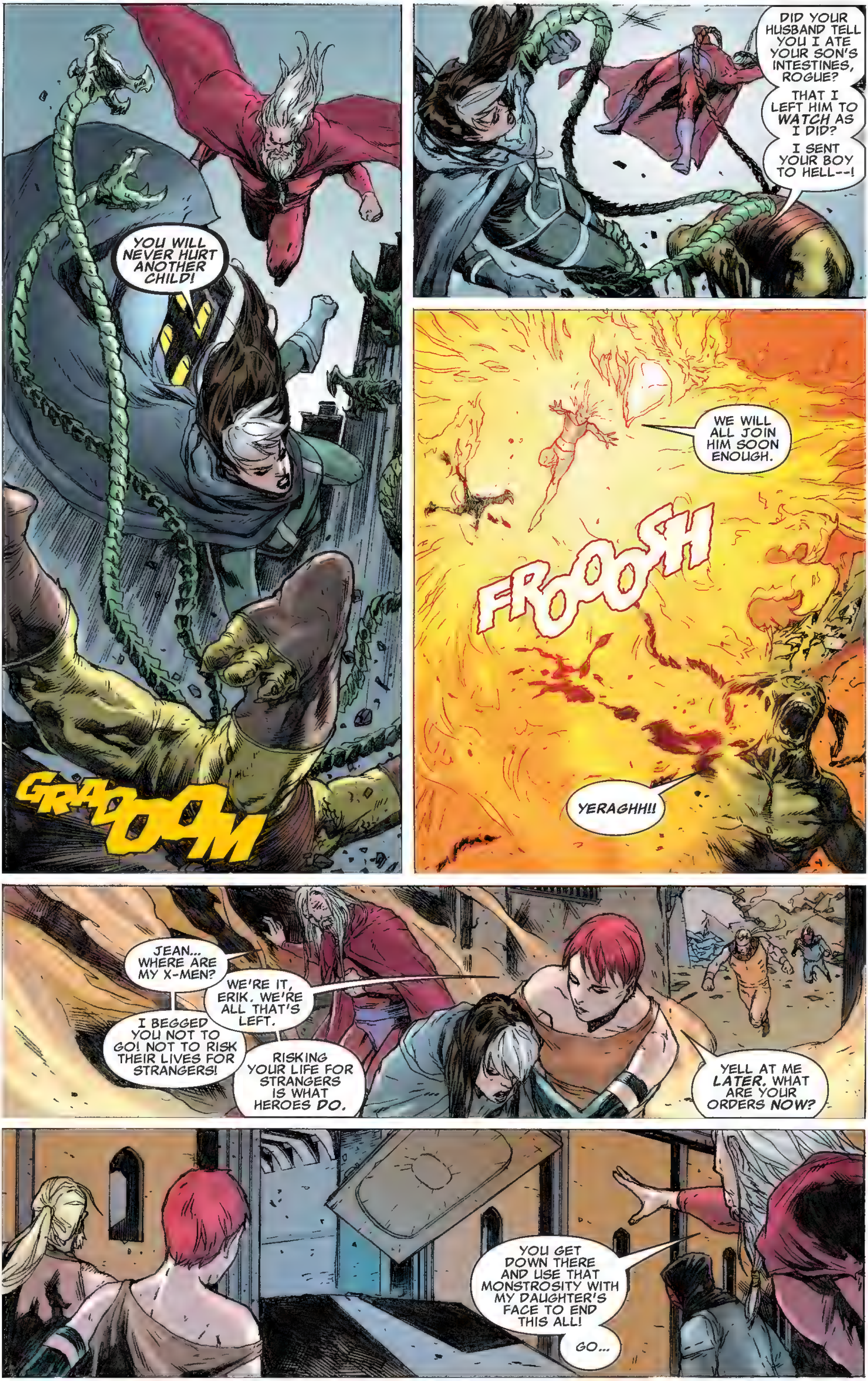

IMPRESSIVE.
YOU NEVER CEASE TO AMAZE ME, PROPHET.
HUMANS CAN DO ANYTHING MUTANTS CAN.
YOU'RE *LATE.*
WHERE'S SUNFIRE? WILD-CHILD?
DEAD.
UNFORTUNATE FOR US.
BET THEY FEEL THE SAME. WHERE THE HELL IS MAGNETO, YOU CREEPY OLD FREAK?
SEPARATED. AMBUSHED. GATEWAY AND SILVER SAMURAI... ALSO DEAD.
NOT BEFORE COUGHING UP THE LOCATION OF THE VESTRY. WE HAVE TO HURRY...
"...SOON THE ARMIES OF AKKABA WILL DESCEND ON THE LAST CITY OF MEN."
IF IT'S TRUE, IF WE ARE ABOUT TO BE OVERWHELMED...

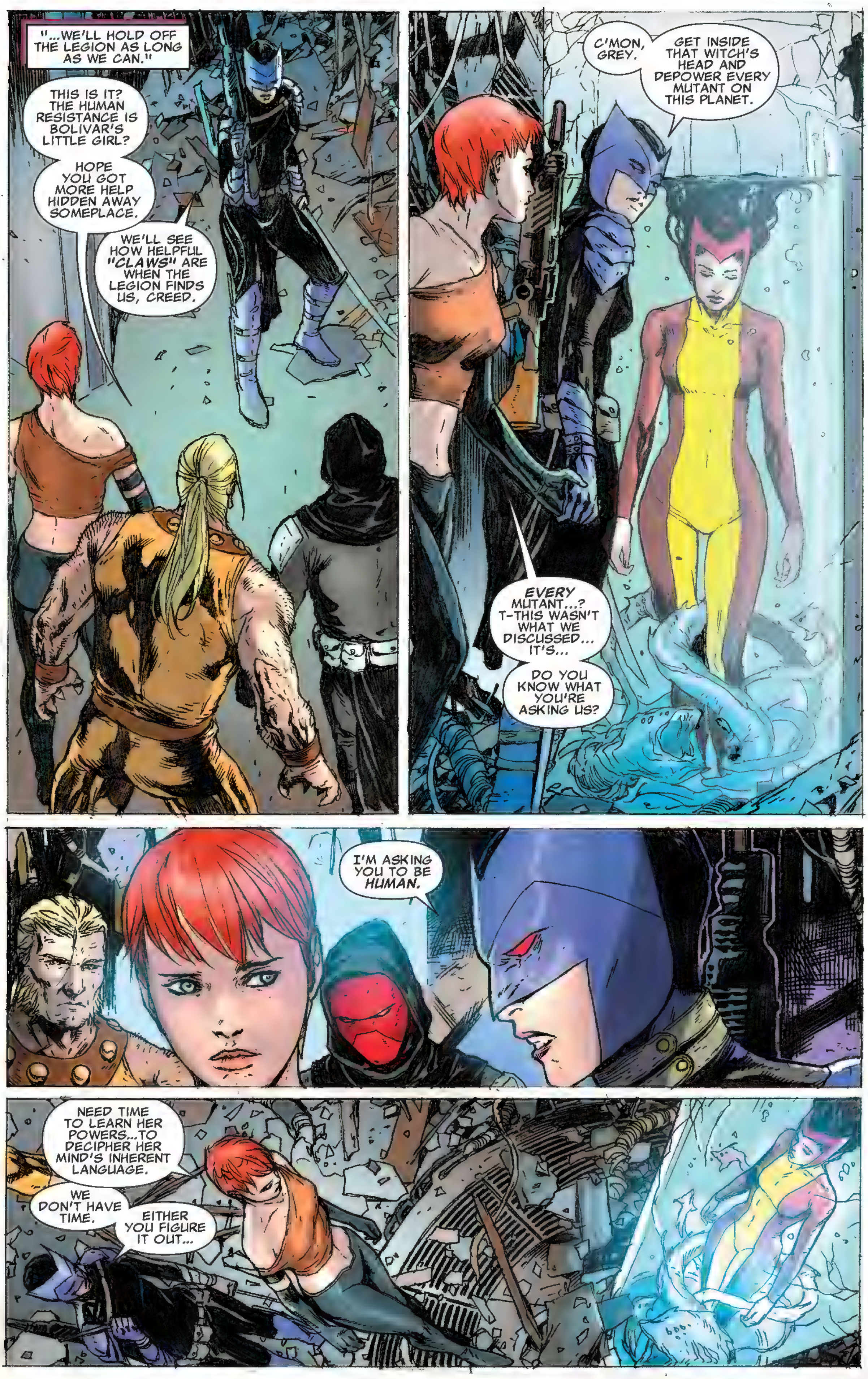

...WE *MUST* MOVE THE PLAN FORWARD.
I'M AFRAID I'M AT A LOSS. JEAN DID NOT SEE FIT TO FILL ME IN ON THIS SCHEME OF HERS BEFORE ABANDONING US SO SHE AND MY X-MEN MIGHT AID THE INTERDIMENSIONAL STRANGERS.
MISS TRASK-- HOW MANY HUMANS, *EXACTLY*, ARE HOUSED HERE?
FAR TOO MANY TO EVACUATE ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE, EVEN IF WE HAD SOMEWHERE TO EVACUATE THEM TO.
THIS IS THE LAST CITY.
HUMANITY'S LAST STAND.
THEN TAKE US TO THIS MYSTERIOUS WEAPON JEAN INTENDS TO USE.
YES, WELL... THERE ARE REASONS FOR THE MYSTERY.
OUR SOLUTION TO THE MUTANT THREAT...
...JEAN FEARED YOU WOULD NOT APPROVE.
I HAVE LOST NEARLY EVERYONE I LOVE.
WATCHED AS MY INFANT SON WAS CRUSHED BY DEMON-OCK.
SEEN MOST OF MY X-MEN DIE OR LIVE TO BETRAY US.
FEW THINGS COULD UPSET ME.
I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT...

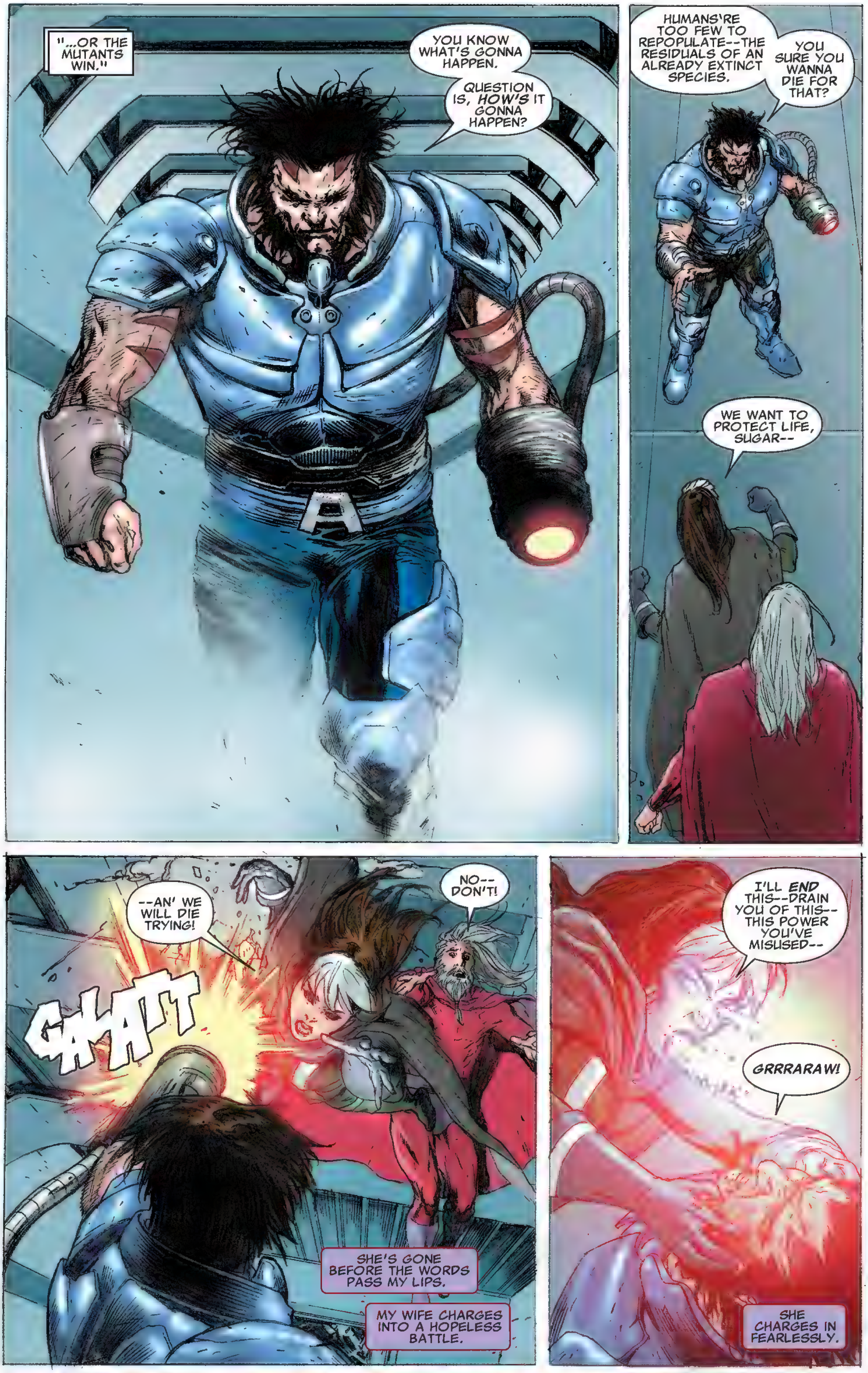

...I WAS CONCERNED THIS *WOULD*.
W-WANDA...
MERELY THE PHYSICAL BODY OF YOUR DAUGHTER-- I CANNOT REPLICATE HER MIND OR RETURN HER MEMORIES.
STILL, HER POWERS REMAIN.
OUR HOPE IS THAT WITH A TELEPATH SHE CAN TURN THE X-GENE *OFF*--
T-THESE BODIES... THESE BODIES ARE...

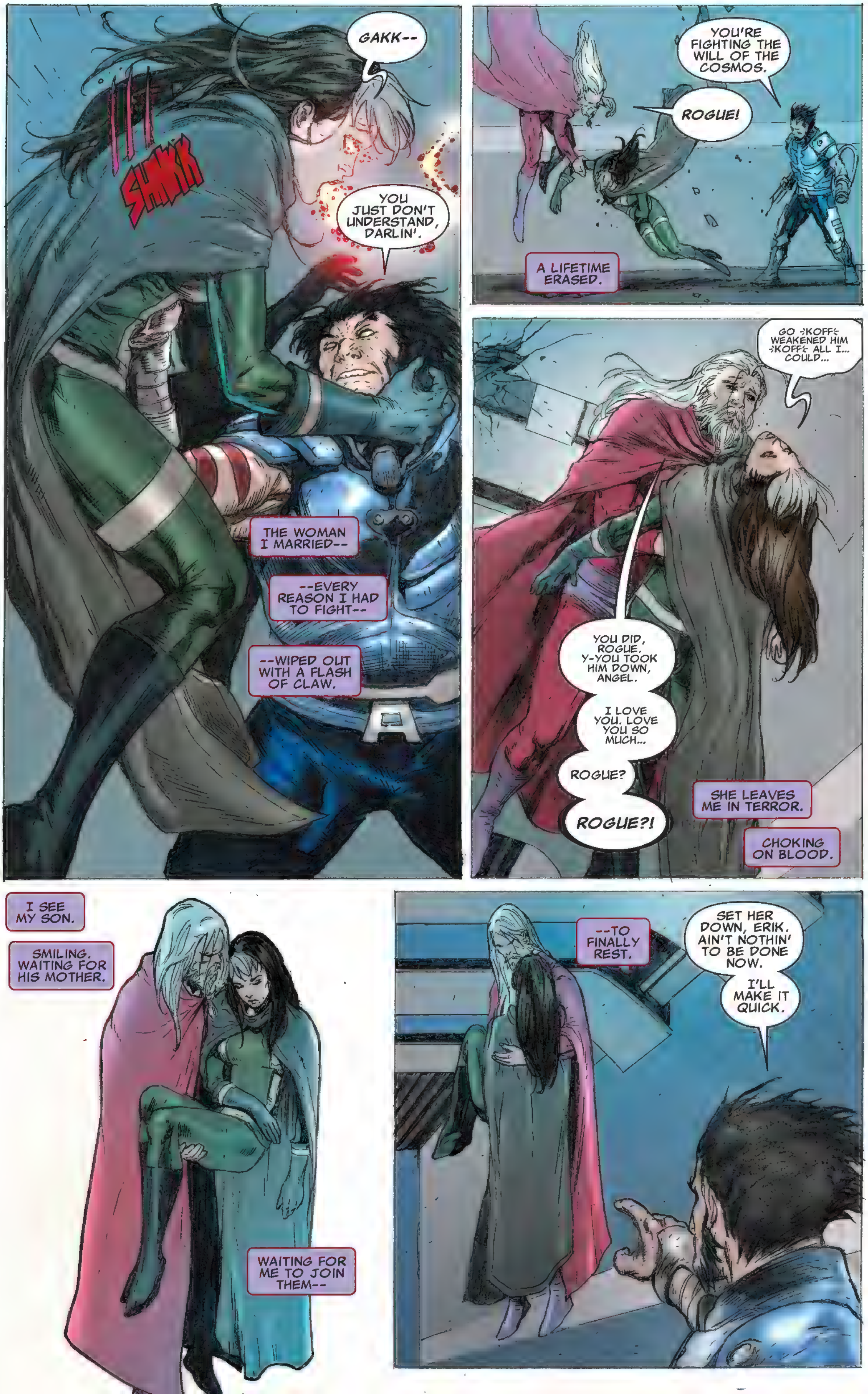

CLONES OF MY DAUGHTER?!
NO-- MUTANT FOOL!
STOP! YOU'RE DESTROYING MY WORK!
YOUR WORK?! MONSTROSITIES OF MY DAUGHTER'S REMAINS!
LISTEN! JEAN SAW IN ANOTHER WORLD, WANDA CURED THE MUTANT GENE--
THIS IS OUR ONE CHANCE TO TURN OFF THE MUTANT GENE--TO SAVE HUMANITY!
BUT NOW... THANKS TO YOU DESTROYING MY SAMPLES...
THERE IS NO SECOND CHANCE.
FIEND? YOU THERE?
I AM.
WHERE ARE YOU, PROPHET?
NEAR.
WE CAN'T POWER WANDA WITHOUT JEAN. GET HERE.
THAT WILL BE DIFFICULT, FIEND...

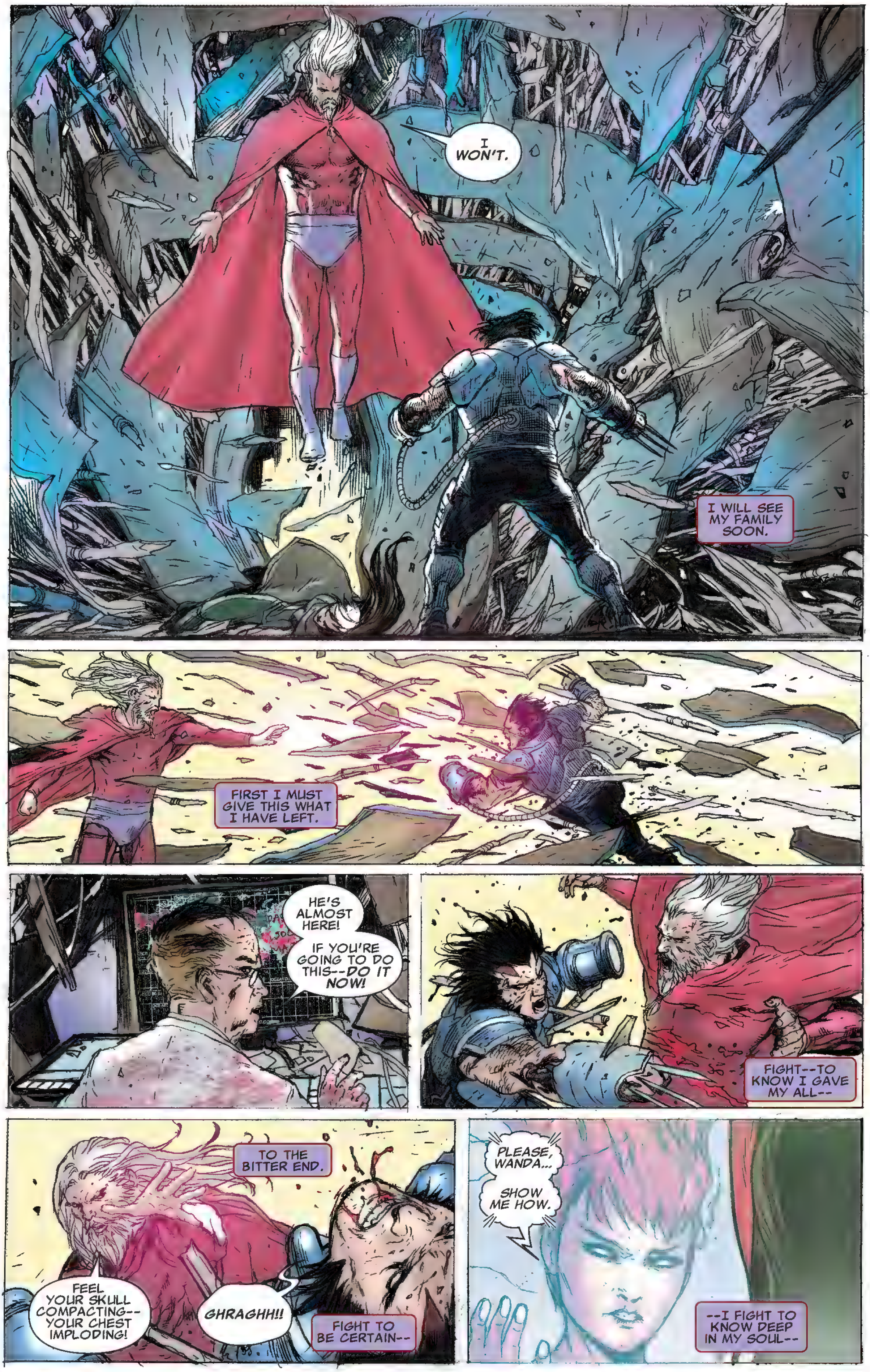

"...THE BLACK LEGION ARE UPON YOU."
PENANCE FOR THE SIN OF SURVIVAL!
DAY IS BRIGHT! SOLAR HULK AM POWERED BY GOOD SUN!
FOOM
DAY GOOD FOR SMASHING!
MY GOD, ROGUE, WE ARE TOO FEW...
SOUTH WALL IS DOWN! WE'RE WIDE OPEN!
PROPHET, LISTEN TO ME, YOU GET JEAN GREY TO ME NOW--
"OR WE ALL DIE."
HULK STRONG FOR MURDER!
BBRAINSSS...
NO!
EARN YOUR KEEP, MY BLACK LEGION! DESTROY ALL HUMANS!
MY DAUGHTER-- YERAGHH!
YOUR SOUL WILL BOIL IN THE BELLY OF MEPHISTO, GIRL!
I WILL TASTE YOUR INNOCENCE!
P-PLEASE-- NO!!
MARK MY WORDS, DEMON--

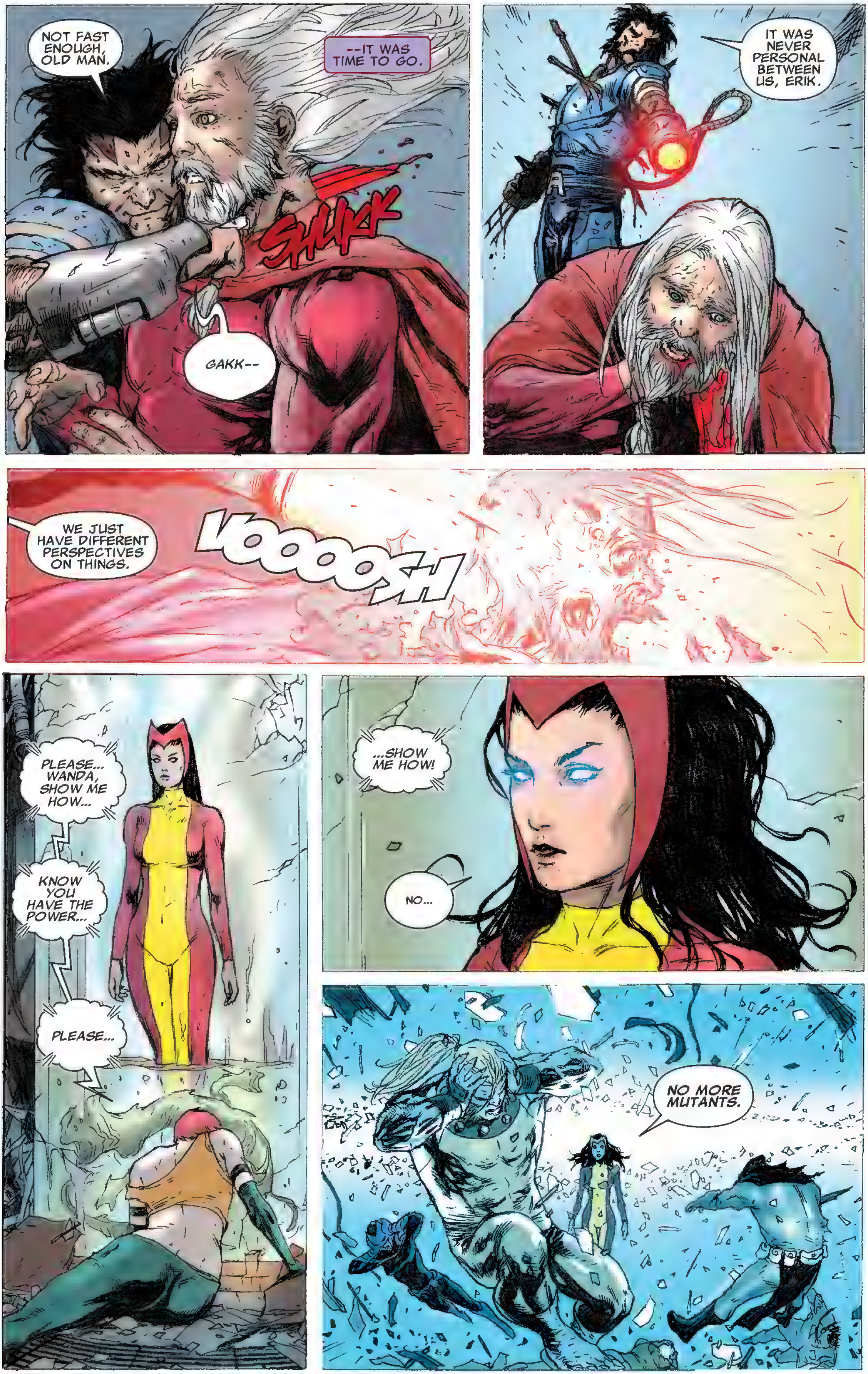

YOU WILL NEVER HURT ANOTHER CHILD!
GRADOOM
DID YOUR HUSBAND TELL YOU I ATE YOUR SON'S INTESTINES, ROGUE?
THAT I LEFT HIM TO *WATCH* AS I DID?
I SENT YOUR BOY TO HELL--!
WE WILL ALL JOIN HIM SOON ENOUGH.
FROOOSH
YERAGHH!!
JEAN... WHERE ARE MY X-MEN?
WE'RE IT, ERIK. WE'RE ALL THAT'S LEFT.
I BEGGED YOU NOT TO GO! NOT TO RISK THEIR LIVES FOR STRANGERS!
RISKING YOUR LIFE FOR STRANGERS IS WHAT HEROES *DO*.
YELL AT ME *LATER*. WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS *NOW*?
YOU GET DOWN THERE AND USE THAT MONSTROSITY WITH MY DAUGHTER'S FACE TO END THIS ALL!
GO...

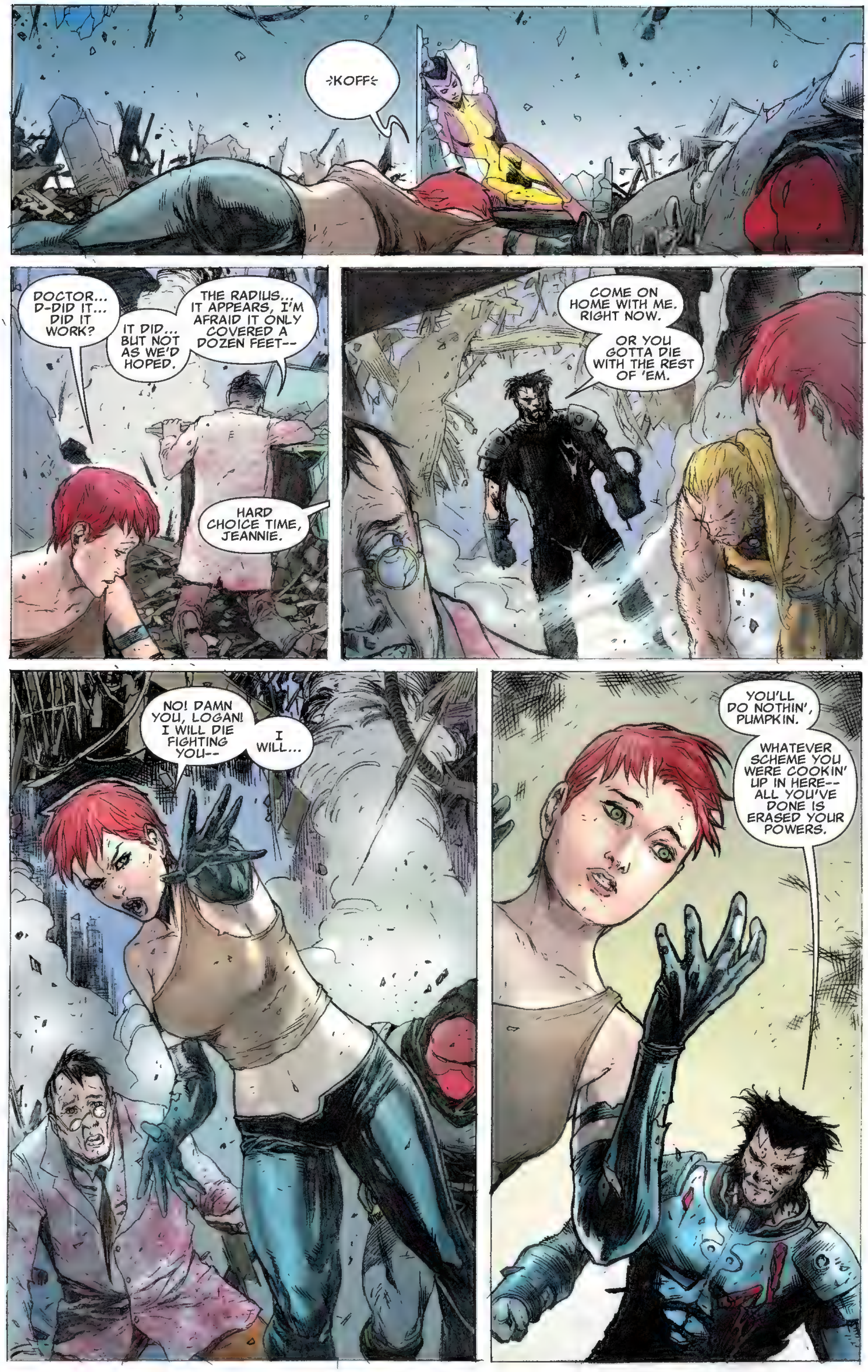

"...WE'LL HOLD OFF THE LEGION AS LONG AS WE CAN."
THIS IS IT? THE HUMAN RESISTANCE IS BOLIVAR'S LITTLE GIRL?
HOPE YOU GOT MORE HELP HIDDEN AWAY SOMEPLACE.
WE'LL SEE HOW HELPFUL "CLAWS" ARE WHEN THE LEGION FINDS US, CREED.
C'MON, GREY.
GET INSIDE THAT WITCH'S HEAD AND DEPOWER EVERY MUTANT ON THIS PLANET.
EVERY MUTANT...? T-THIS WASN'T WHAT WE DISCUSSED... IT'S...
DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING US?
I'M ASKING YOU TO BE HUMAN.
NEED TIME TO LEARN HER POWERS...TO DECIPHER HER MIND'S INHERENT LANGUAGE.
WE DON'T HAVE TIME.
EITHER YOU FIGURE IT OUT...

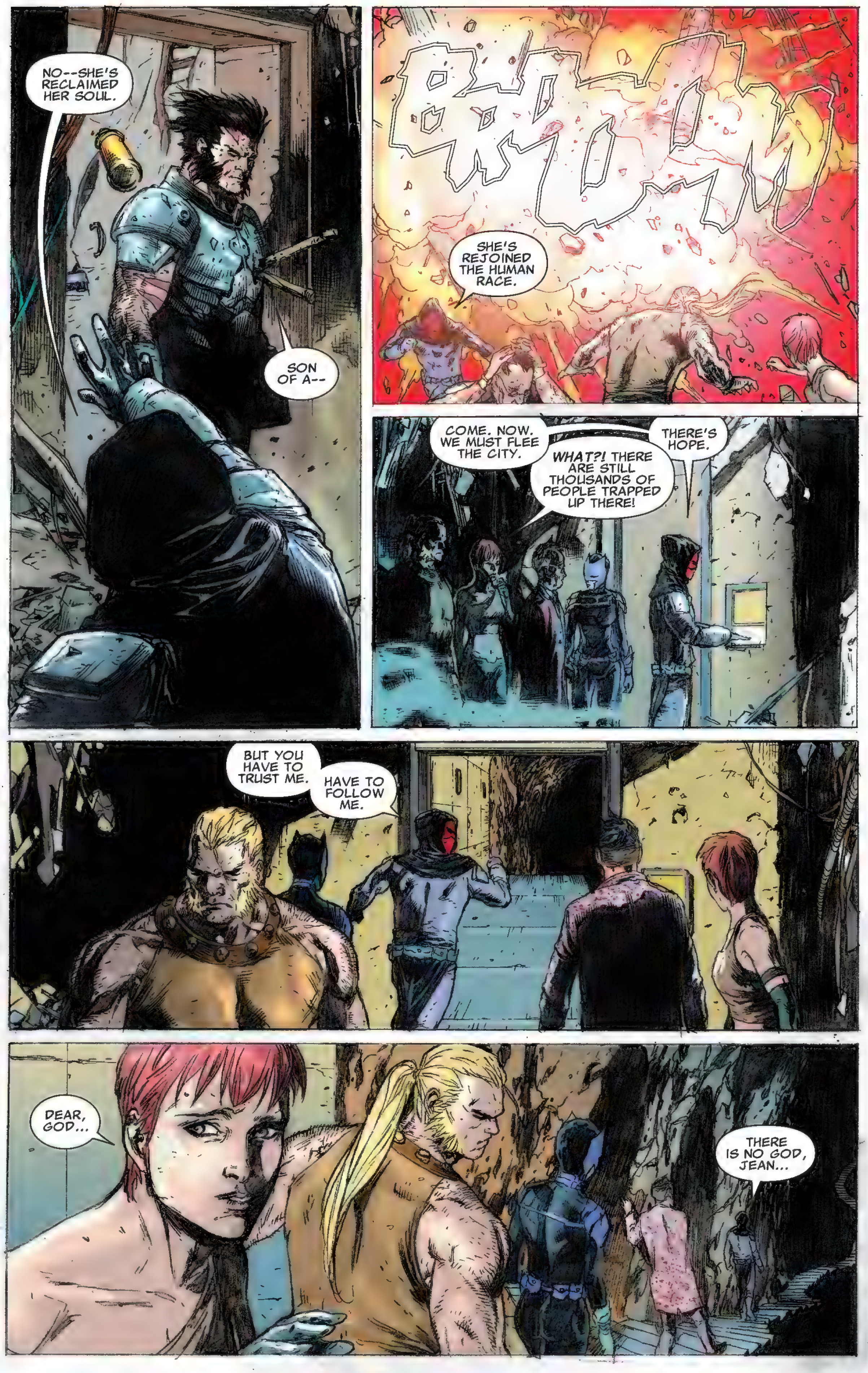

"...OR THE MUTANTS WIN."
YOU KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN.
QUESTION IS, *HOW'S* IT GONNA HAPPEN?
HUMANS'RE TOO FEW TO REPOPULATE--THE RESIDUALS OF AN ALREADY EXTINCT SPECIES.
YOU SURE YOU WANNA DIE FOR THAT?
WE WANT TO PROTECT LIFE, SUGAR--
--AN' WE WILL DIE TRYING!
NO-- DON'T!
GAKATT
SHE'S GONE BEFORE THE WORDS PASS MY LIPS.
MY WIFE CHARGES INTO A HOPELESS BATTLE.
I'LL *END* THIS--DRAIN YOU OF THIS--THIS POWER YOU'VE MISUSED--
GRRRARAW!
SHE CHARGES IN FEARLESSLY.

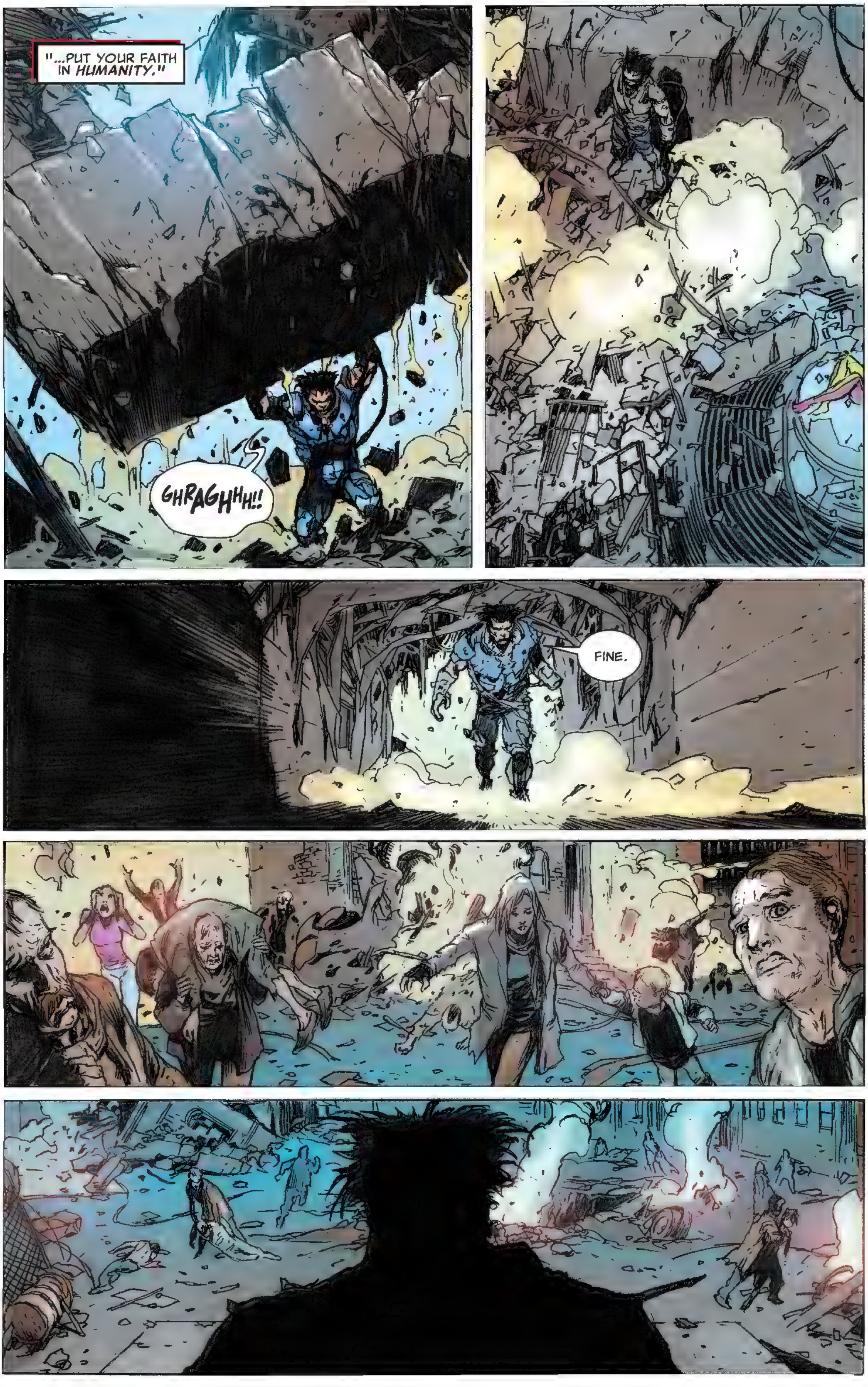

GAKK--
SHAKK
YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND, DARLIN'.
THE WOMAN I MARRIED--
--EVERY REASON I HAD TO FIGHT--
--WIPED OUT WITH A FLASH OF CLAW.
YOU'RE FIGHTING THE WILL OF THE COSMOS.
ROGUE!
A LIFETIME ERASED.
GO *KOFF* WEAKENED HIM *KOFF* ALL I... COULD...
YOU DID, ROGUE. Y-YOU TOOK HIM DOWN, ANGEL.
I LOVE YOU. LOVE YOU SO MUCH...
ROGUE?
ROGUE?!
SHE LEAVES ME IN TERROR.
CHOKING ON BLOOD.
I SEE MY SON.
SMILING. WAITING FOR HIS MOTHER.
WAITING FOR ME TO JOIN THEM--
--TO FINALLY REST.
SET HER DOWN, ERIK. AIN'T NOTHIN' TO BE DONE NOW.
I'LL MAKE IT QUICK.

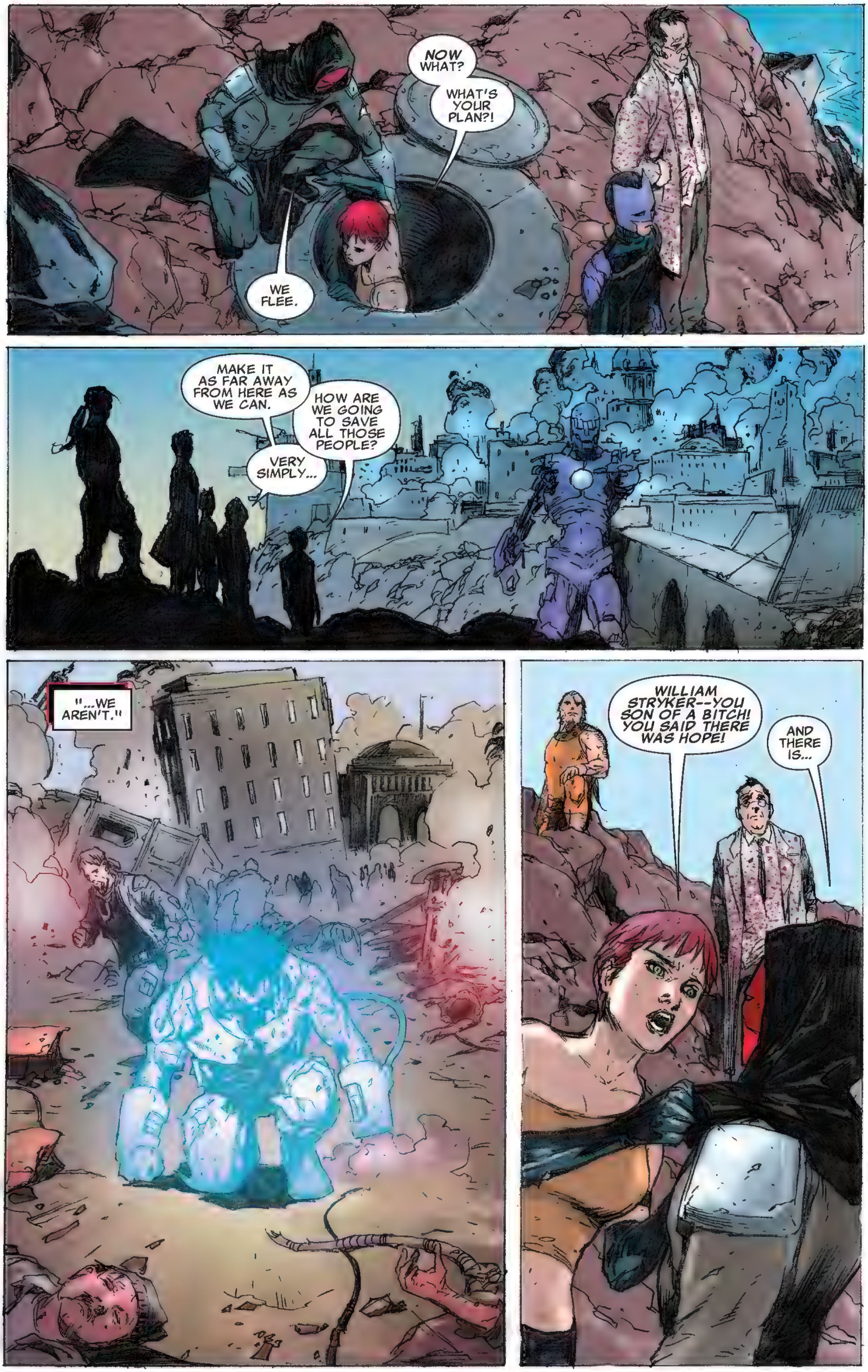

I WON'T.
I WILL SEE MY FAMILY SOON.
FIRST I MUST GIVE THIS WHAT I HAVE LEFT.
HE'S ALMOST HERE!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO THIS--*DO IT NOW!*
FIGHT--TO KNOW I GAVE MY ALL--
TO THE BITTER END.
FEEL YOUR SKULL COMPACTING--YOUR CHEST IMPLODING!
GHRAGHH!!
FIGHT TO BE CERTAIN--
PLEASE, WANDA...
SHOW ME HOW.
--I FIGHT TO KNOW DEEP IN MY SOUL--

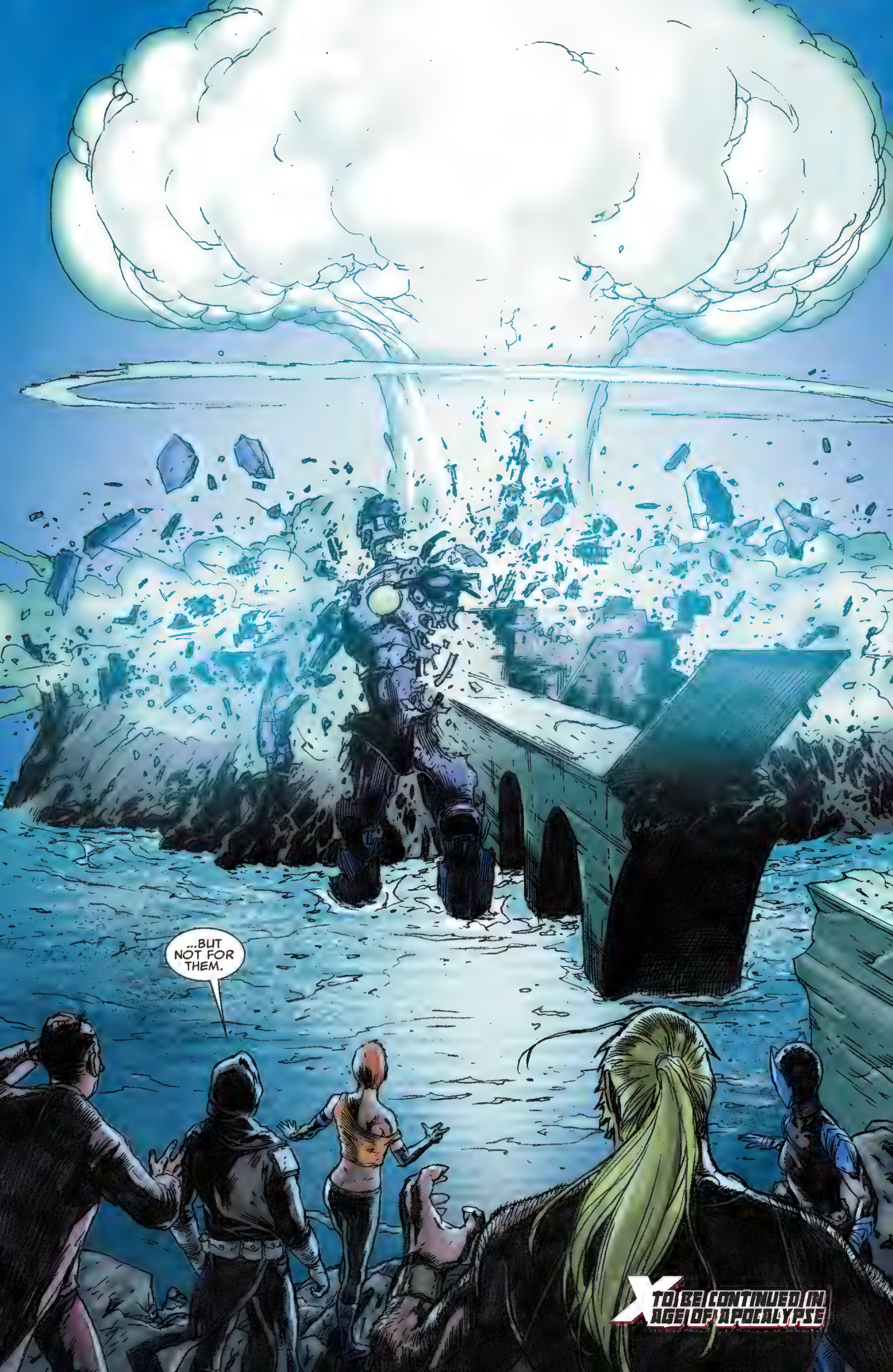

NOT FAST ENOUGH, OLD MAN.
--IT WAS TIME TO GO.
SHUKK
GAKK--
IT WAS NEVER PERSONAL BETWEEN US, ERIK.
WE JUST HAVE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THINGS.
VOOOOSH
PLEASE... WANDA, SHOW ME HOW...
KNOW YOU HAVE THE POWER...
PLEASE...
...SHOW ME HOW!
NO...
NO MORE MUTANTS.

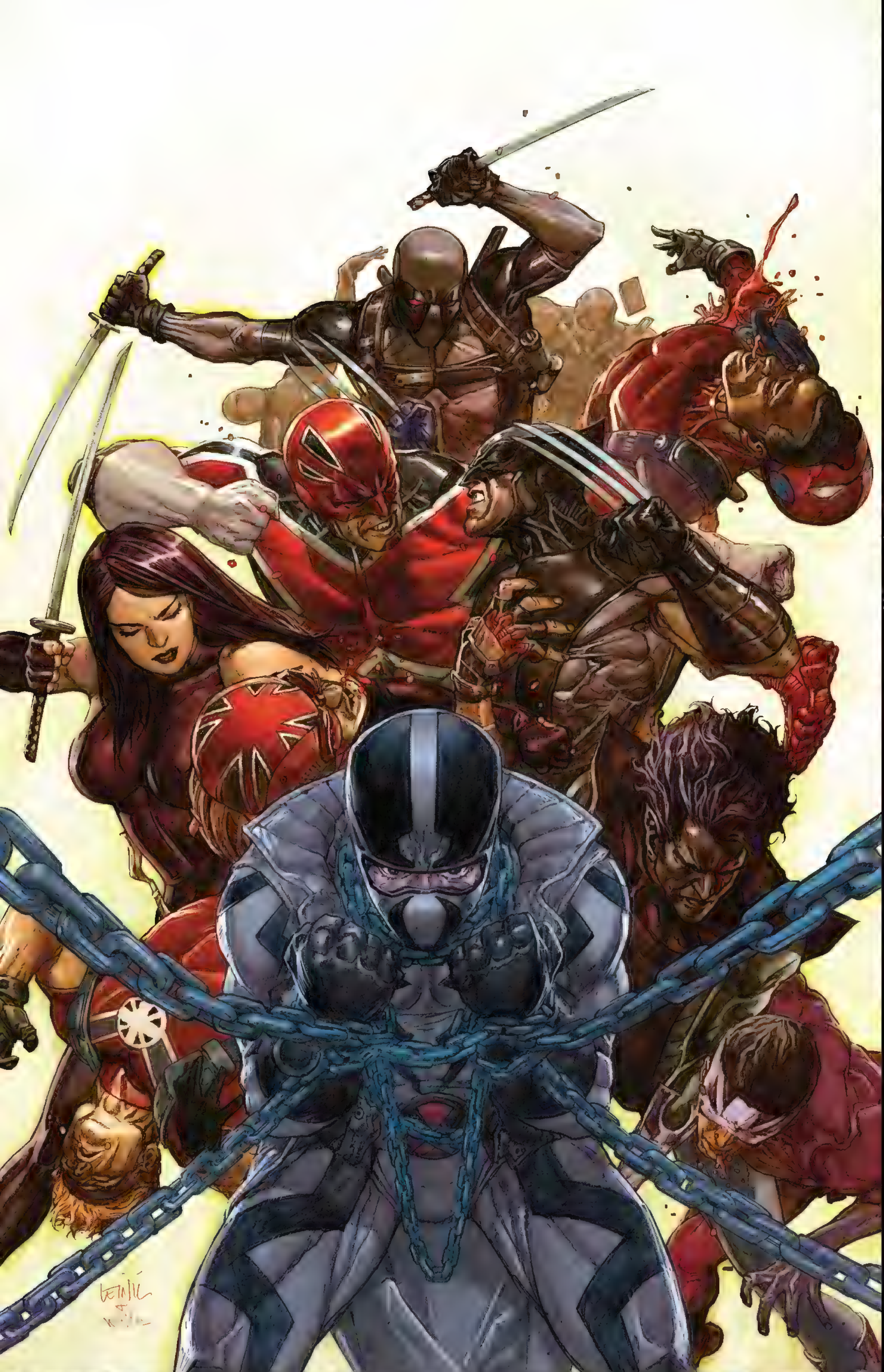

KOFF
DOCTOR... D-DID IT... DID IT WORK?
IT DID... BUT NOT AS WE'D HOPED.
THE RADIUS... IT APPEARS, I'M AFRAID IT ONLY COVERED A DOZEN FEET--
HARD CHOICE TIME, JEANNIE.
COME ON HOME WITH ME. RIGHT NOW.
OR YOU GOTTA DIE WITH THE REST OF 'EM.
NO! DAMN YOU, LOGAN! I WILL DIE FIGHTING YOU--
I WILL...
YOU'LL DO NOTHIN', PUMPKIN.
WHATEVER SCHEME YOU WERE COOKIN' UP IN HERE-- ALL YOU'VE DONE IS ERASED YOUR POWERS.


NO--SHE'S RECLAIMED HER SOUL.
SON OF A--
BRROOOM
SHE'S REJOINED THE HUMAN RACE.
COME. NOW. WE MUST FLEE THE CITY.
THERE'S HOPE.
WHAT?! THERE ARE STILL THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TRAPPED UP THERE!
BUT YOU HAVE TO TRUST ME.
HAVE TO FOLLOW ME.
DEAR, GOD...
THERE IS NO GOD, JEAN...


"...PUT YOUR FAITH IN HUMANITY."
GHRAGHHH!!
FINE.

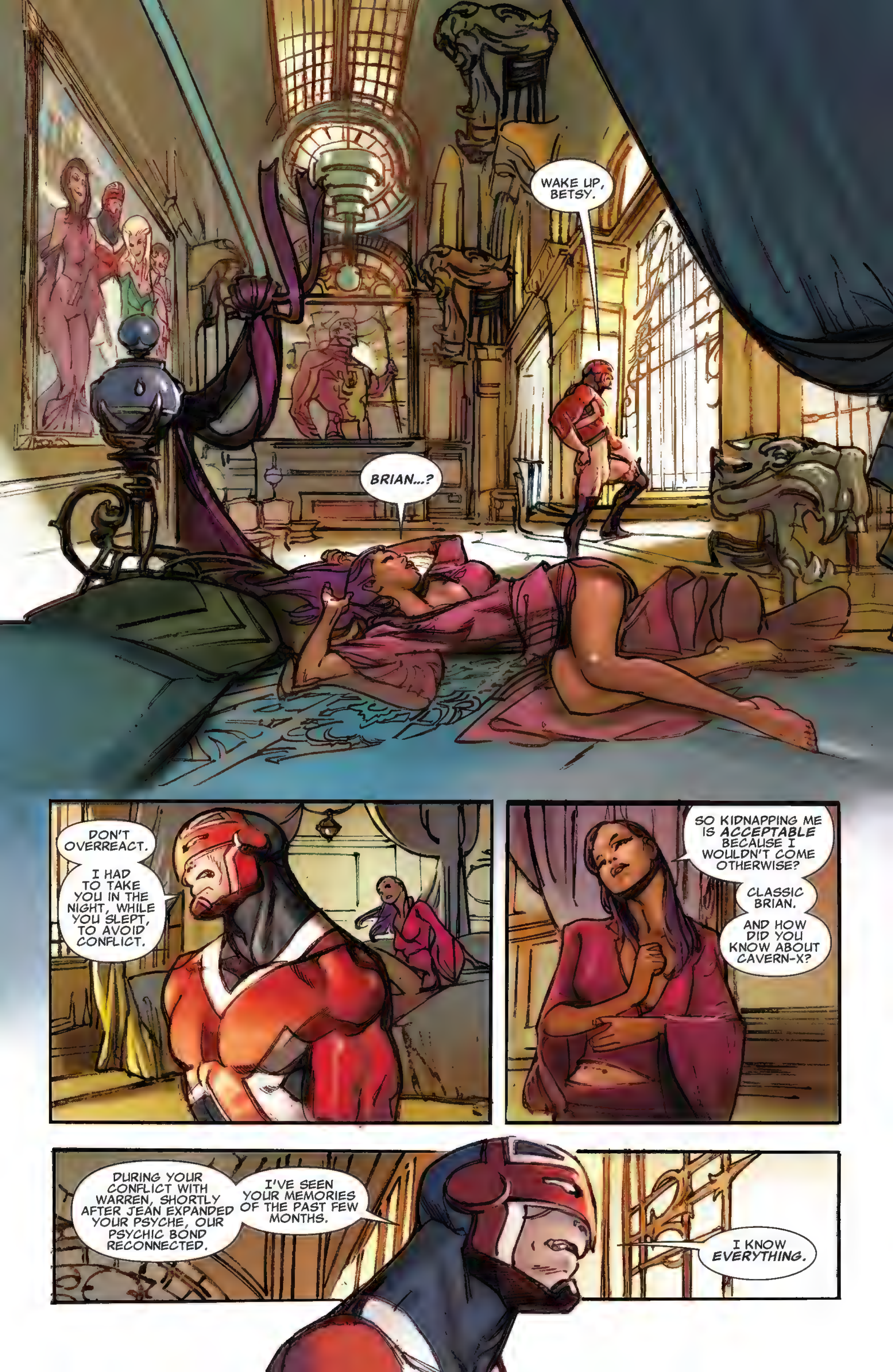

NOW WHAT?
WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?!
WE FLEE.
MAKE IT AS FAR AWAY FROM HERE AS WE CAN.
HOW ARE WE GOING TO SAVE ALL THOSE PEOPLE?
VERY SIMPLY...
"...WE AREN'T."
WILLIAM STRYKER--YOU SON OF A BITCH! YOU SAID THERE WAS HOPE!
AND THERE IS...

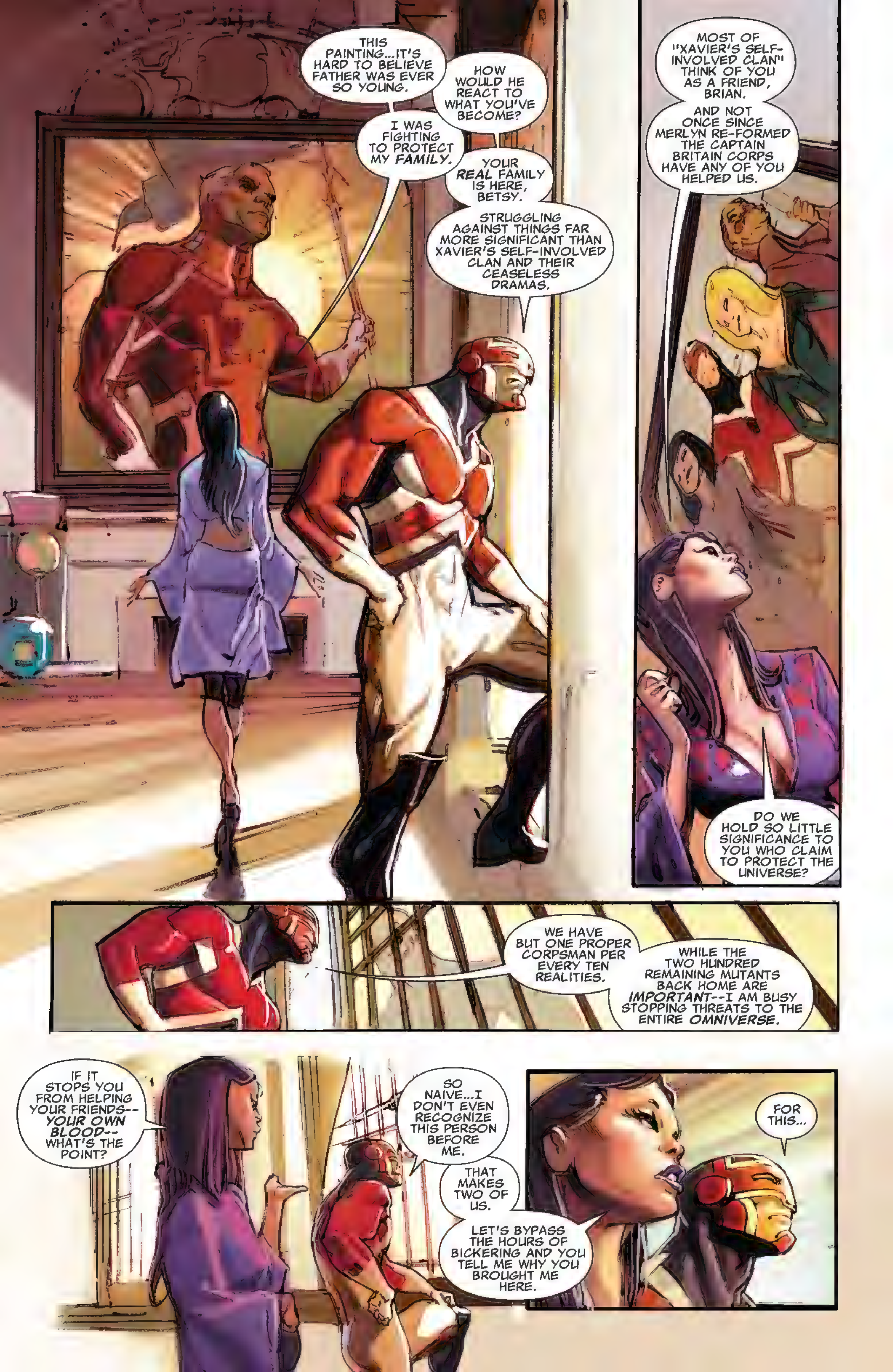

...BUT NOT FOR THEM.
TO BE CONTINUED IN AGE OF APOCALYPSE

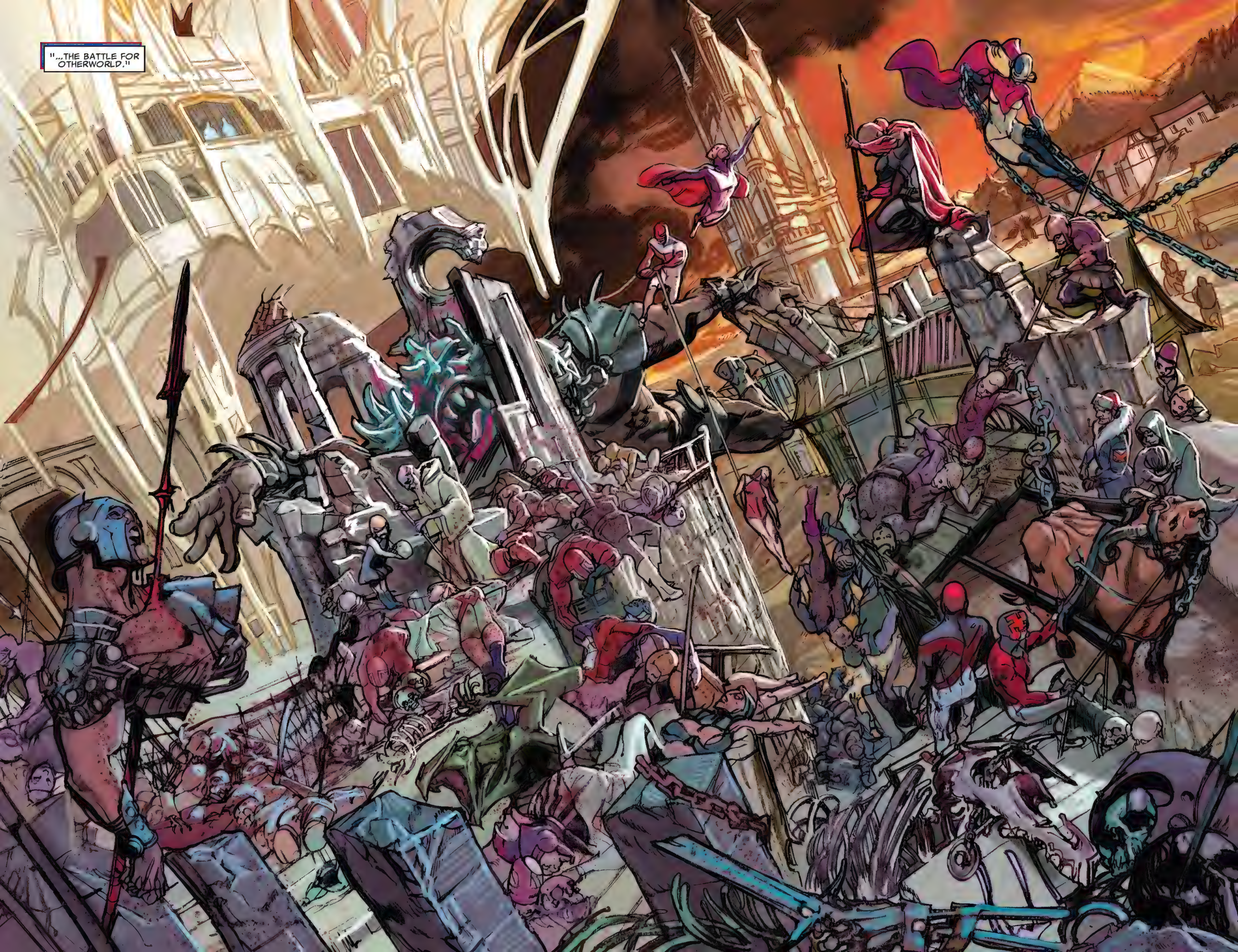


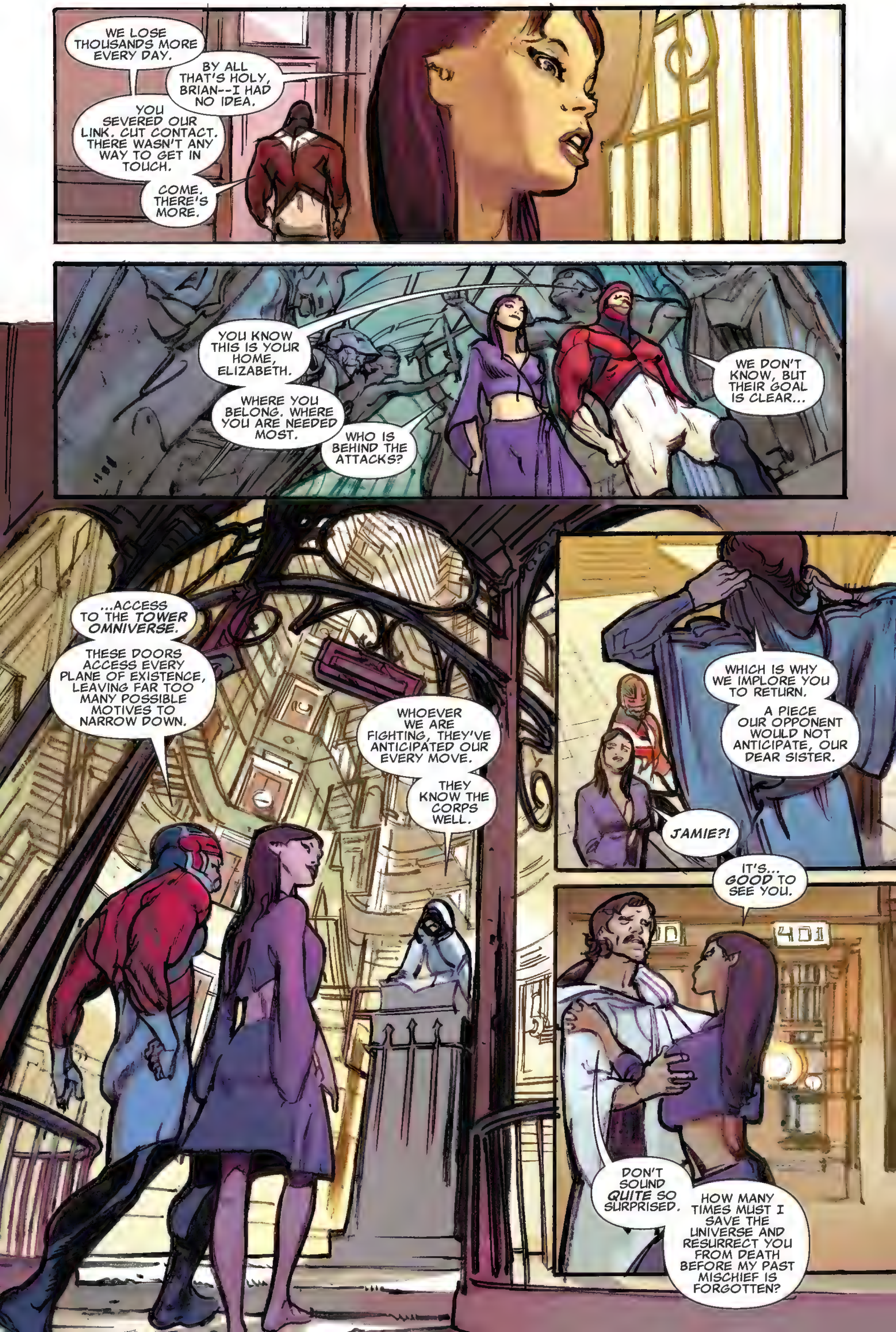
OTHERWORLD

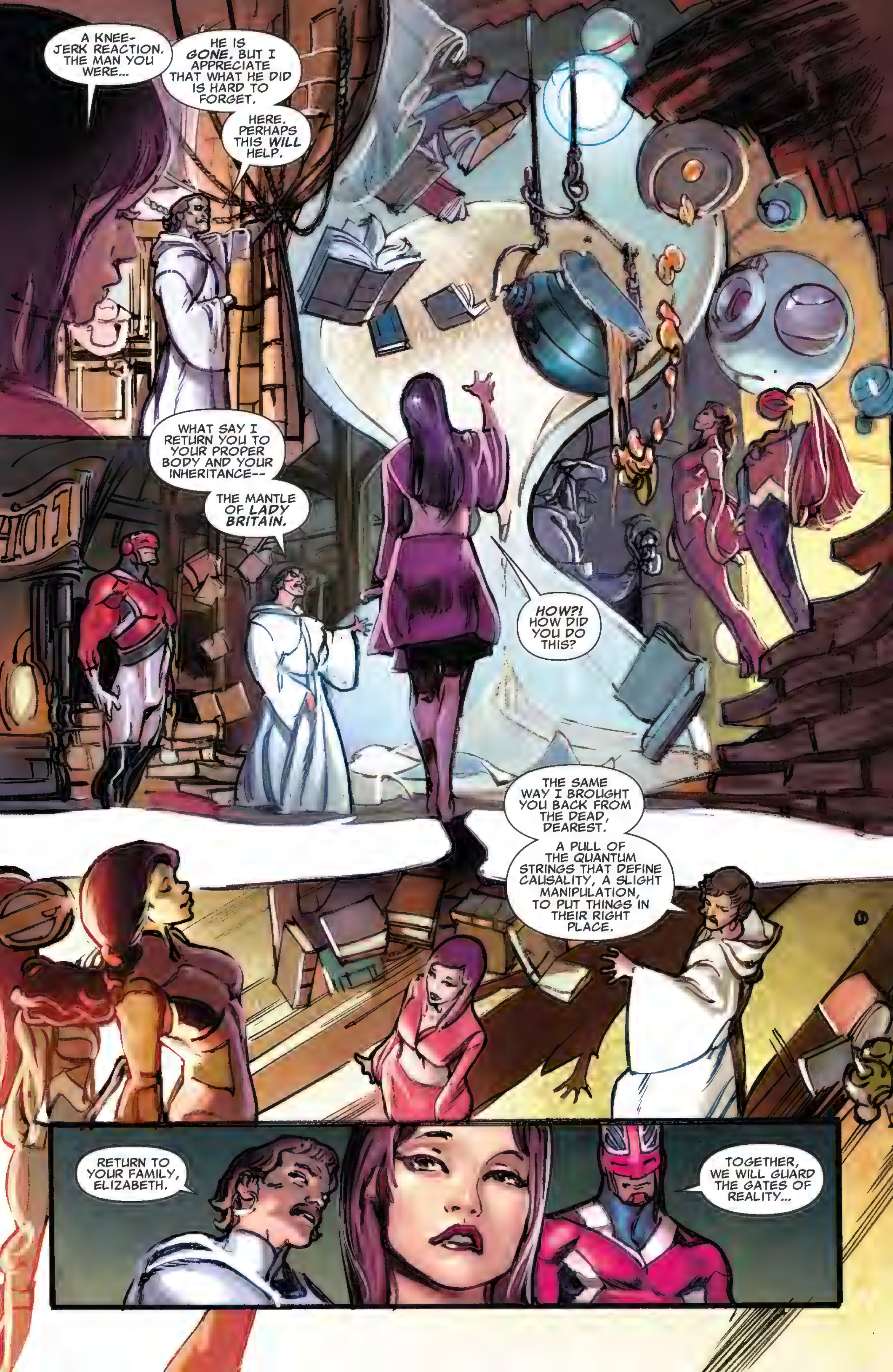
CHAPTER 1 20

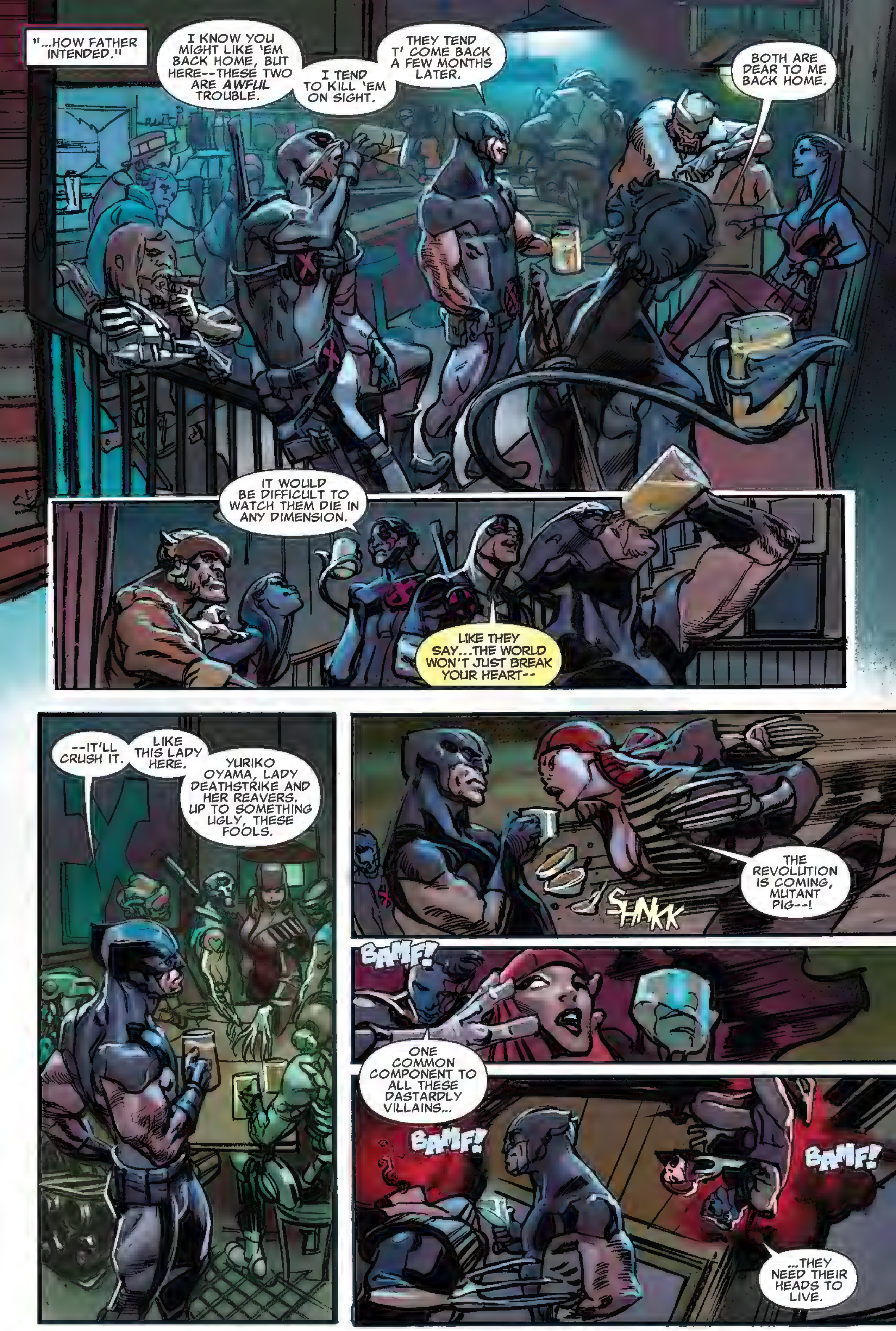

WAKE UP, BETSY.
BRIAN...?
DON'T OVERREACT.
I HAD TO TAKE YOU IN THE NIGHT, WHILE YOU SLEPT, TO AVOID CONFLICT.
SO KIDNAPPING ME IS *ACCEPTABLE* BECAUSE I WOULDN'T COME OTHERWISE?
CLASSIC BRIAN.
AND HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT CAVERN-X?
DURING YOUR CONFLICT WITH WARREN, SHORTLY AFTER JEAN EXPANDED YOUR PSYCHE, OUR PSYCHIC BOND RECONNECTED.
I'VE SEEN YOUR MEMORIES OF THE PAST FEW MONTHS.
I KNOW *EVERYTHING.*

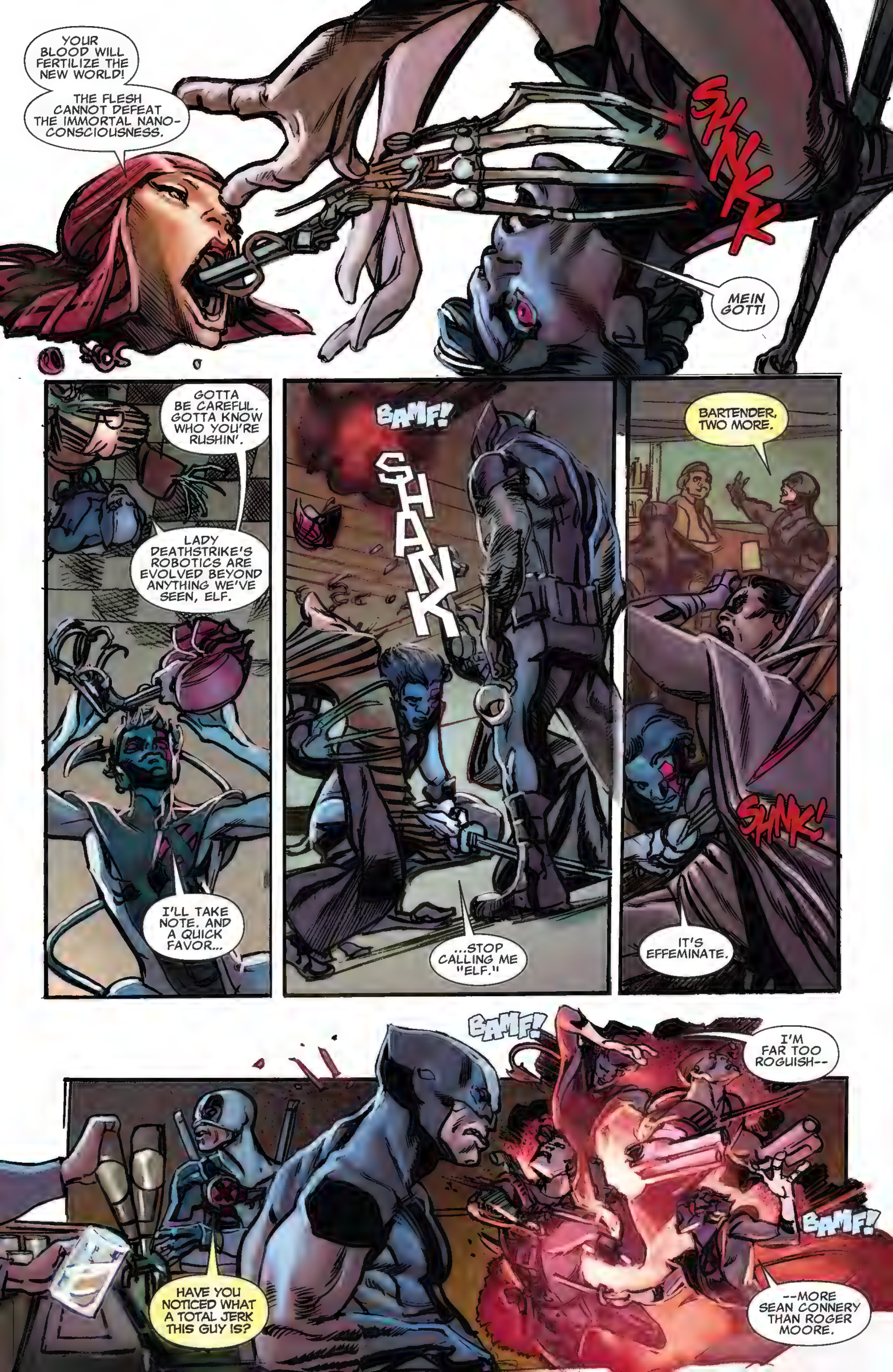

THIS PAINTING...IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE FATHER WAS EVER SO YOUNG.
HOW WOULD HE REACT TO WHAT YOU'VE BECOME?
I WAS FIGHTING TO PROTECT MY *FAMILY.*
YOUR *REAL* FAMILY IS HERE, BETSY.
STRUGGLING AGAINST THINGS FAR MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN XAVIER'S SELF-INVOLVED CLAN AND THEIR CEASELESS DRAMAS.
MOST OF "XAVIER'S SELF-INVOLVED CLAN" THINK OF YOU AS A FRIEND, BRIAN.
AND NOT ONCE SINCE MERLYN RE-FORMED THE CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPS HAVE ANY OF YOU HELPED US.
DO WE HOLD SO LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE TO YOU WHO CLAIM TO PROTECT THE UNIVERSE?
WE HAVE BUT ONE PROPER CORPSMAN PER EVERY TEN REALITIES.
WHILE THE TWO HUNDRED REMAINING MUTANTS BACK HOME ARE *IMPORTANT*--I AM BUSY STOPPING THREATS TO THE ENTIRE *OMNIVERSE.*
IF IT STOPS YOU FROM HELPING YOUR FRIENDS-- *YOUR OWN BLOOD*-- WHAT'S THE POINT?
SO NAIVE...I DON'T EVEN RECOGNIZE THIS PERSON BEFORE ME.
THAT MAKES TWO OF US.
LET'S BYPASS THE HOURS OF BICKERING AND YOU TELL ME WHY YOU BROUGHT ME HERE.
FOR THIS...

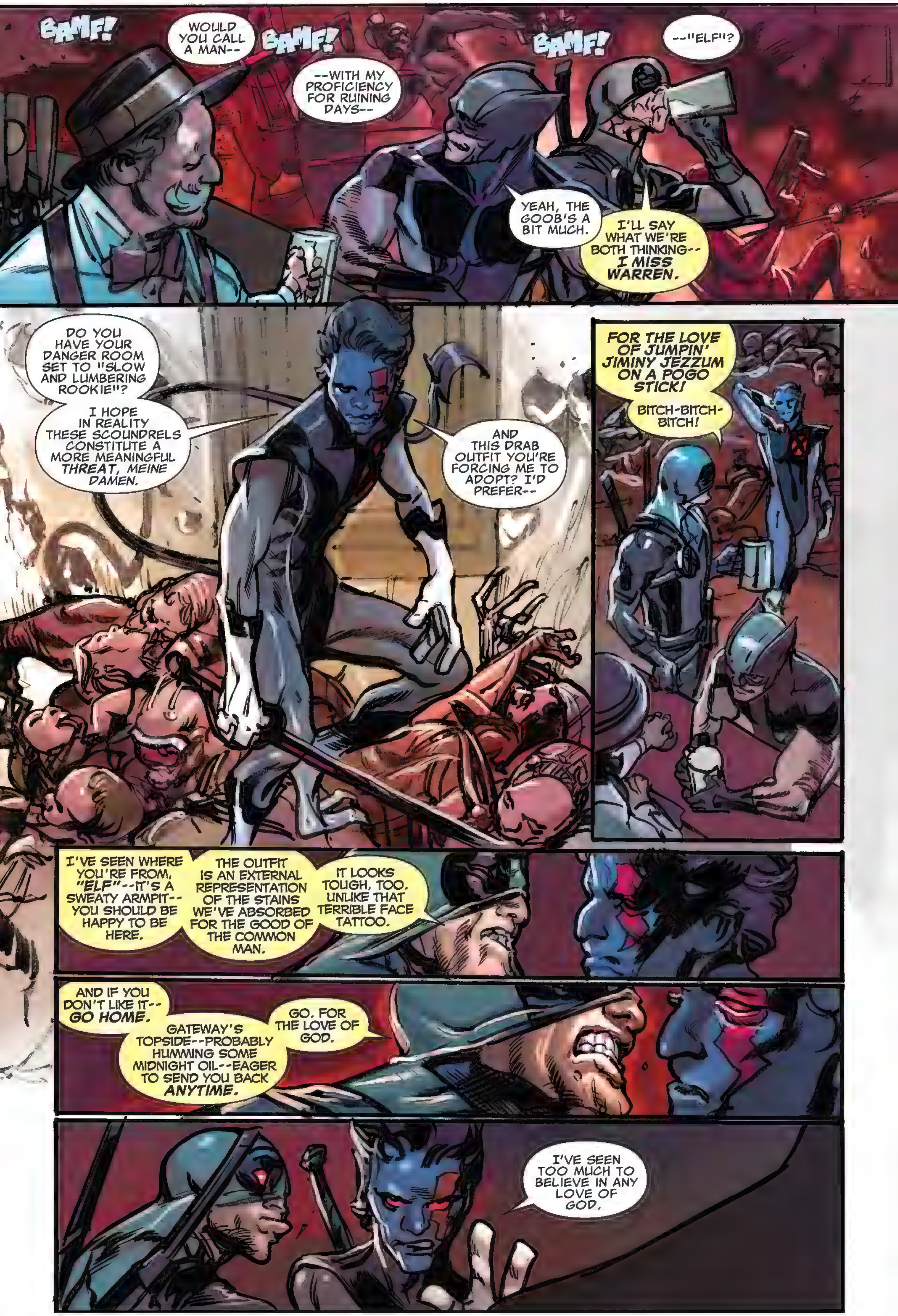

"...THE BATTLE FOR OTHERWORLD."

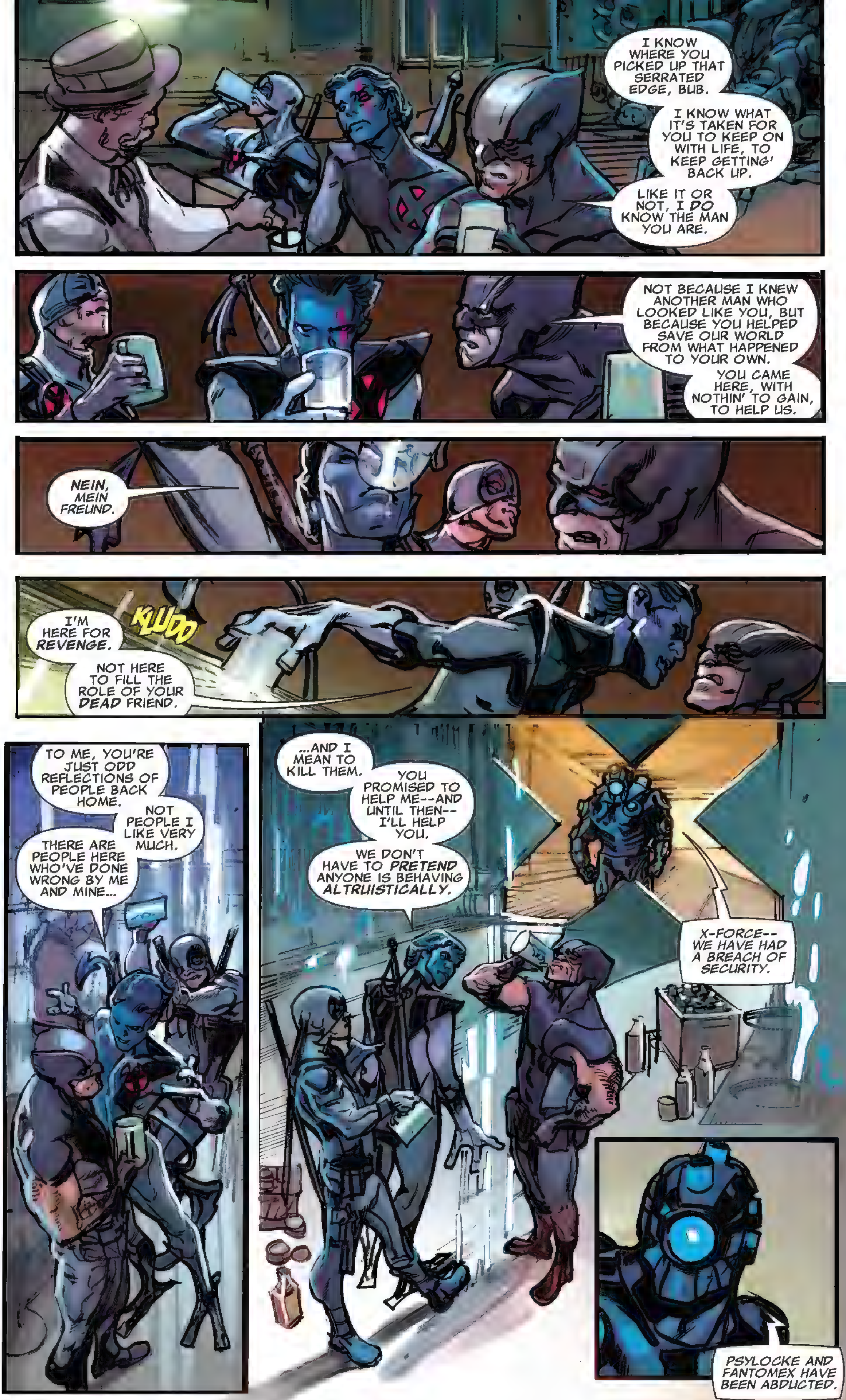

WE LOSE THOUSANDS MORE EVERY DAY.
BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, BRIAN--I HAD NO IDEA.
YOU SEVERED OUR LINK. CUT CONTACT. THERE WASN'T ANY WAY TO GET IN TOUCH.
COME. THERE'S MORE.
YOU KNOW THIS IS YOUR HOME, ELIZABETH.
WHERE YOU BELONG. WHERE YOU ARE NEEDED MOST.
WHO IS BEHIND THE ATTACKS?
WE DON'T KNOW, BUT THEIR GOAL IS CLEAR...
...ACCESS TO THE *TOWER OMNIVERSE.*
THESE DOORS ACCESS EVERY PLANE OF EXISTENCE, LEAVING FAR TOO MANY POSSIBLE MOTIVES TO NARROW DOWN.
WHOEVER WE ARE FIGHTING, THEY'VE ANTICIPATED OUR EVERY MOVE.
THEY KNOW THE CORPS WELL.
WHICH IS WHY WE IMPLORE YOU TO RETURN.
A PIECE OUR OPPONENT WOULD NOT ANTICIPATE, OUR DEAR SISTER.
JAMIE?!
IT'S... *GOOD* TO SEE YOU.
401
DON'T SOUND *QUITE* SO SURPRISED.
HOW MANY TIMES MUST I SAVE THE UNIVERSE AND RESURRECT YOU FROM DEATH BEFORE MY PAST MISCHIEF IS FORGOTTEN?

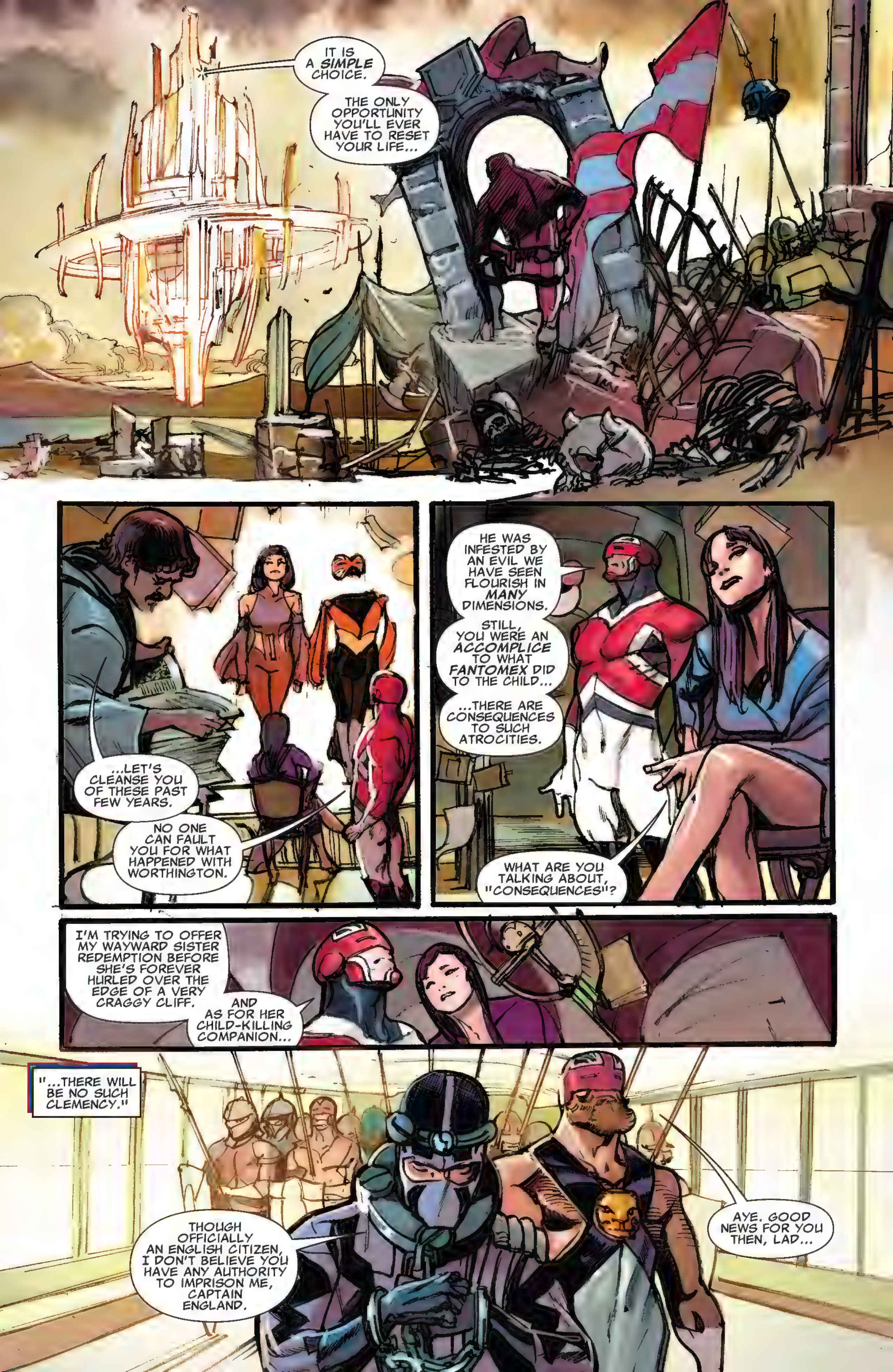

A KNEE-JERK REACTION. THE MAN YOU WERE...
HE IS *GONE*, BUT I APPRECIATE THAT WHAT HE DID IS HARD TO FORGET.
HERE. PERHAPS THIS *WILL* HELP.
WHAT SAY I RETURN YOU TO YOUR PROPER BODY AND YOUR INHERITANCE--
THE MANTLE OF *LADY BRITAIN.*
HOW?! HOW DID YOU DO THIS?
THE SAME WAY I BROUGHT YOU BACK FROM THE DEAD, DEAREST.
A PULL OF THE QUANTUM STRINGS THAT DEFINE CAUSALITY, A SLIGHT MANIPULATION, TO PUT THINGS IN THEIR RIGHT PLACE.
RETURN TO YOUR FAMILY, ELIZABETH.
TOGETHER, WE WILL GUARD THE GATES OF REALITY...

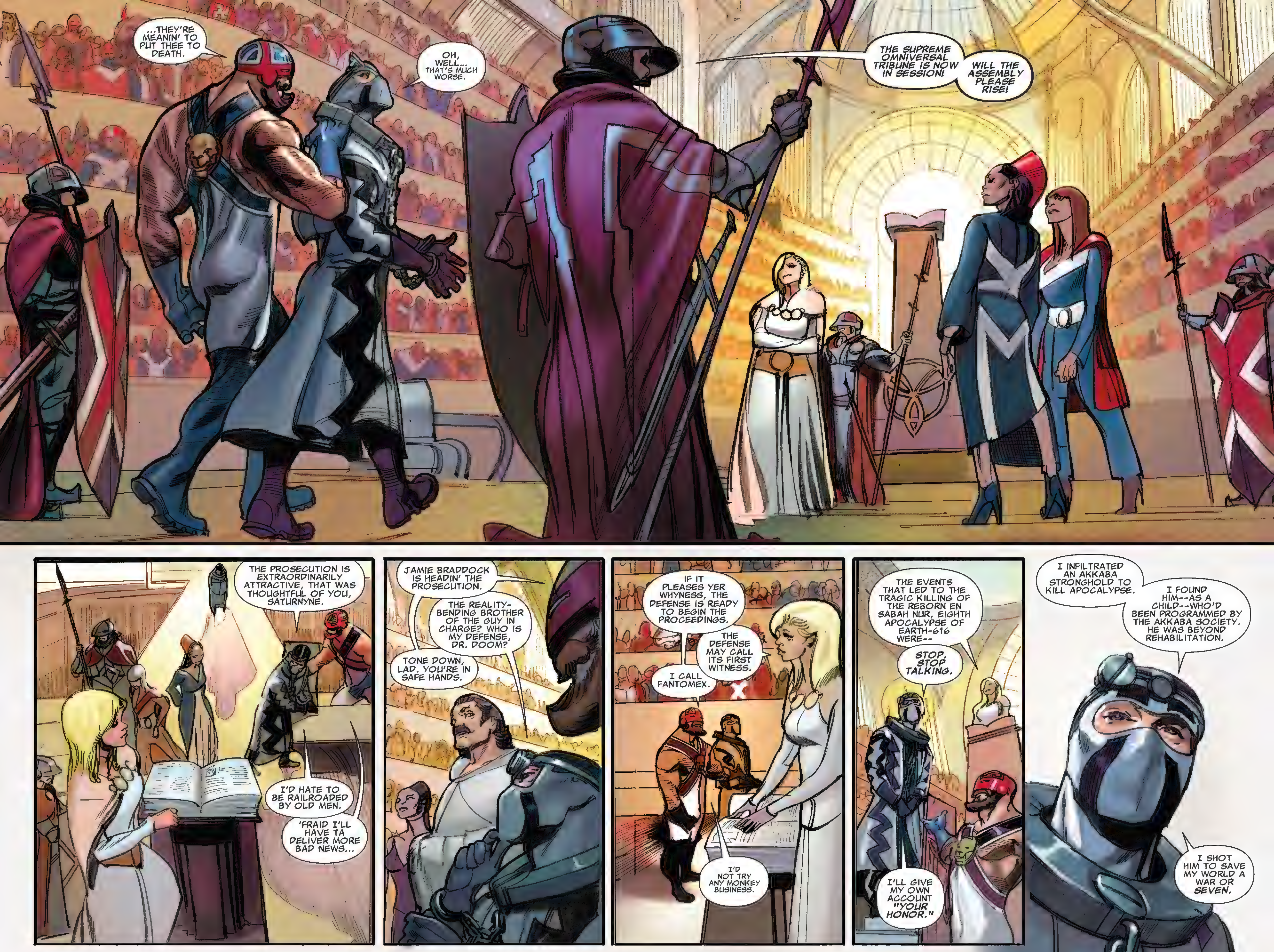

"...HOW FATHER INTENDED."
I KNOW YOU MIGHT LIKE 'EM BACK HOME, BUT HERE--THESE TWO ARE *AWFUL* TROUBLE.
I TEND TO KILL 'EM ON SIGHT.
THEY TEND T' COME BACK A FEW MONTHS LATER.
BOTH ARE DEAR TO ME BACK HOME.
IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO WATCH THEM DIE IN ANY DIMENSION.
LIKE THEY SAY...THE WORLD WON'T JUST BREAK YOUR HEART--
--IT'LL CRUSH IT.
LIKE THIS LADY HERE.
YURIKO OYAMA, LADY DEATHSTRIKE AND HER REAVERS. UP TO SOMETHING UGLY, THESE FOOLS.
THE REVOLUTION IS COMING, MUTANT PIG--!
SHNKK
BAMF!
ONE COMMON COMPONENT TO ALL THESE DASTARDLY VILLAINS...
BAMF!
BAMF!
...THEY NEED THEIR HEADS TO LIVE.

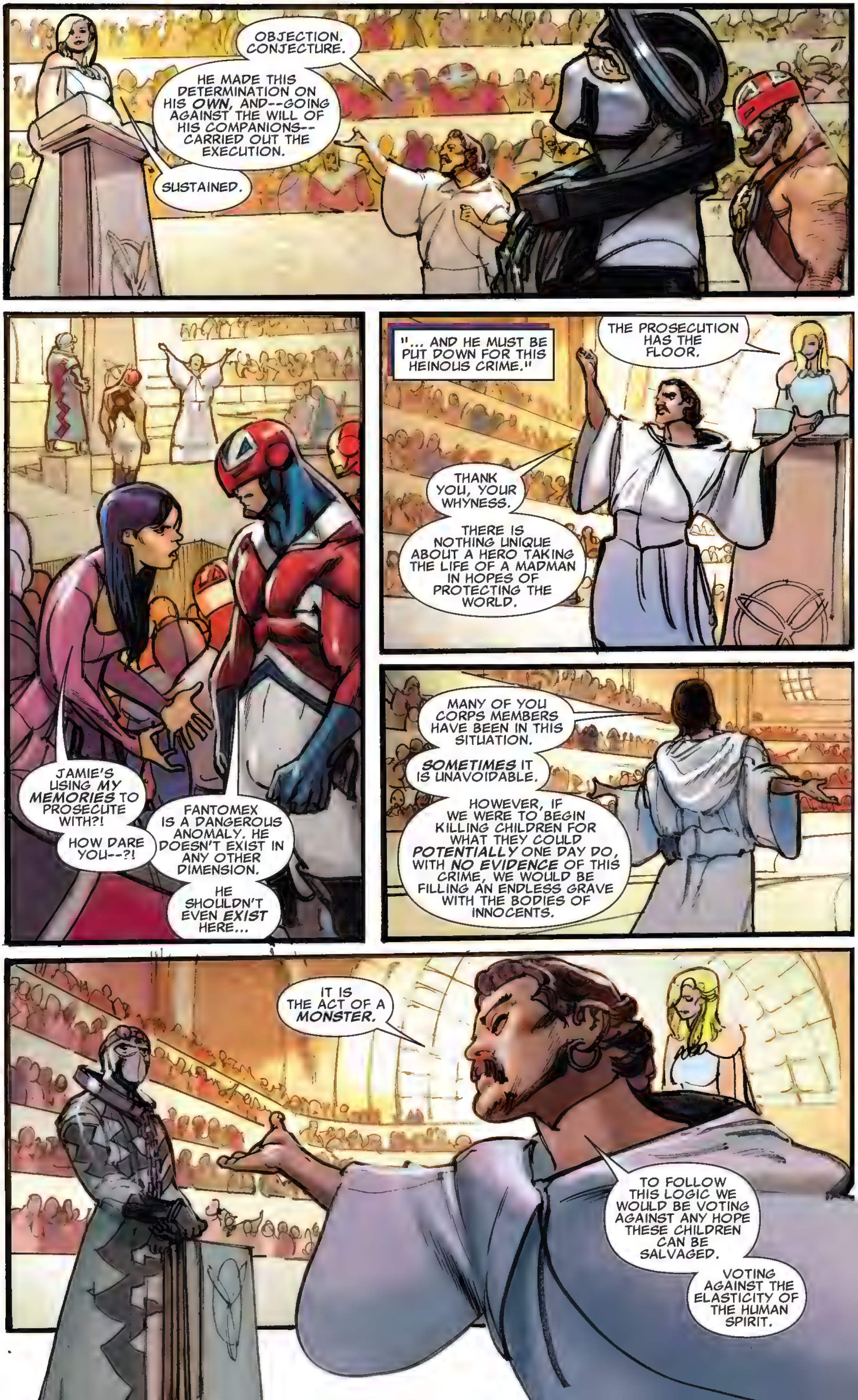

YOUR BLOOD WILL FERTILIZE THE NEW WORLD!
THE FLESH CANNOT DEFEAT THE IMMORTAL NANO-CONSCIOUSNESS.
SHNKK
MEIN GOTT!
GOTTA BE CAREFUL. GOTTA KNOW WHO YOU'RE RUSHIN'.
LADY DEATHSTRIKE'S ROBOTICS ARE EVOLVED BEYOND ANYTHING WE'VE SEEN, ELF.
I'LL TAKE NOTE. AND A QUICK FAVOR...
BAMF!
SHANK
...STOP CALLING ME "ELF."
BARTENDER, TWO MORE.
SHNK!
IT'S EFFEMINATE.
BAMF!
I'M FAR TOO ROGUISH--
BAMF!
--MORE SEAN CONNERY THAN ROGER MOORE.
HAVE YOU NOTICED WHAT A TOTAL JERK THIS GUY IS?

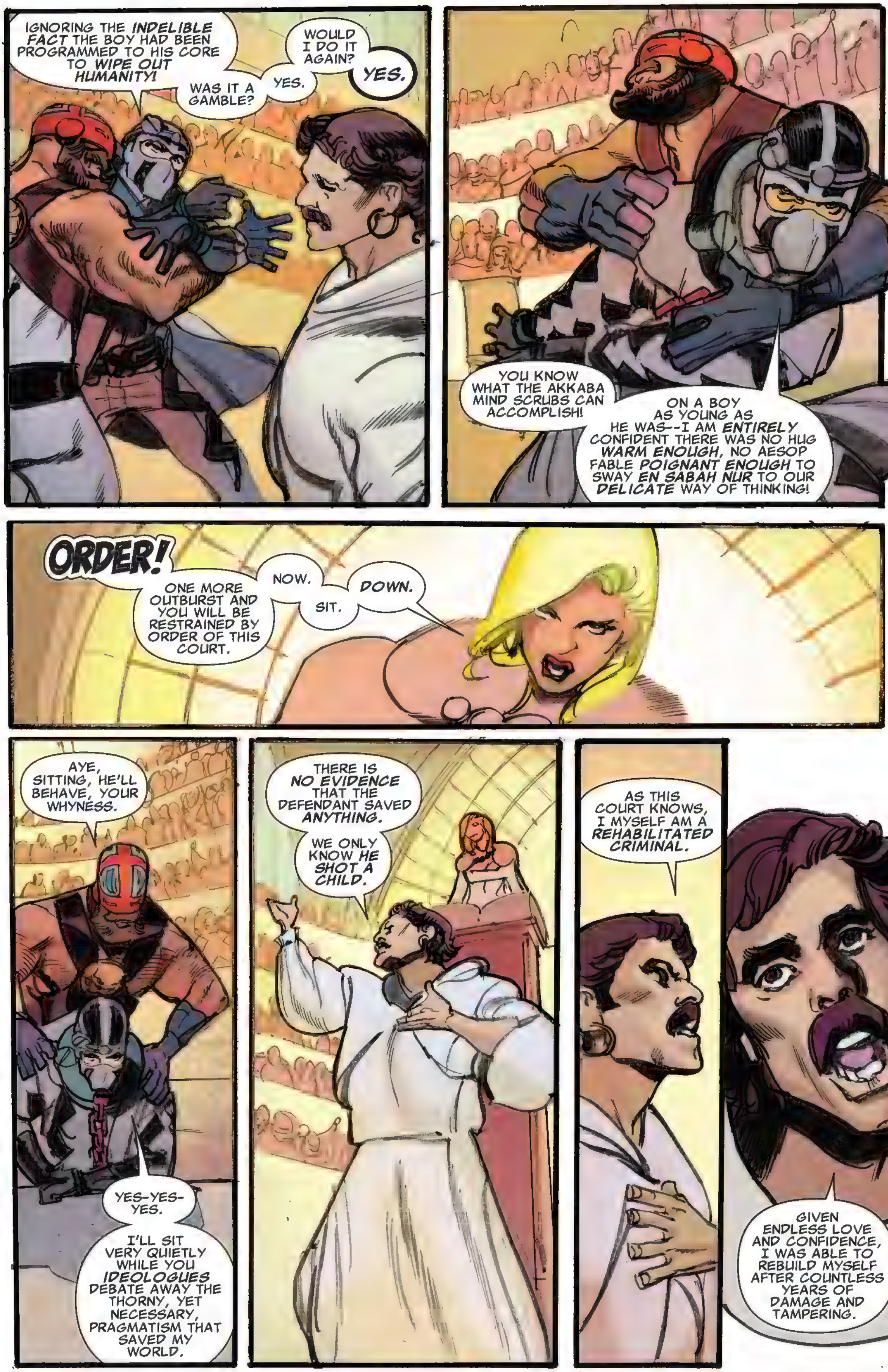

BAMF!
WOULD YOU CALL A MAN--
BAMF!
--WITH MY PROFICIENCY FOR RUINING DAYS--
BAMF!
--"ELF"?
YEAH, THE GOOB'S A BIT MUCH.
I'LL SAY WHAT WE'RE BOTH THINKING-- I MISS WARREN.
DO YOU HAVE YOUR DANGER ROOM SET TO "SLOW AND LUMBERING ROOKIE"?
I HOPE IN REALITY THESE SCOUNDRELS CONSTITUTE A MORE MEANINGFUL THREAT, MEINE DAMEN.
AND THIS DRAB OUTFIT YOU'RE FORCING ME TO ADOPT? I'D PREFER--
FOR THE LOVE OF JUMPIN' JIMINY JEZZUM ON A POGO STICK!
BITCH-BITCH-BITCH!
I'VE SEEN WHERE YOU'RE FROM, "ELF"--IT'S A SWEATY ARMPIT-- YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY TO BE HERE.
THE OUTFIT IS AN EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION OF THE STAINS WE'VE ABSORBED FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMON MAN.
IT LOOKS TOUGH, TOO. UNLIKE THAT TERRIBLE FACE TATTOO.
AND IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT-- GO HOME.
GATEWAY'S TOPSIDE--PROBABLY HUMMING SOME MIDNIGHT OIL--EAGER TO SEND YOU BACK ANYTIME.
GO. FOR THE LOVE OF GOD.
I'VE SEEN TOO MUCH TO BELIEVE IN ANY LOVE OF GOD.

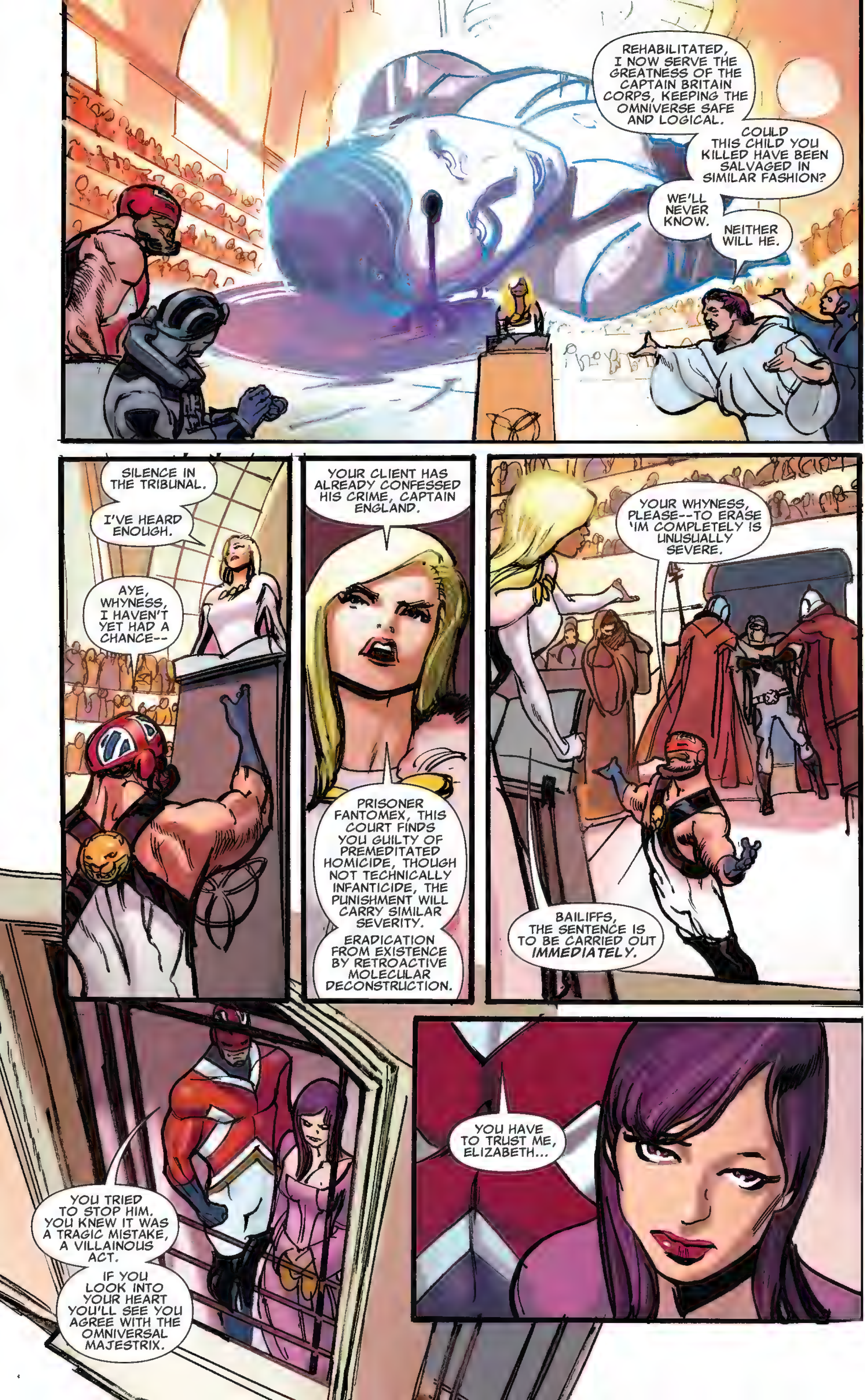

I KNOW WHERE YOU PICKED UP THAT SERRATED EDGE, BUB.
I KNOW WHAT IT'S TAKEN FOR YOU TO KEEP ON WITH LIFE, TO KEEP GETTING' BACK UP.
LIKE IT OR NOT, I *DO* KNOW THE MAN YOU ARE.
NOT BECAUSE I KNEW ANOTHER MAN WHO LOOKED LIKE YOU, BUT BECAUSE YOU HELPED SAVE OUR WORLD FROM WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR OWN.
YOU CAME HERE, WITH NOTHIN' TO GAIN, TO HELP US.
NEIN, MEIN FREUND.
KLUDD
I'M HERE FOR *REVENGE.*
NOT HERE TO FILL THE ROLE OF YOUR *DEAD* FRIEND.
TO ME, YOU'RE JUST ODD REFLECTIONS OF PEOPLE BACK HOME.
NOT PEOPLE I LIKE VERY MUCH.
THERE ARE PEOPLE HERE WHO'VE DONE WRONG BY ME AND MINE...
...AND I MEAN TO KILL THEM.
YOU PROMISED TO HELP ME--AND UNTIL THEN--I'LL HELP YOU.
WE DON'T HAVE TO *PRETEND* ANYONE IS BEHAVING *ALTRUISTICALLY.*
X-FORCE--WE HAVE HAD A BREACH OF SECURITY.
PSYLOCKE AND FANTOMEX HAVE BEEN ABDUCTED.

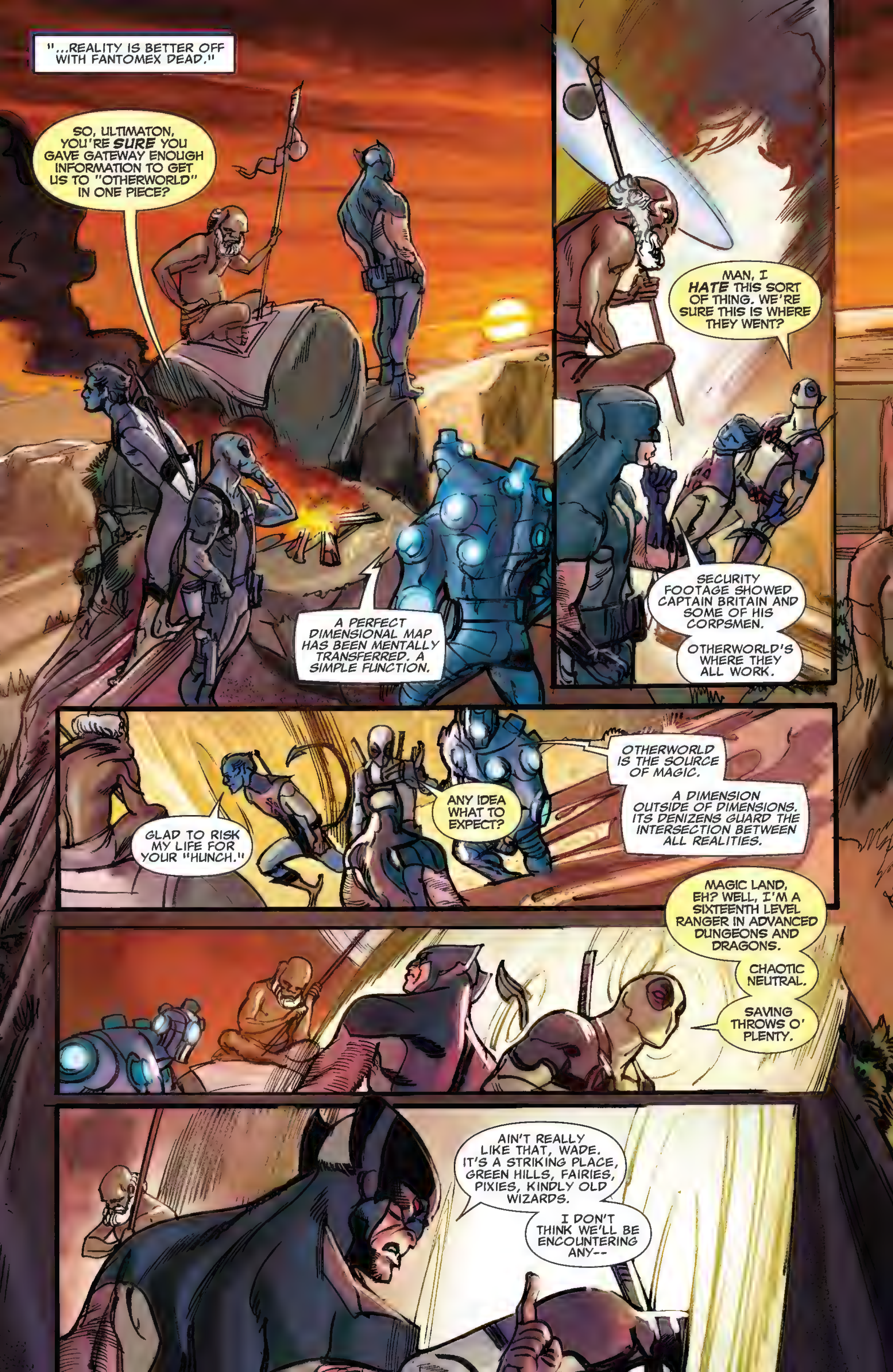

IT IS A *SIMPLE* CHOICE.
THE ONLY OPPORTUNITY YOU'LL EVER HAVE TO RESET YOUR LIFE...
...LET'S CLEANSE YOU OF THESE PAST FEW YEARS.
NO ONE CAN FAULT YOU FOR WHAT HAPPENED WITH WORTHINGTON.
HE WAS INFESTED BY AN EVIL WE HAVE SEEN FLOURISH IN *MANY* DIMENSIONS.
STILL, YOU WERE AN *ACCOMPLICE* TO WHAT *FANTOMEX* DID TO THE CHILD...
...THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES TO SUCH ATROCITIES.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, "CONSEQUENCES"?
I'M TRYING TO OFFER MY WAYWARD SISTER REDEMPTION BEFORE SHE'S FOREVER HURLED OVER THE EDGE OF A VERY CRAGGY CLIFF.
AND AS FOR HER CHILD-KILLING COMPANION...
"...THERE WILL BE NO SUCH CLEMENCY."
THOUGH OFFICIALLY AN ENGLISH CITIZEN, I DON'T BELIEVE YOU HAVE ANY AUTHORITY TO IMPRISON ME, CAPTAIN ENGLAND.
AYE. GOOD NEWS FOR YOU THEN, LAD...

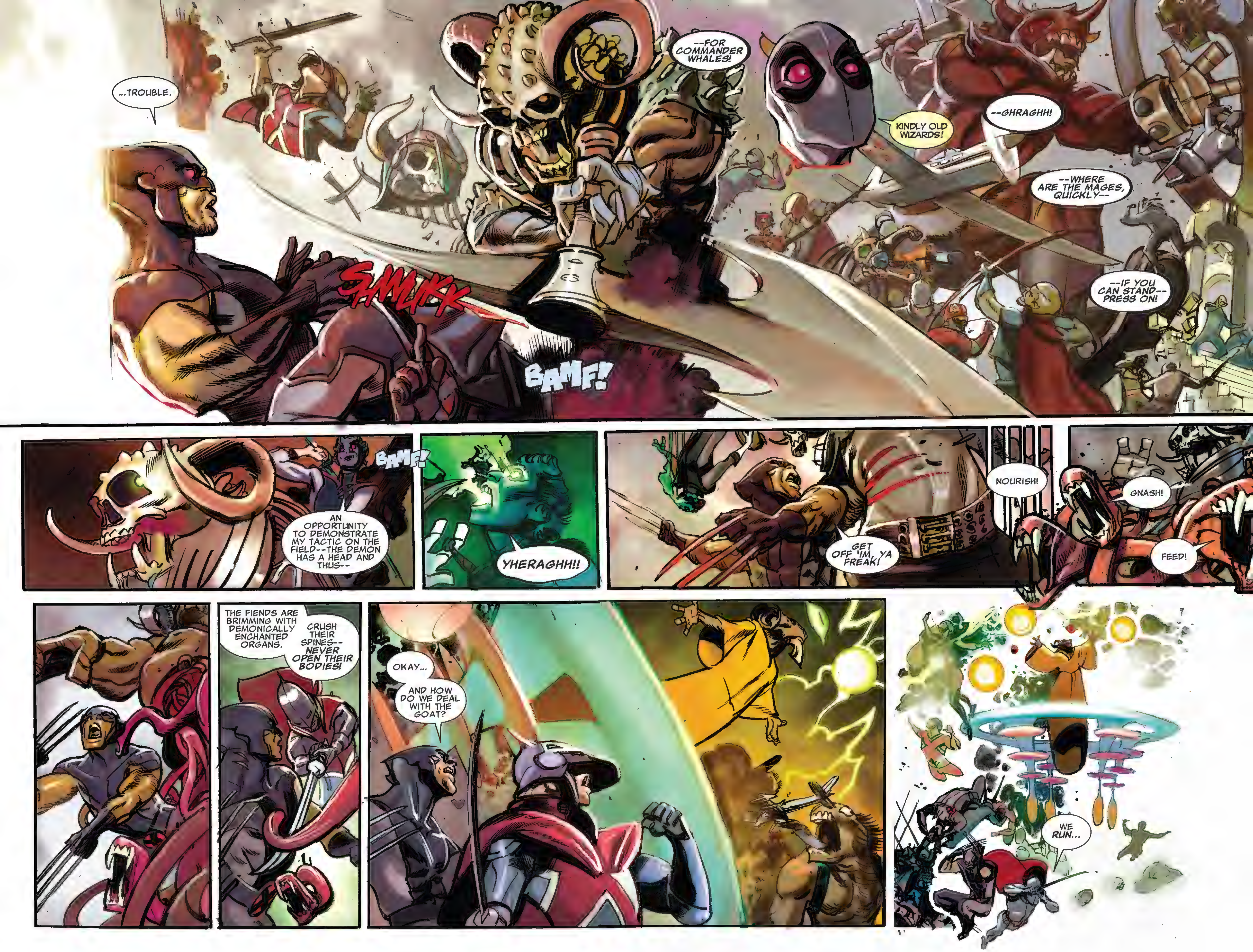

...THEY'RE MEANIN' TO PUT THEE TO DEATH.
OH, WELL... THAT'S MUCH WORSE.
THE SUPREME OMNIVERSAL TRIBUNE IS NOW IN SESSION!
WILL THE ASSEMBLY PLEASE RISE!
THE PROSECUTION IS EXTRAORDINARILY ATTRACTIVE, THAT WAS THOUGHTFUL OF YOU, SATURNYNE.
I'D HATE TO BE RAILROADED BY OLD MEN.
'FRAID I'LL HAVE TA DELIVER MORE BAD NEWS...
JAMIE BRADDOCK IS HEADIN' THE PROSECUTION.
THE REALITY-BENDING BROTHER OF THE GUY IN CHARGE? WHO IS MY DEFENSE, DR. DOOM?
TONE DOWN, LAD. YOU'RE IN SAFE HANDS.
IF IT PLEASES YER WHYNESS, THE DEFENSE IS READY TO BEGIN THE PROCEEDINGS.
THE DEFENSE MAY CALL ITS FIRST WITNESS.
I CALL FANTOMEX.
I'D NOT TRY ANY MONKEY BUSINESS.
THE EVENTS THAT LED TO THE TRAGIC KILLING OF THE REBORN EN SABAH NUR, EIGHTH APOCALYPSE OF EARTH-616 WERE--
STOP. STOP TALKING.
I'LL GIVE MY OWN ACCOUNT "YOUR HONOR."
I INFILTRATED AN AKKABA STRONGHOLD TO KILL APOCALYPSE.
I FOUND HIM--AS A CHILD--WHO'D BEEN PROGRAMMED BY THE AKKABA SOCIETY. HE WAS BEYOND REHABILITATION.
I SHOT HIM TO SAVE MY WORLD A WAR OR SEVEN.

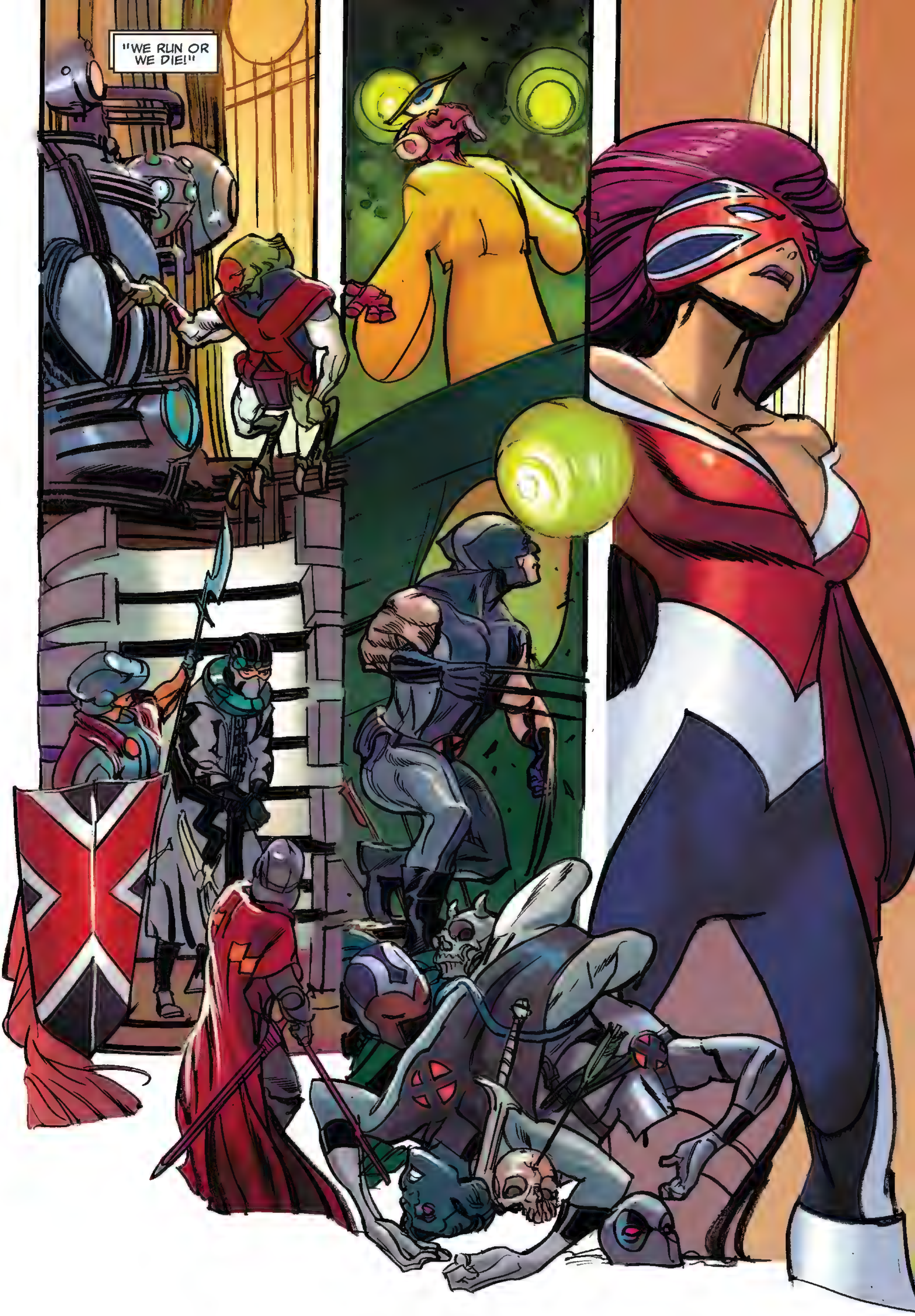

OBJECTION. CONJECTURE.
HE MADE THIS DETERMINATION ON HIS *OWN*, AND--GOING AGAINST THE WILL OF HIS COMPANIONS--CARRIED OUT THE EXECUTION.
SUSTAINED.
JAMIE'S USING *MY MEMORIES* TO PROSECUTE WITH?!
HOW DARE YOU--?!
FANTOMEX IS A DANGEROUS ANOMALY. HE DOESN'T EXIST IN ANY OTHER DIMENSION.
HE SHOULDN'T EVEN *EXIST* HERE...
"... AND HE MUST BE PUT DOWN FOR THIS HEINOUS CRIME."
THE PROSECUTION HAS THE FLOOR.
THANK YOU, YOUR WHYNESS.
THERE IS NOTHING UNIQUE ABOUT A HERO TAKING THE LIFE OF A MADMAN IN HOPES OF PROTECTING THE WORLD.
MANY OF YOU CORPS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN IN THIS SITUATION.
SOMETIMES IT IS UNAVOIDABLE.
HOWEVER, IF WE WERE TO BEGIN KILLING CHILDREN FOR WHAT THEY COULD *POTENTIALLY* ONE DAY DO, WITH *NO EVIDENCE* OF THIS CRIME, WE WOULD BE FILLING AN ENDLESS GRAVE WITH THE BODIES OF INNOCENTS.
IT IS THE ACT OF A *MONSTER.*
TO FOLLOW THIS LOGIC WE WOULD BE VOTING AGAINST ANY HOPE THESE CHILDREN CAN BE SALVAGED.
VOTING AGAINST THE ELASTICITY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

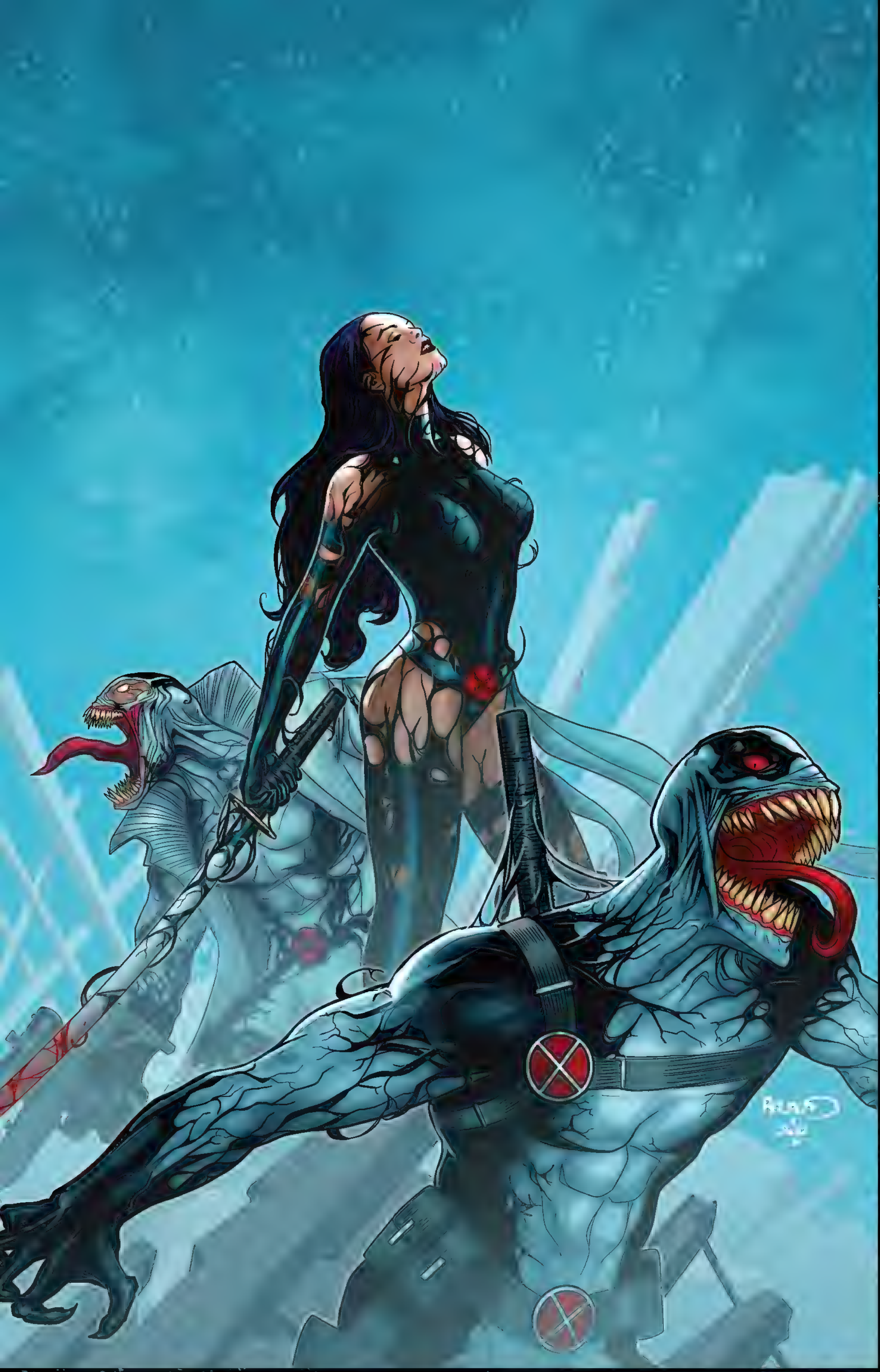

IGNORING THE INDELIBLE FACT THE BOY HAD BEEN PROGRAMMED TO HIS CORE TO WIPE OUT HUMANITY!
WAS IT A GAMBLE?
YES.
WOULD I DO IT AGAIN?
YES.
YOU KNOW WHAT THE AKKABA MIND SCRUBS CAN ACCOMPLISH!
ON A BOY AS YOUNG AS HE WAS--I AM ENTIRELY CONFIDENT THERE WAS NO HUG WARM ENOUGH, NO AESOP FABLE POIGNANT ENOUGH TO SWAY EN SABAH NUR TO OUR DELICATE WAY OF THINKING!
ORDER!
ONE MORE OUTBURST AND YOU WILL BE RESTRAINED BY ORDER OF THIS COURT.
NOW.
SIT.
DOWN.
AYE, SITTING, HE'LL BEHAVE, YOUR WHYNESS.
YES-YES-YES.
I'LL SIT VERY QUIETLY WHILE YOU IDEOLOGUES DEBATE AWAY THE THORNY, YET NECESSARY, PRAGMATISM THAT SAVED MY WORLD.
THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE DEFENDANT SAVED ANYTHING.
WE ONLY KNOW HE SHOT A CHILD.
AS THIS COURT KNOWS, I MYSELF AM A REHABILITATED CRIMINAL.
GIVEN ENDLESS LOVE AND CONFIDENCE, I WAS ABLE TO REBUILD MYSELF AFTER COUNTLESS YEARS OF DAMAGE AND TAMPERING.


REHABILITATED, I NOW SERVE THE GREATNESS OF THE CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPS, KEEPING THE OMNIVERSE SAFE AND LOGICAL.
COULD THIS CHILD YOU KILLED HAVE BEEN SALVAGED IN SIMILAR FASHION?
WE'LL NEVER KNOW.
NEITHER WILL HE.
SILENCE IN THE TRIBUNAL.
I'VE HEARD ENOUGH.
AYE, WHYNESS, I HAVEN'T YET HAD A CHANCE--
YOUR CLIENT HAS ALREADY CONFESSED HIS CRIME, CAPTAIN ENGLAND.
PRISONER FANTOMEX, THIS COURT FINDS YOU GUILTY OF PREMEDITATED HOMICIDE, THOUGH NOT TECHNICALLY INFANTICIDE, THE PUNISHMENT WILL CARRY SIMILAR SEVERITY.
ERADICATION FROM EXISTENCE BY RETROACTIVE MOLECULAR DECONSTRUCTION.
YOUR WHYNESS, PLEASE--TO ERASE 'IM COMPLETELY IS UNUSUALLY SEVERE.
BAILIFFS, THE SENTENCE IS TO BE CARRIED OUT *IMMEDIATELY*.
YOU TRIED TO STOP HIM. YOU KNEW IT WAS A TRAGIC MISTAKE, A VILLAINOUS ACT.
IF YOU LOOK INTO YOUR HEART YOU'LL SEE YOU AGREE WITH THE OMNIVERSAL MAJESTRIX.
YOU HAVE TO TRUST ME, ELIZABETH...


"...REALITY IS BETTER OFF WITH FANTOMEX DEAD."
SO, ULTIMATON, YOU'RE **SURE** YOU GAVE GATEWAY ENOUGH INFORMATION TO GET US TO "OTHERWORLD" IN ONE PIECE?
A PERFECT DIMENSIONAL MAP HAS BEEN MENTALLY TRANSFERRED. A SIMPLE FUNCTION.
MAN, I **HATE** THIS SORT OF THING. WE'RE SURE THIS IS WHERE THEY WENT?
SECURITY FOOTAGE SHOWED CAPTAIN BRITAIN AND SOME OF HIS CORPSMEN.
OTHERWORLD'S WHERE THEY ALL WORK.
GLAD TO RISK MY LIFE FOR YOUR "HUNCH."
ANY IDEA WHAT TO EXPECT?
OTHERWORLD IS THE SOURCE OF MAGIC.
A DIMENSION OUTSIDE OF DIMENSIONS. ITS DENIZENS GUARD THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN ALL REALITIES.
MAGIC LAND, EH? WELL, I'M A SIXTEENTH LEVEL RANGER IN ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS.
CHAOTIC NEUTRAL.
SAVING THROWS O' PLENTY.
AIN'T REALLY LIKE THAT, WADE. IT'S A STRIKING PLACE, GREEN HILLS, FAIRIES, PIXIES, KINDLY OLD WIZARDS.
I DON'T THINK WE'LL BE ENCOUNTERING ANY--

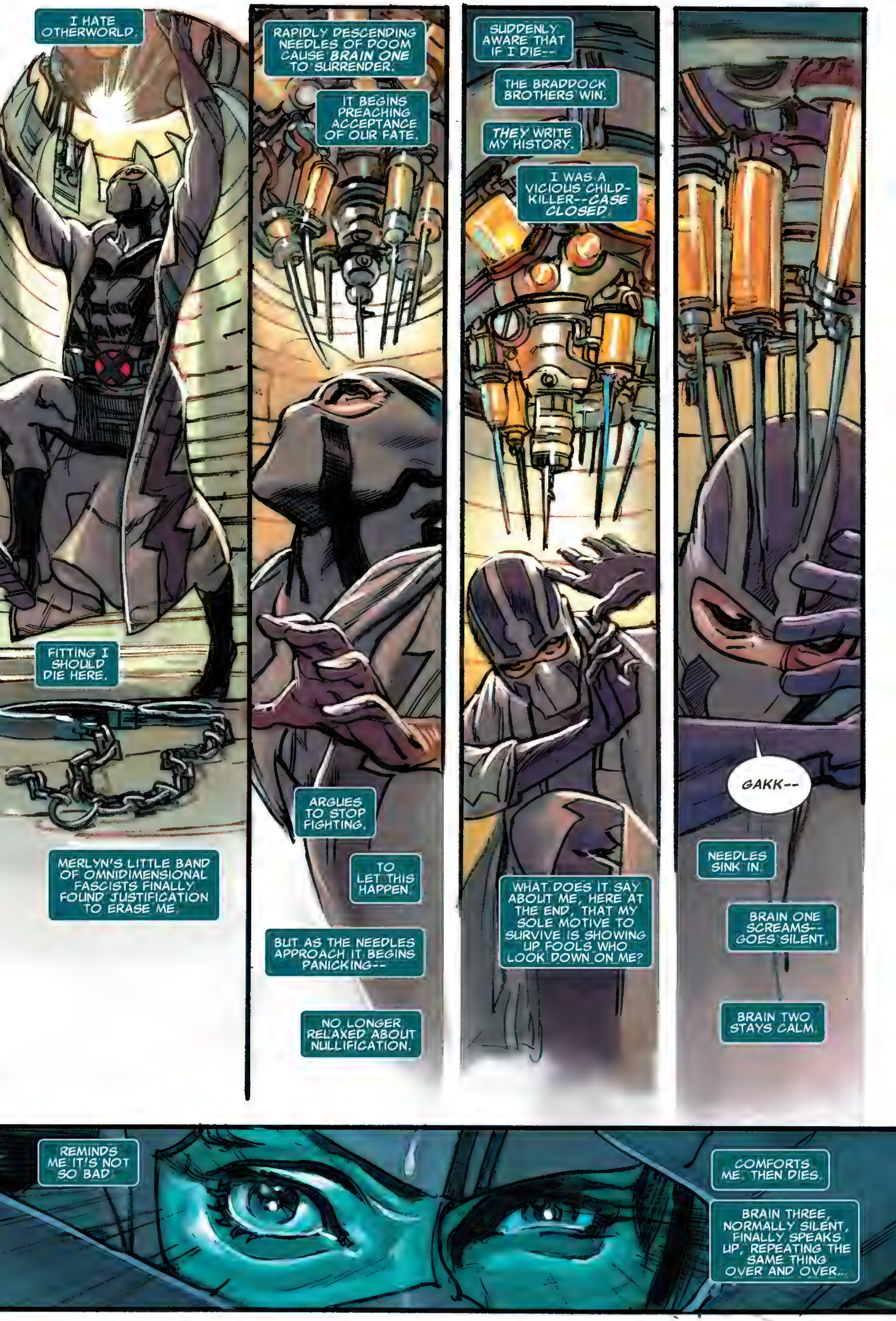

...TROUBLE.
--FOR COMMANDER WHALES!
KINDLY OLD WIZARDS!
--GHRAGHH!
--WHERE ARE THE MAGES, QUICKLY--
SMUKK
BAMF!
--IF YOU CAN STAND--PRESS ON!
BAMF!
AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE MY TACTIC ON THE FIELD--THE DEMON HAS A HEAD AND THUS--
YHERAGHH!!
GET OFF 'IM, YA FREAK!
NOURISH!
GNASH!
FEED!
THE FIENDS ARE BRIMMING WITH DEMONICALLY ENCHANTED ORGANS.
CRUSH THEIR SPINES-- NEVER OPEN THEIR BODIES!
OKAY...
AND HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THE GOAT?
WE RUN...

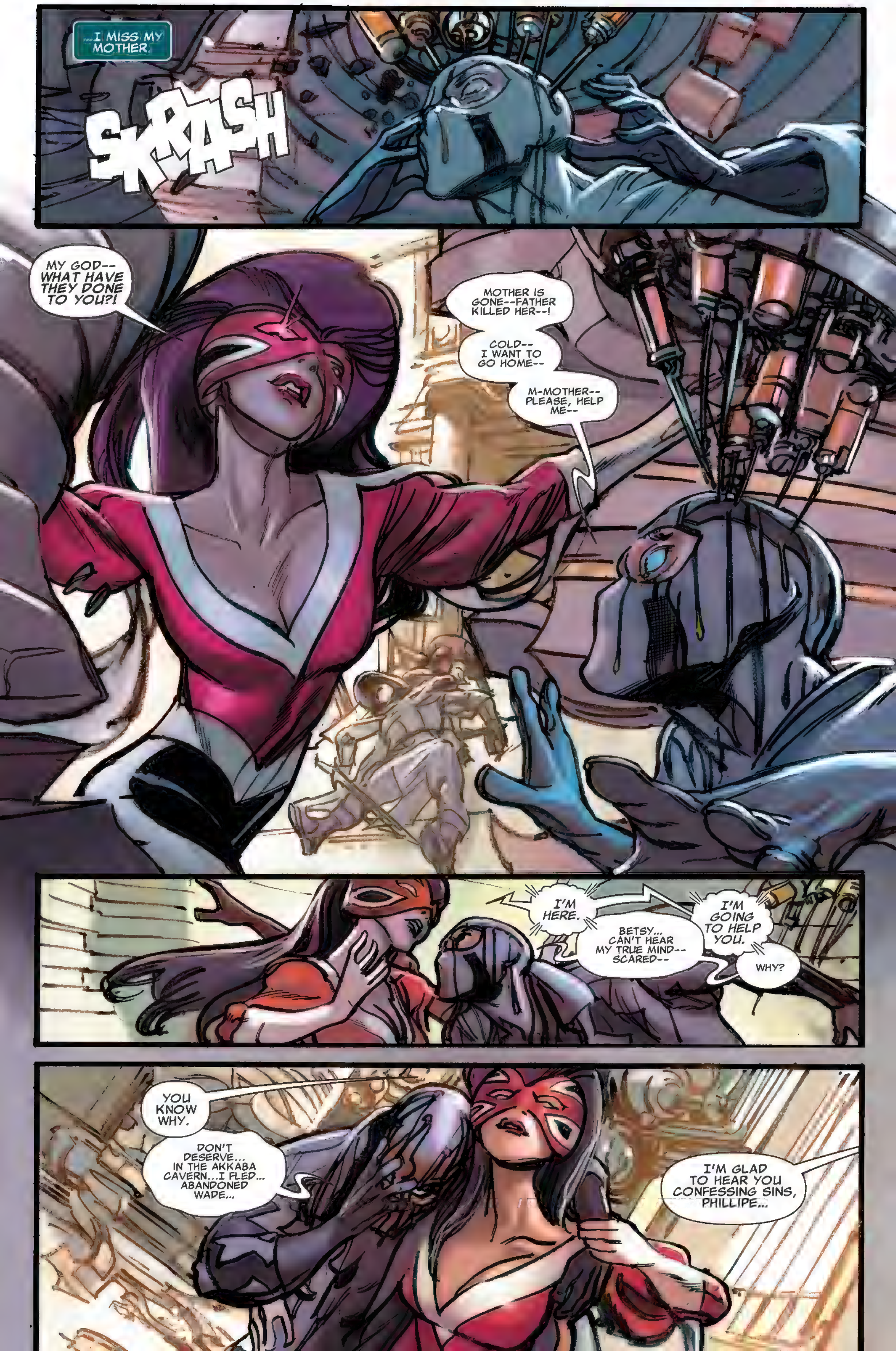

"WE RUN OR WE DIE!"

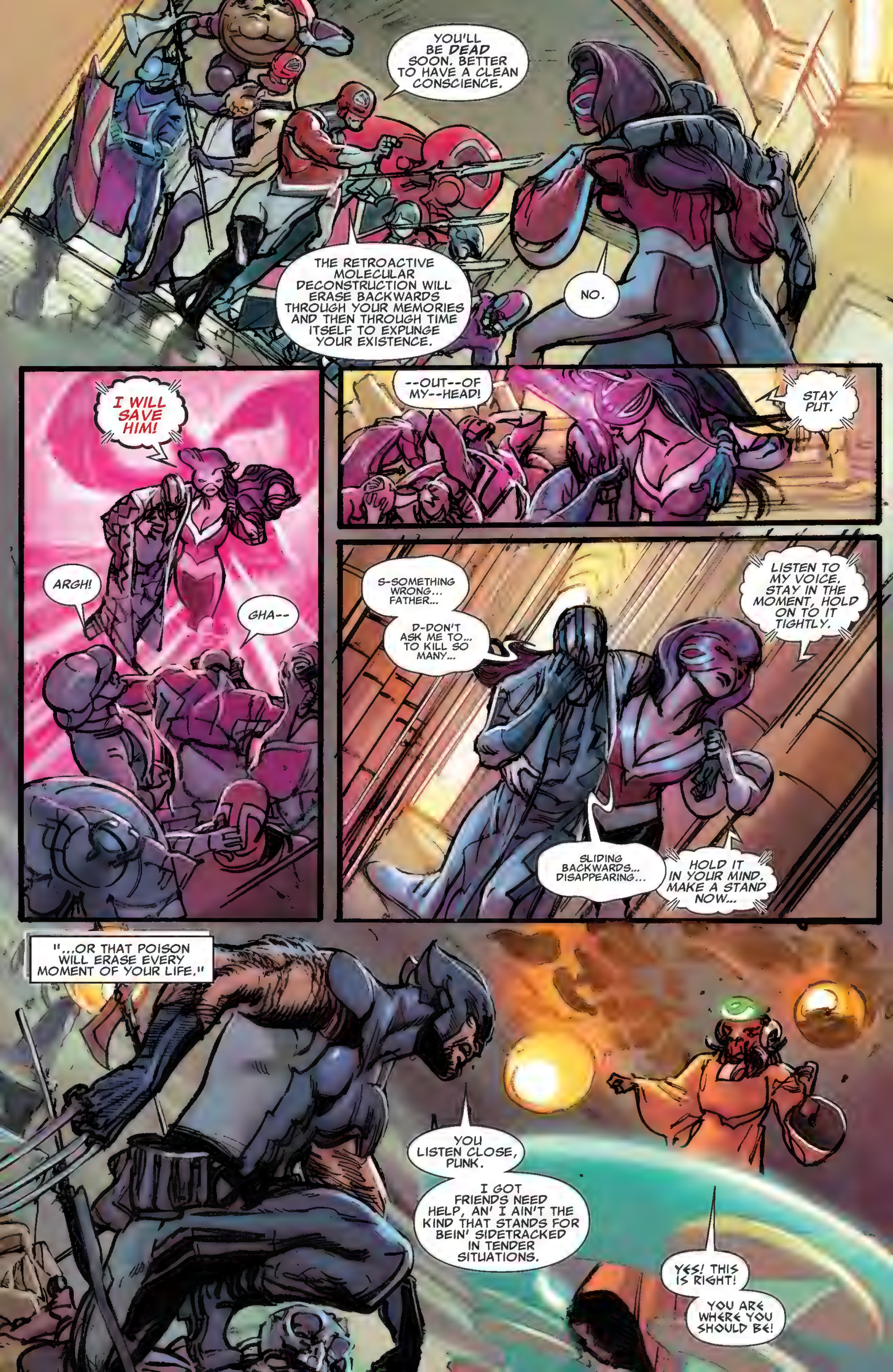


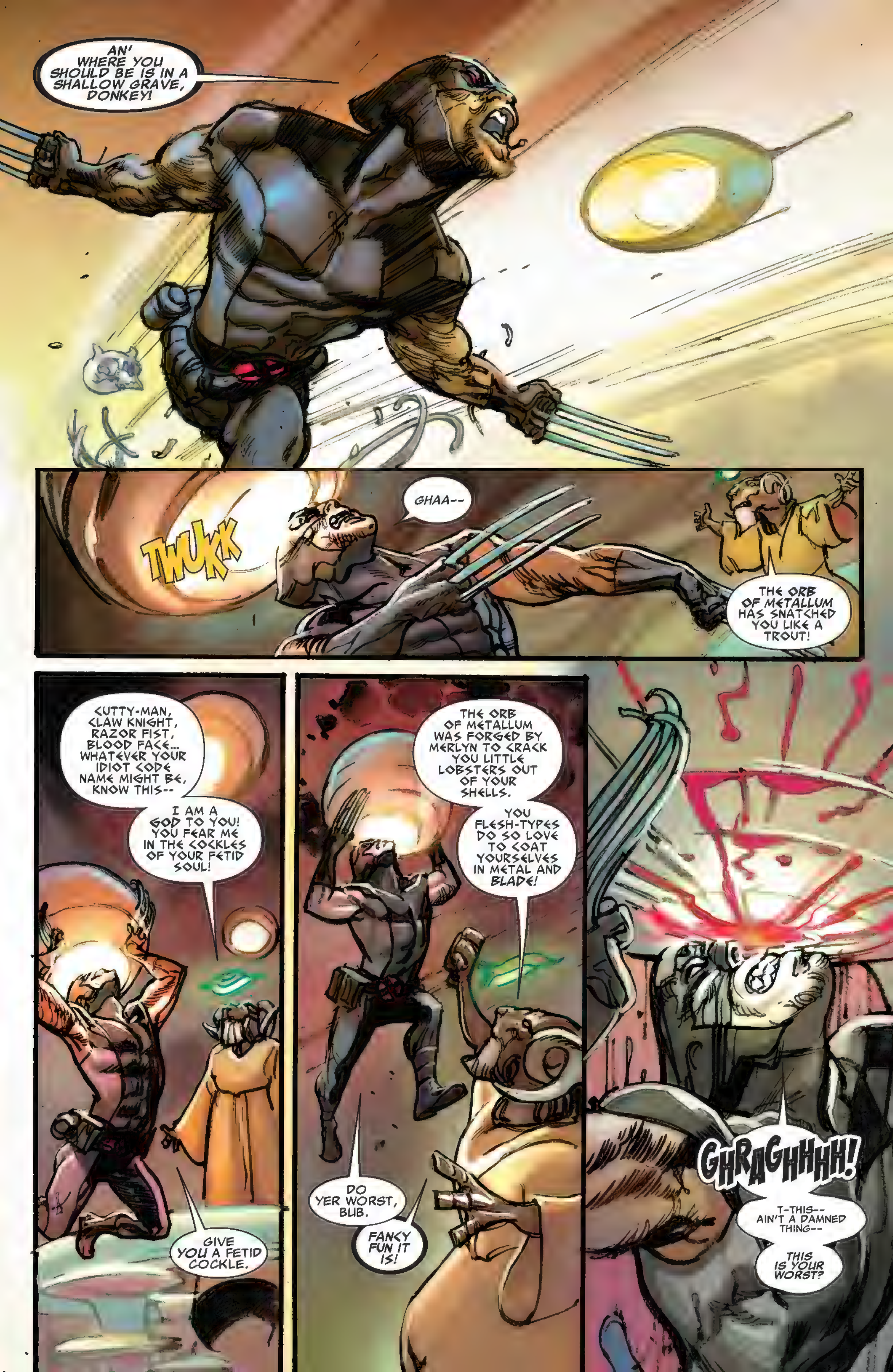
UNCANNY X-FORCE 20 VENOM VARIANT
ART BY PAUL RENAUD

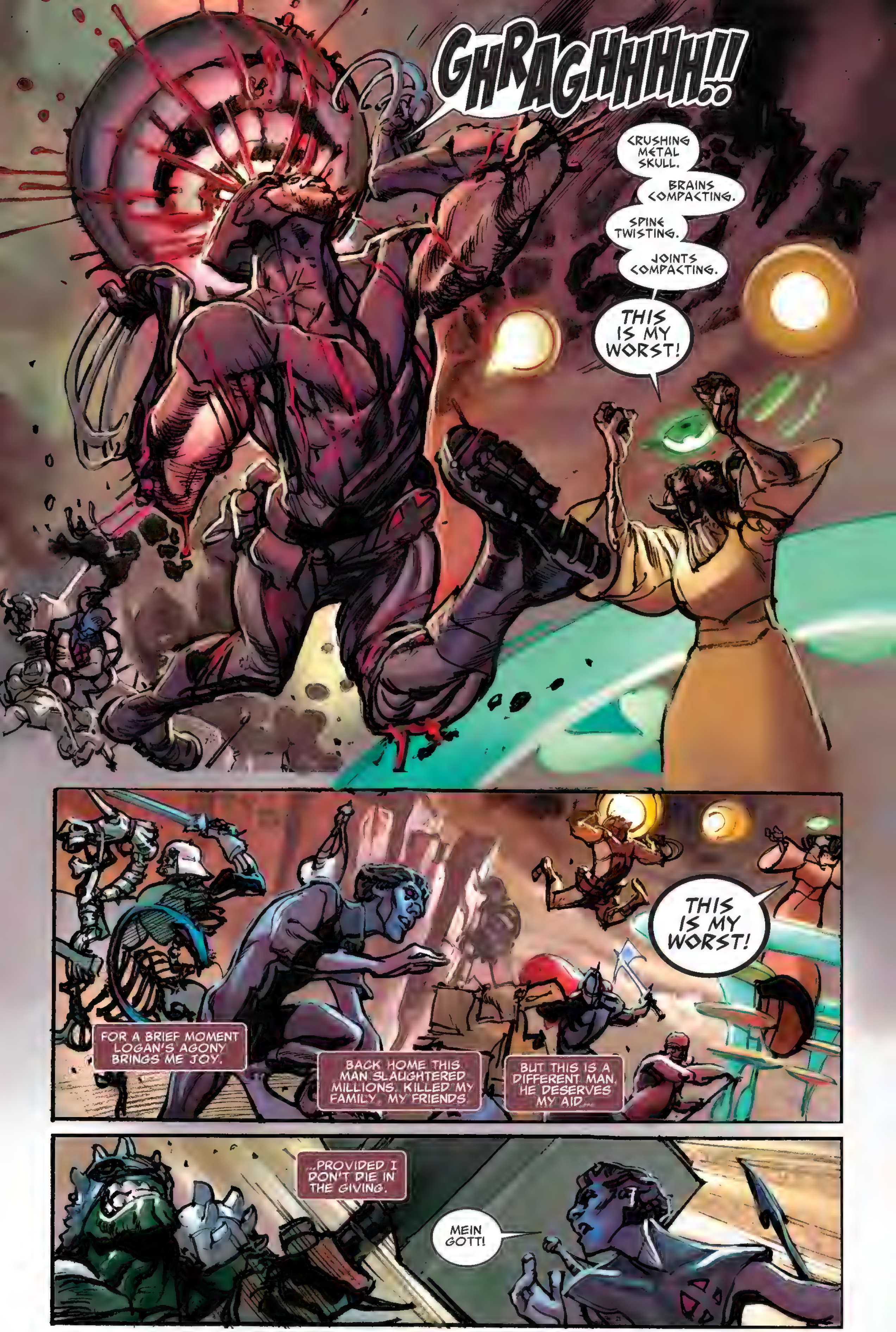
21 OTHERWORLD
CHAPTER 2

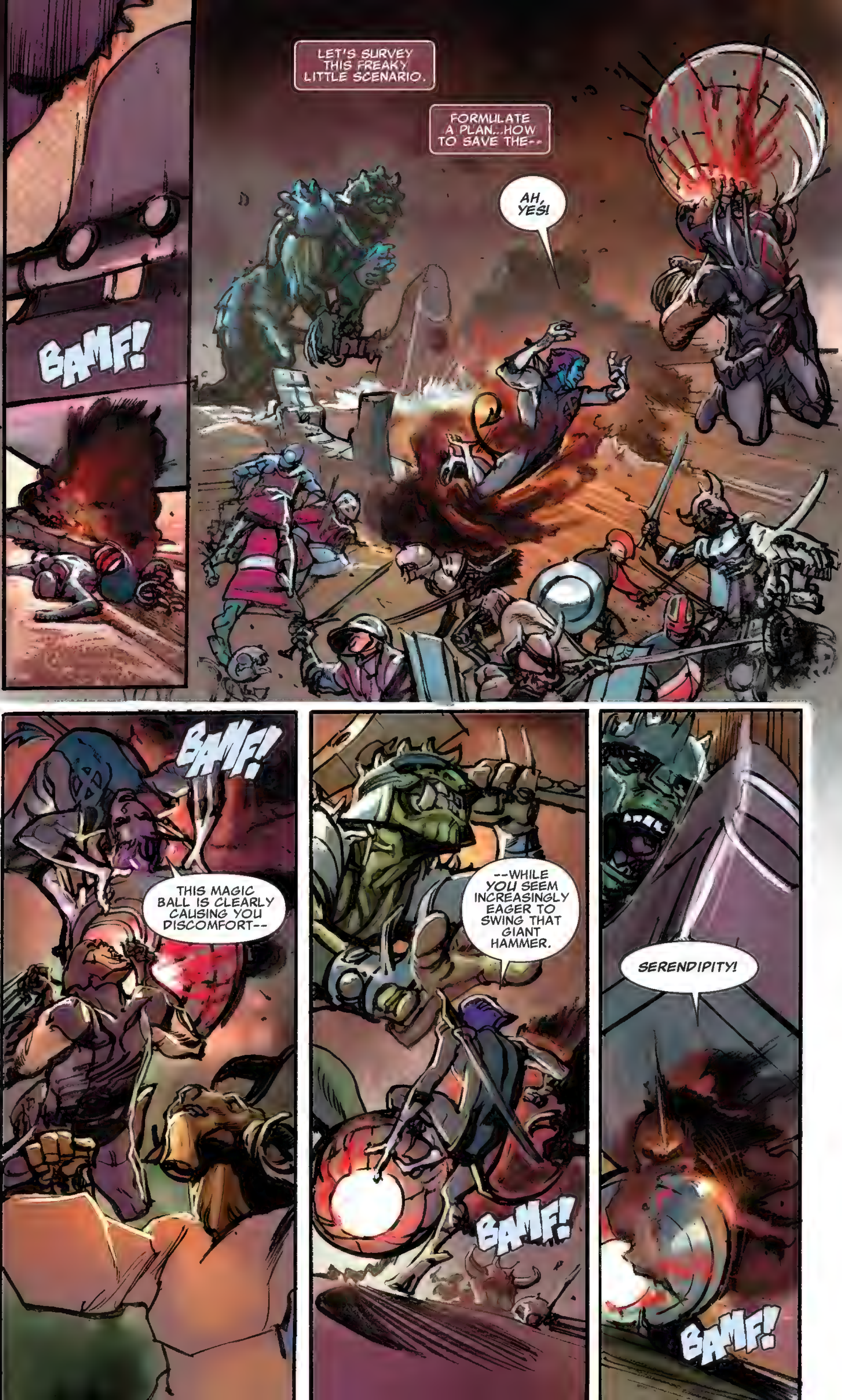

I HATE OTHERWORLD.
FITTING I SHOULD DIE HERE.
MERLYN'S LITTLE BAND OF OMNIDIMENSIONAL FASCISTS FINALLY FOUND JUSTIFICATION TO ERASE ME.
RAPIDLY DESCENDING NEEDLES OF DOOM CAUSE BRAIN ONE TO SURRENDER.
IT BEGINS PREACHING ACCEPTANCE OF OUR FATE.
ARGUES TO STOP FIGHTING.
TO LET THIS HAPPEN.
BUT AS THE NEEDLES APPROACH IT BEGINS PANICKING--
NO LONGER RELAXED ABOUT NULLIFICATION.
SUDDENLY AWARE THAT IF I DIE--
THE BRADDOCK BROTHERS WIN.
THEY WRITE MY HISTORY.
I WAS A VICIOUS CHILD-KILLER--CASE CLOSED.
WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT ME, HERE AT THE END, THAT MY SOLE MOTIVE TO SURVIVE IS SHOWING UP FOOLS WHO LOOK DOWN ON ME?
GAKK--
NEEDLES SINK IN.
BRAIN ONE SCREAMS--GOES SILENT.
BRAIN TWO STAYS CALM.
REMINDS ME IT'S NOT SO BAD.
COMFORTS ME. THEN DIES.
BRAIN THREE, NORMALLY SILENT, FINALLY SPEAKS UP, REPEATING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER...

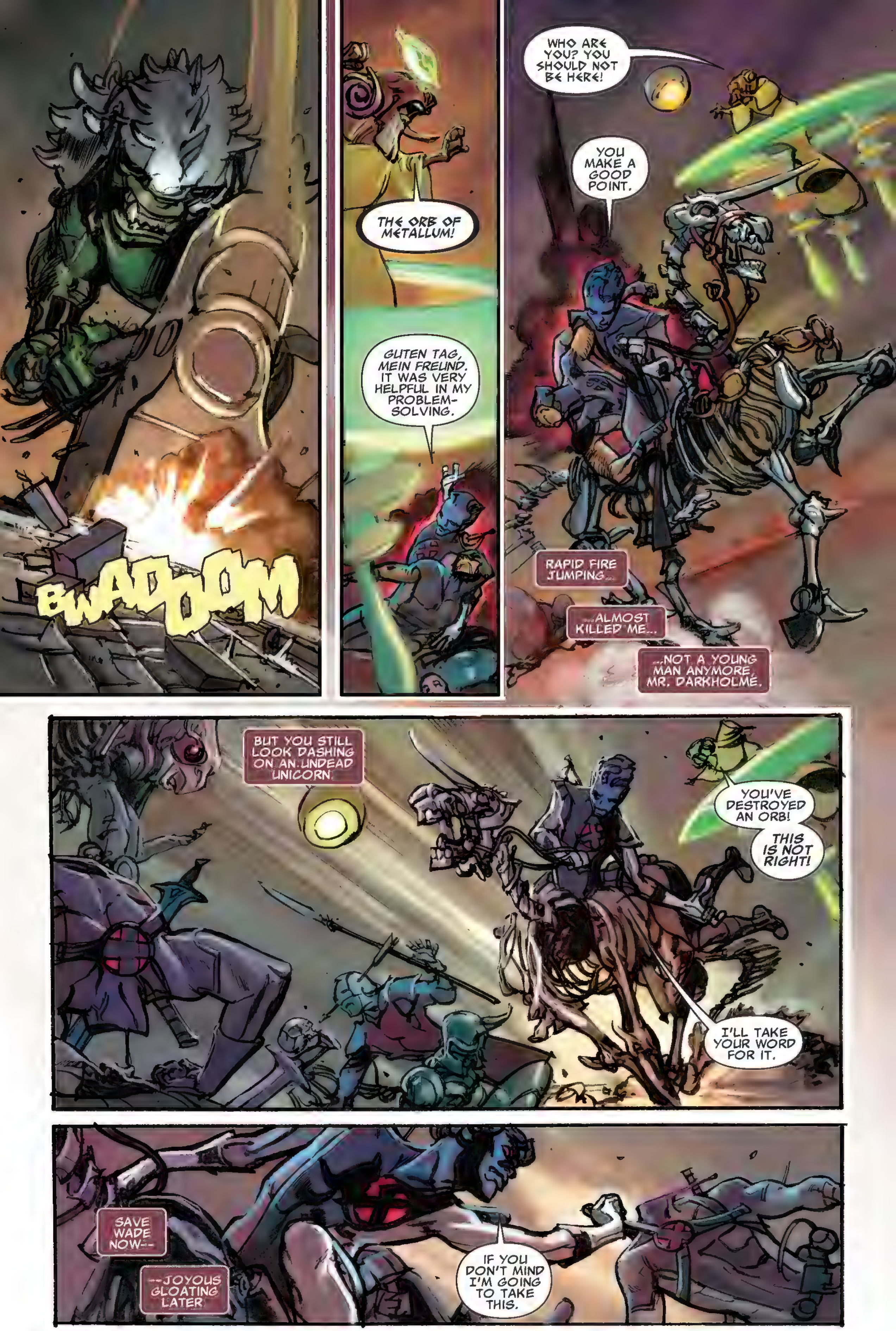

...I MISS MY MOTHER.
SKRASH
MY GOD-- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?!
MOTHER IS GONE--FATHER KILLED HER--!
COLD-- I WANT TO GO HOME--
M-MOTHER-- PLEASE, HELP ME--
I'M HERE.
BETSY... CAN'T HEAR MY TRUE MIND-- SCARED--
I'M GOING TO HELP YOU.
WHY?
YOU KNOW WHY.
DON'T DESERVE... IN THE AKKABA CAVERN...I FLED... ABANDONED WADE...
I'M GLAD TO HEAR YOU CONFESSING SINS, PHILLIPE...

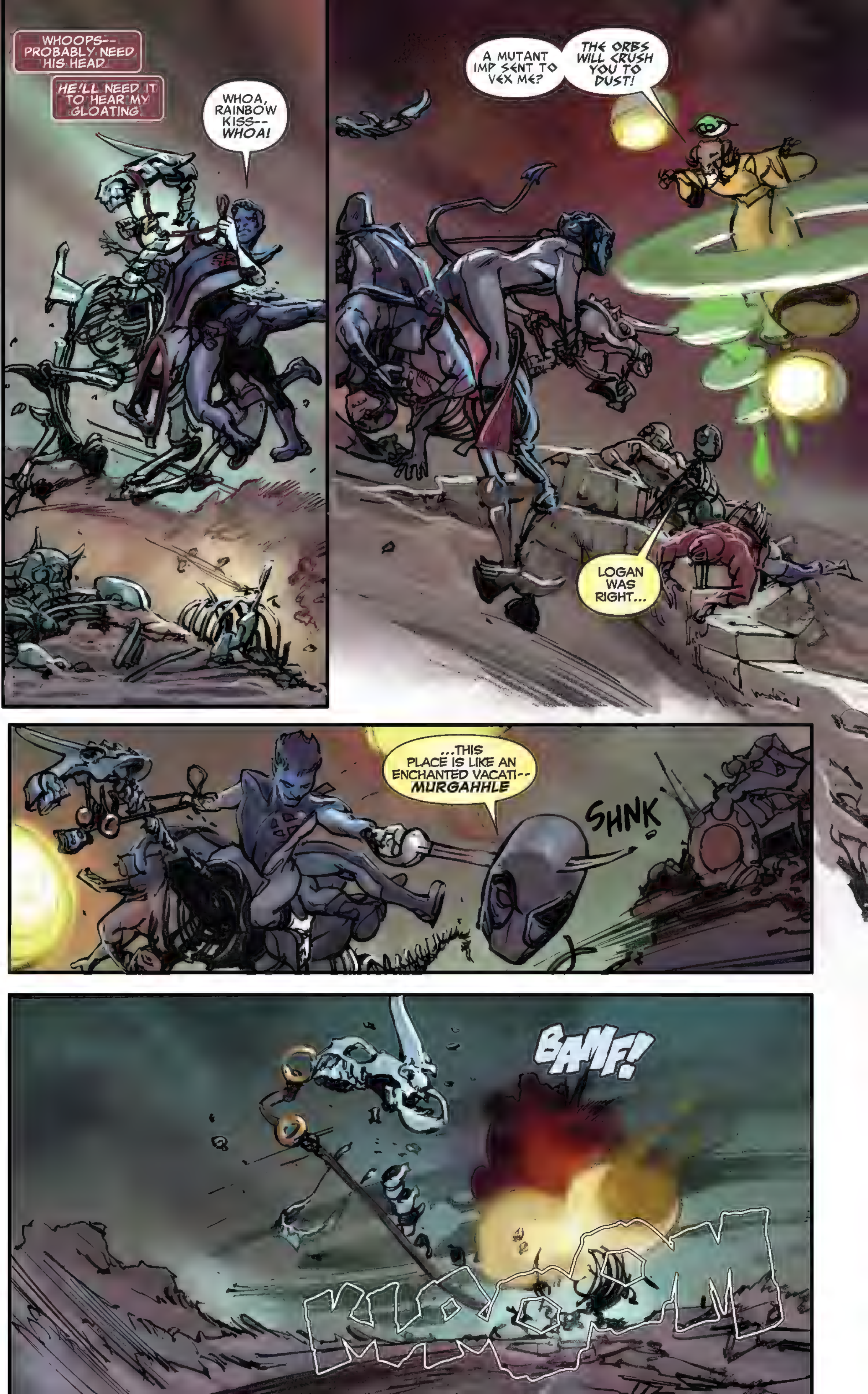

YOU'LL BE *DEAD* SOON. BETTER TO HAVE A CLEAN CONSCIENCE.
THE RETROACTIVE MOLECULAR DECONSTRUCTION WILL ERASE BACKWARDS THROUGH YOUR MEMORIES AND THEN THROUGH TIME ITSELF TO EXPUNGE YOUR EXISTENCE.
NO.
I WILL SAVE HIM!
ARGH!
GHA--
--OUT--OF MY--HEAD!
STAY PUT.
S-SOMETHING WRONG... FATHER...
D-DON'T ASK ME TO... TO KILL SO MANY...
LISTEN TO MY VOICE. STAY IN THE MOMENT, HOLD ON TO IT TIGHTLY.
SLIDING BACKWARDS... DISAPPEARING...
HOLD IT IN YOUR MIND. MAKE A STAND NOW...
"...OR THAT POISON WILL ERASE EVERY MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE."
YOU LISTEN CLOSE, PUNK.
I GOT FRIENDS NEED HELP, AN' I AIN'T THE KIND THAT STANDS FOR BEIN' SIDETRACKED IN TENDER SITUATIONS.
YES! THIS IS RIGHT!
YOU ARE WHERE YOU SHOULD BE!

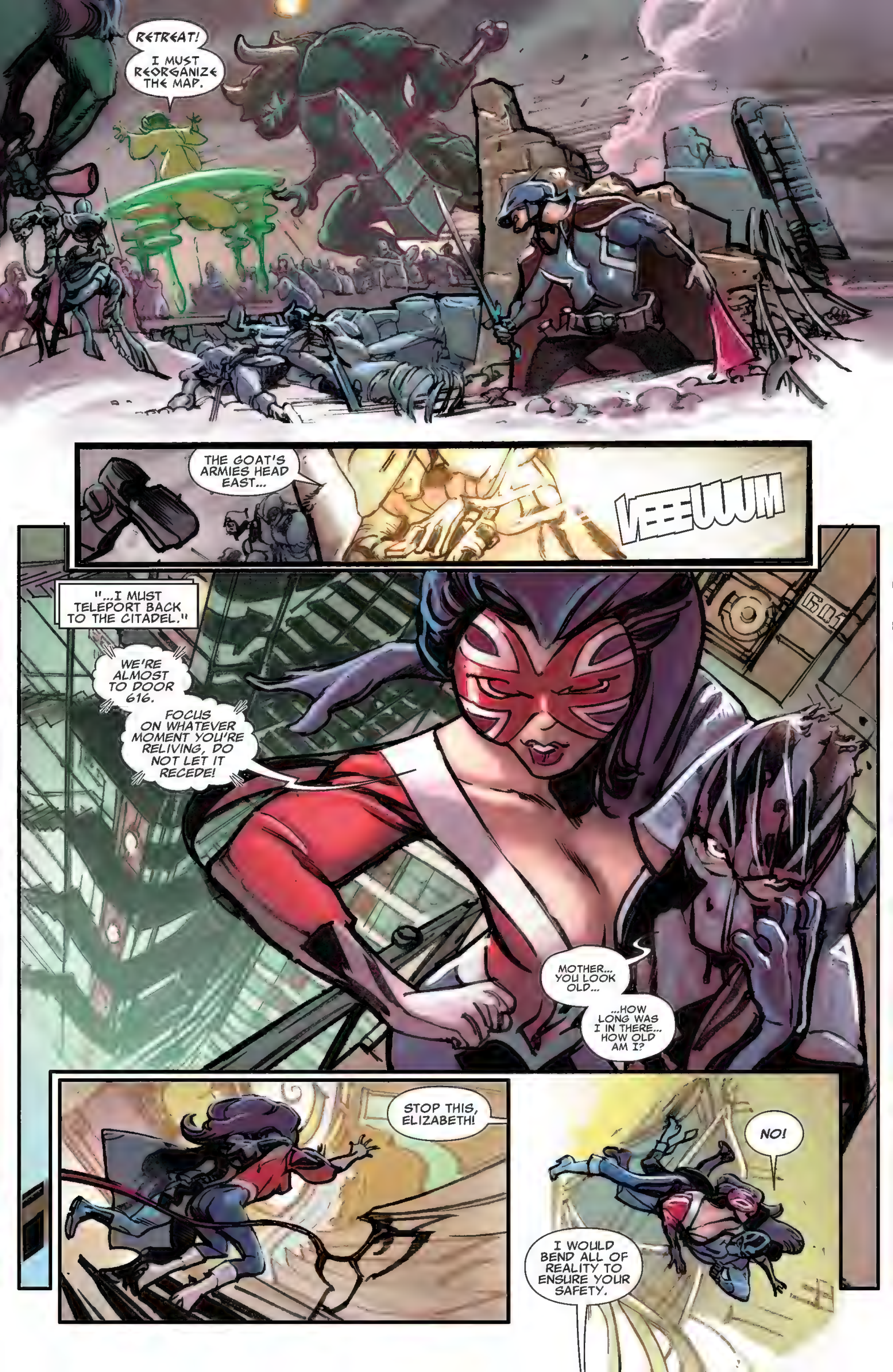

AN' WHERE YOU SHOULD BE IS IN A SHALLOW GRAVE, DONKEY!
TWUKK
GHAA--
THE ORB OF METALLUM HAS SNATCHED YOU LIKE A TROUT!
CUTTY-MAN, CLAW KNIGHT, RAZOR FIST, BLOOD FACE... WHATEVER YOUR IDIOT CODE NAME MIGHT BE, KNOW THIS--
I AM A GOD TO YOU! YOU FEAR ME IN THE COCKLES OF YOUR FETID SOUL!
GIVE YOU A FETID COCKLE.
THE ORB OF METALLUM WAS FORGED BY MERLYN TO CRACK YOU LITTLE LOBSTERS OUT OF YOUR SHELLS.
YOU FLESH-TYPES DO SO LOVE TO COAT YOURSELVES IN METAL AND BLADE!
DO YER WORST, BUB.
FANCY FUN IT IS!
GHRAGHHHH!
T-THIS-- AIN'T A DAMNED THING--
THIS IS YOUR WORST?

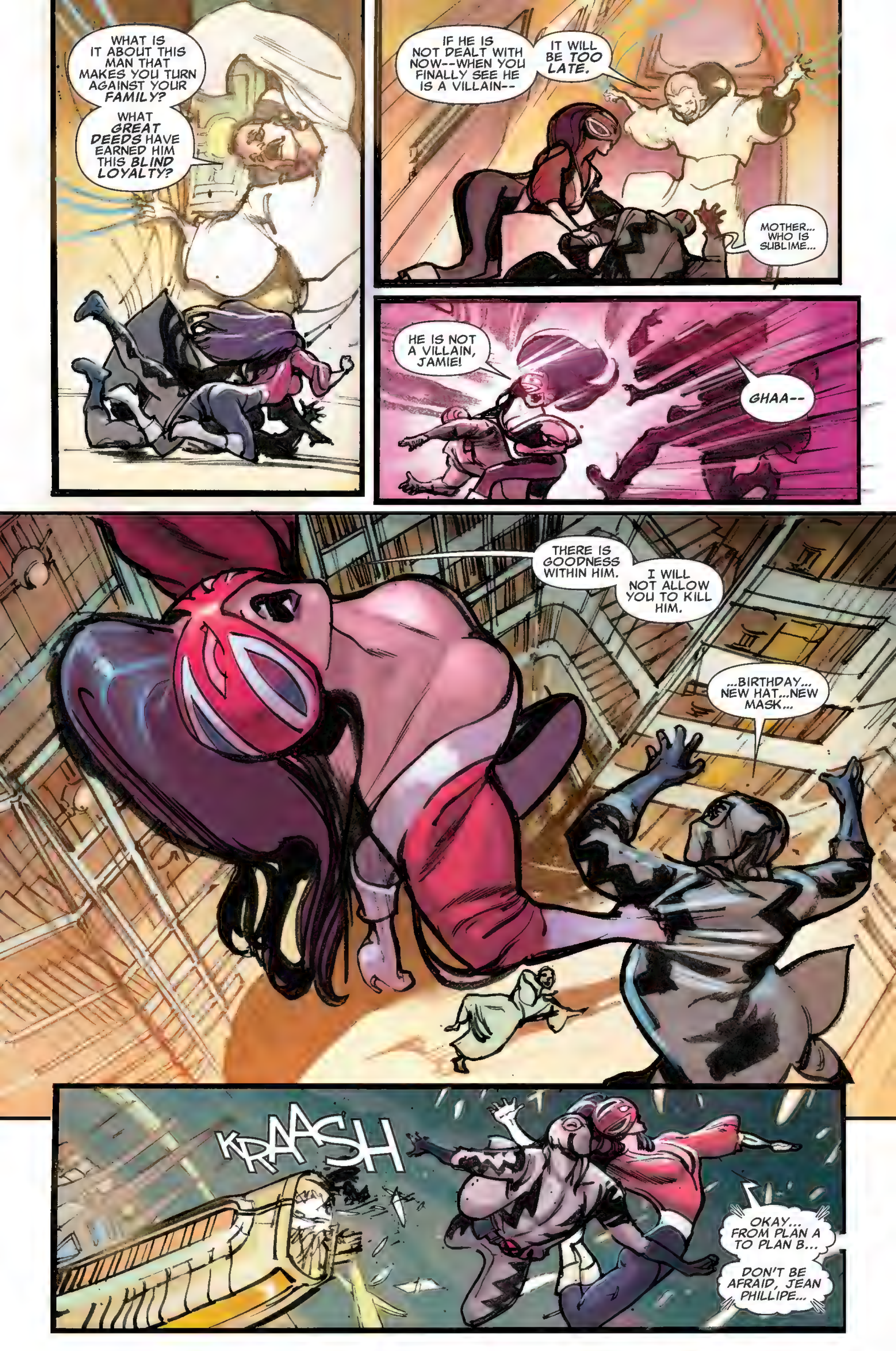

GHRAGHHHH!!
CRUSHING METAL SKULL.
BRAINS COMPACTING.
SPINE TWISTING.
JOINTS COMPACTING.
THIS IS MY WORST!
THIS IS MY WORST!
FOR A BRIEF MOMENT LOGAN'S AGONY BRINGS ME JOY.
BACK HOME THIS MAN SLAUGHTERED MILLIONS. KILLED MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS.
BUT THIS IS A DIFFERENT MAN. HE DESERVES MY AID...
...PROVIDED I DON'T DIE IN THE GIVING.
MEIN GOTT!

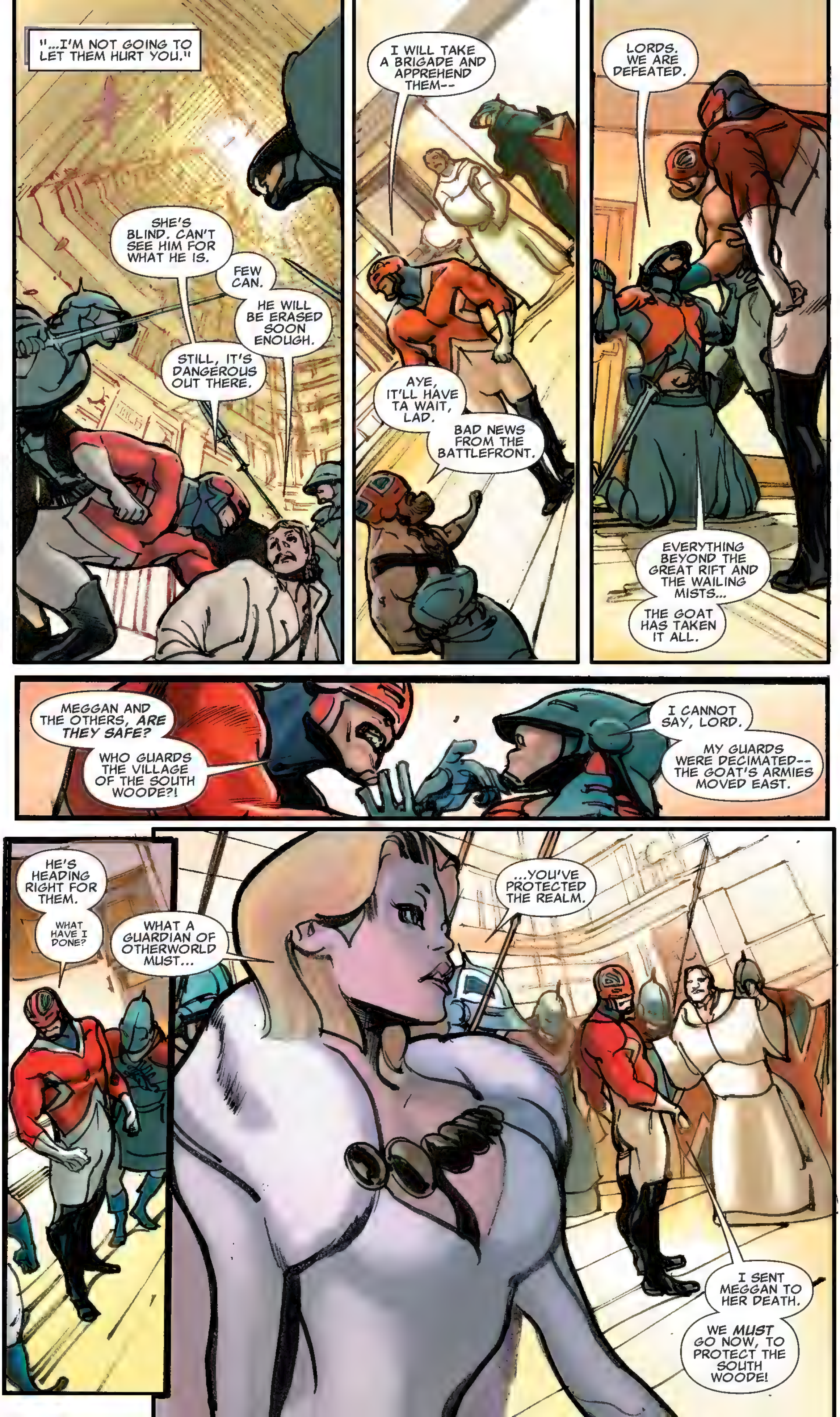

BAMF!
LET'S SURVEY THIS FREAKY LITTLE SCENARIO.
FORMULATE A PLAN...HOW TO SAVE THE--
AH, YES!
BAMF!
THIS MAGIC BALL IS CLEARLY CAUSING YOU DISCOMFORT--
--WHILE YOU SEEM INCREASINGLY EAGER TO SWING THAT GIANT HAMMER.
BAMF!
SERENDIPITY!
BAMF!

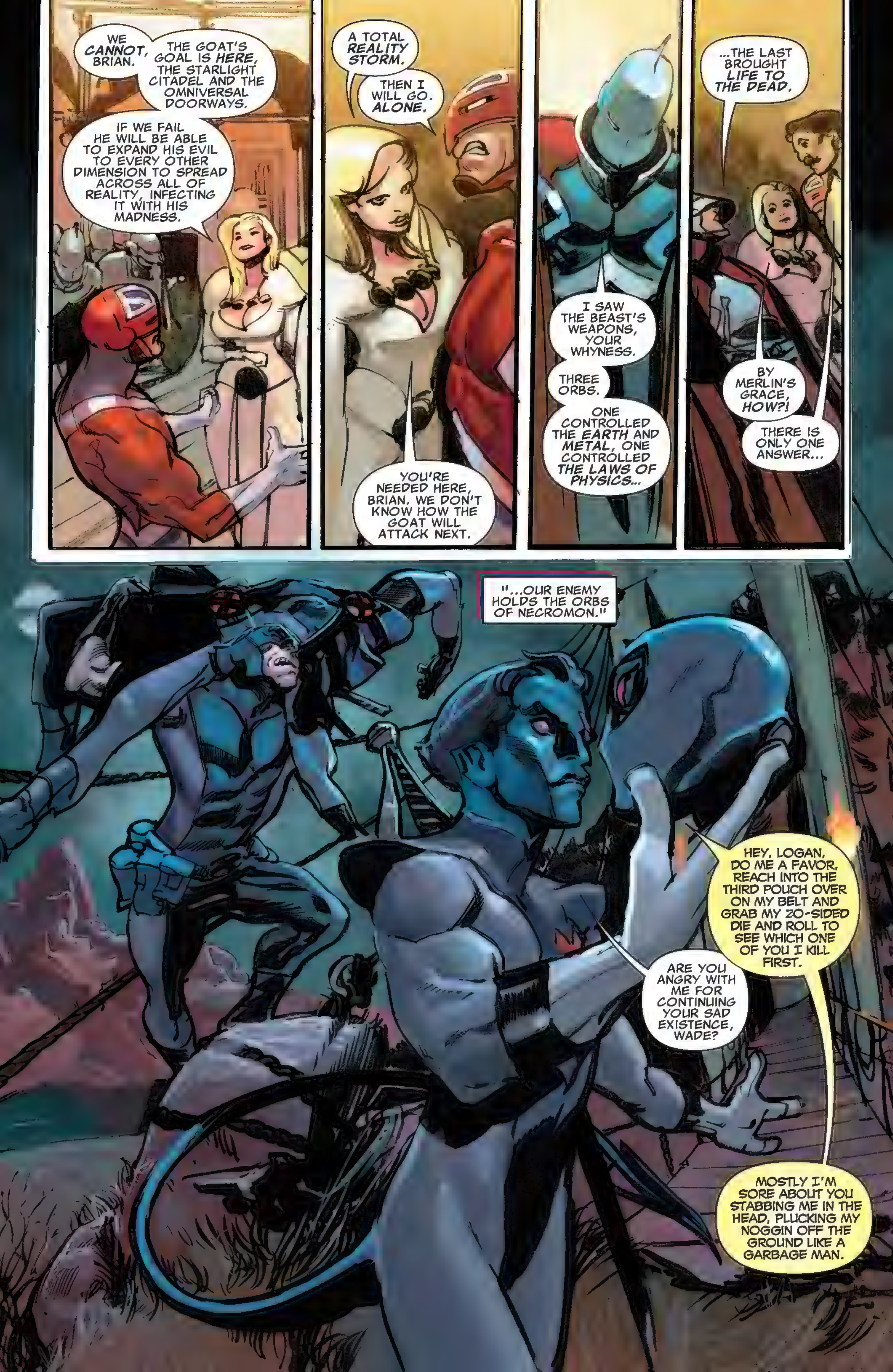

BWADOOM
THE ORB OF METALLUM!
GUTEN TAG, MEIN FREUND. IT WAS VERY HELPFUL IN MY PROBLEM-SOLVING.
WHO ARE YOU? YOU SHOULD NOT BE HERE!
YOU MAKE A GOOD POINT.
RAPID FIRE JUMPING...
...ALMOST KILLED ME...
...NOT A YOUNG MAN ANYMORE, MR. DARKHOLME.
BUT YOU STILL LOOK DASHING ON AN UNDEAD UNICORN
YOU'VE DESTROYED AN ORB!
THIS IS NOT RIGHT!
I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT.
SAVE WADE NOW--
--JOYOUS GLOATING LATER
IF YOU DON'T MIND I'M GOING TO TAKE THIS.

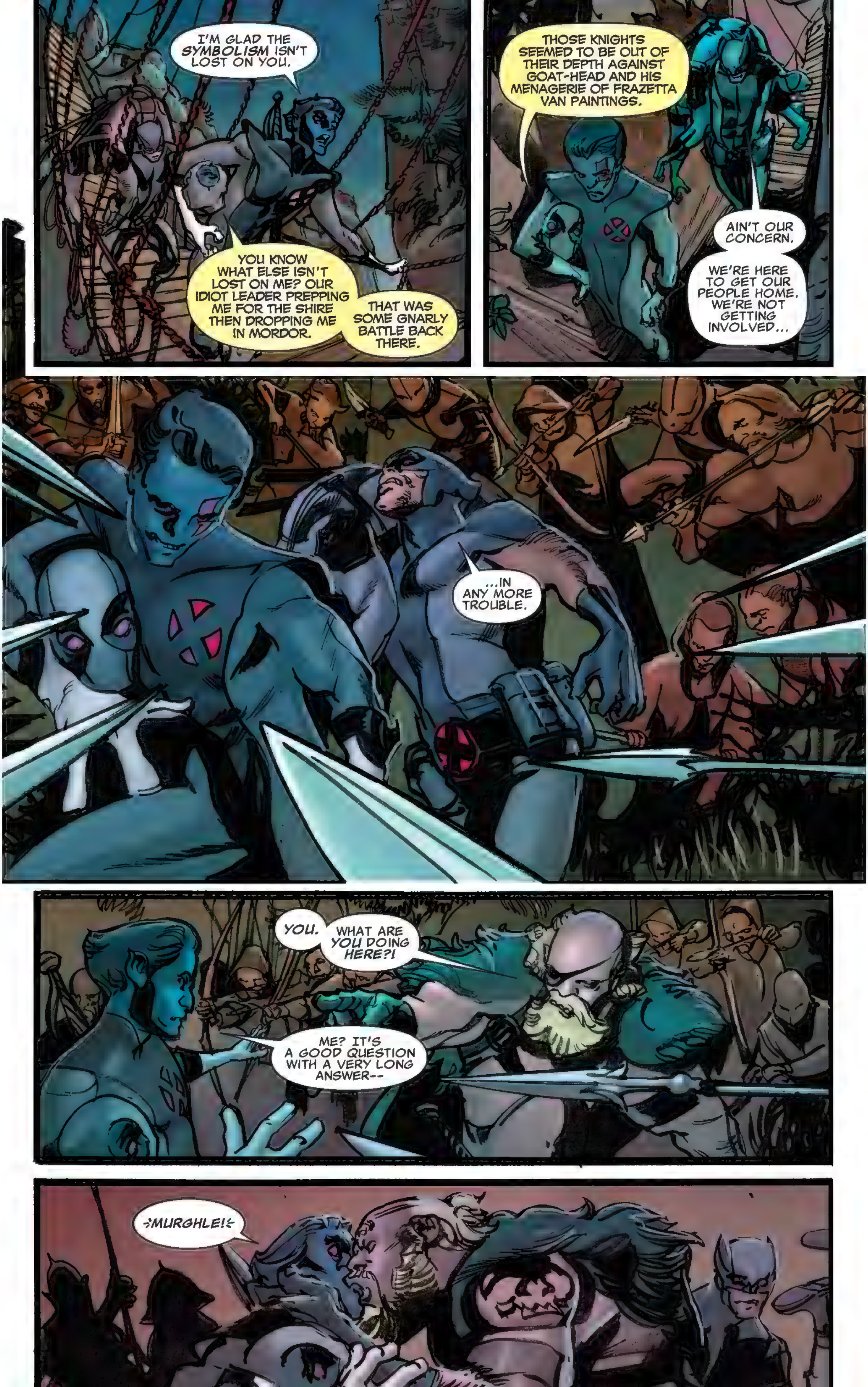

WHOOPS-- PROBABLY NEED HIS HEAD.
HE'LL NEED IT TO HEAR MY GLOATING.
WHOA, RAINBOW KISS-- WHOA!
A MUTANT IMP SENT TO VEX ME?
THE ORBS WILL CRUSH YOU TO DUST!
LOGAN WAS RIGHT...
...THIS PLACE IS LIKE AN ENCHANTED VACATI-- MURGAHHLE
SHNK
BAMF!
KLABOOM

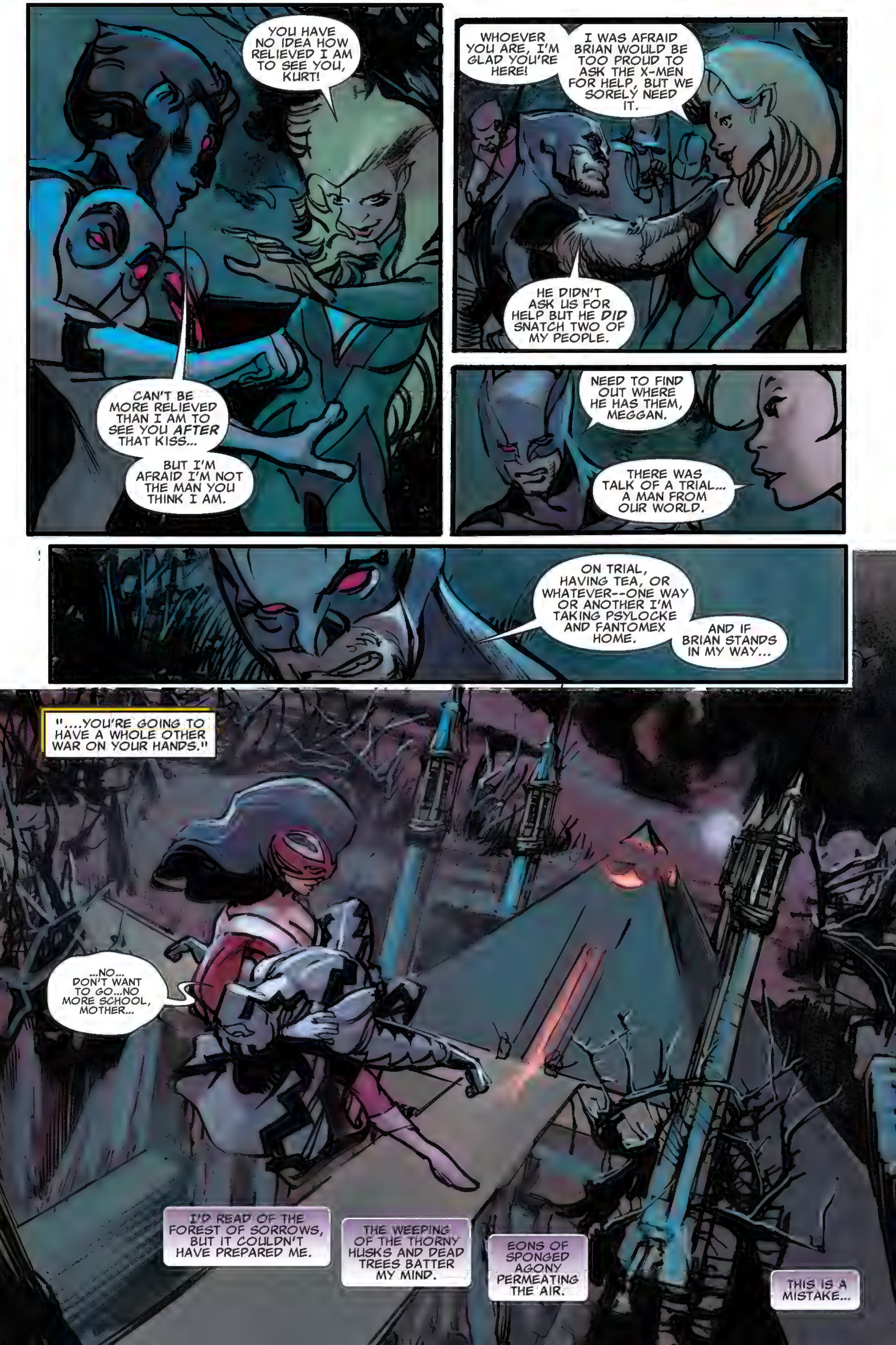

RETREAT!
I MUST REORGANIZE THE MAP.
THE GOAT'S ARMIES HEAD EAST...
VEEEUUUM
"...I MUST TELEPORT BACK TO THE CITADEL."
WE'RE ALMOST TO DOOR 616.
FOCUS ON WHATEVER MOMENT YOU'RE RELIVING, DO NOT LET IT RECEDE!
MOTHER... YOU LOOK OLD...
...HOW LONG WAS I IN THERE... HOW OLD AM I?
STOP THIS, ELIZABETH!
NO!
I WOULD BEND ALL OF REALITY TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY.

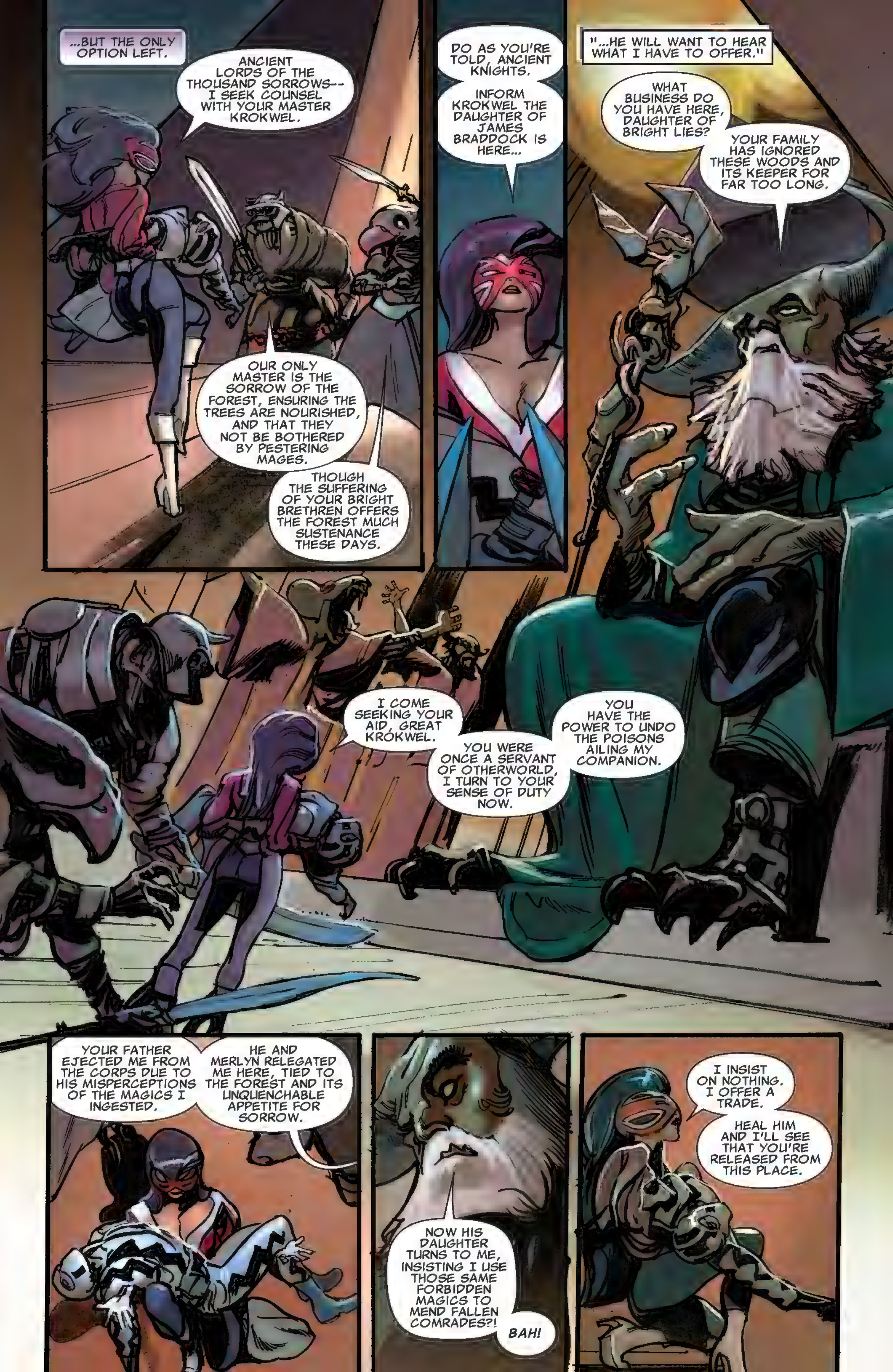

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS MAN THAT MAKES YOU TURN AGAINST YOUR *FAMILY?*
WHAT *GREAT DEEDS* HAVE EARNED HIM THIS *BLIND LOYALTY?*
IF HE IS NOT DEALT WITH NOW--WHEN YOU FINALLY SEE HE IS A VILLAIN--
IT WILL BE *TOO LATE.*
MOTHER... WHO IS SUBLIME...
HE IS NOT A VILLAIN, JAMIE!
GHAA--
THERE IS GOODNESS WITHIN HIM.
I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO KILL HIM.
...BIRTHDAY... NEW HAT...NEW MASK...
KRAASH
OKAY... FROM PLAN A TO PLAN B...
DON'T BE AFRAID, JEAN PHILLIPE...

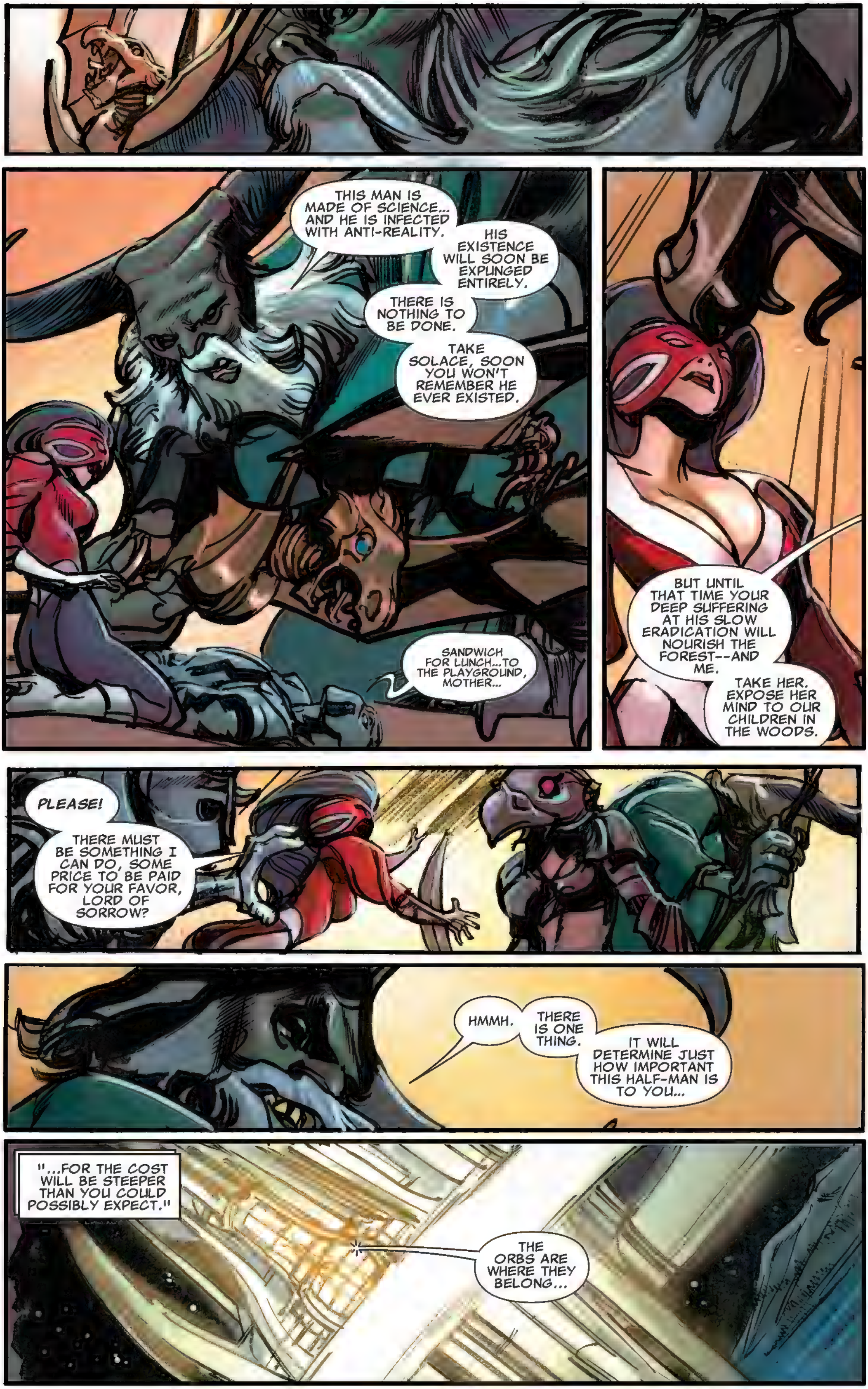

"...I'M NOT GOING TO LET THEM HURT YOU."
SHE'S BLIND. CAN'T SEE HIM FOR WHAT HE IS.
FEW CAN.
HE WILL BE ERASED SOON ENOUGH.
STILL, IT'S DANGEROUS OUT THERE.
I WILL TAKE A BRIGADE AND APPREHEND THEM--
AYE, IT'LL HAVE TA WAIT, LAD.
BAD NEWS FROM THE BATTLEFRONT.
LORDS. WE ARE DEFEATED.
EVERYTHING BEYOND THE GREAT RIFT AND THE WAILING MISTS...
THE GOAT HAS TAKEN IT ALL.
MEGGAN AND THE OTHERS, ARE THEY SAFE?
WHO GUARDS THE VILLAGE OF THE SOUTH WOODE?!
I CANNOT SAY, LORD.
MY GUARDS WERE DECIMATED-- THE GOAT'S ARMIES MOVED EAST.
HE'S HEADING RIGHT FOR THEM.
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
WHAT A GUARDIAN OF OTHERWORLD MUST...
...YOU'VE PROTECTED THE REALM.
I SENT MEGGAN TO HER DEATH.
WE MUST GO NOW, TO PROTECT THE SOUTH WOODE!

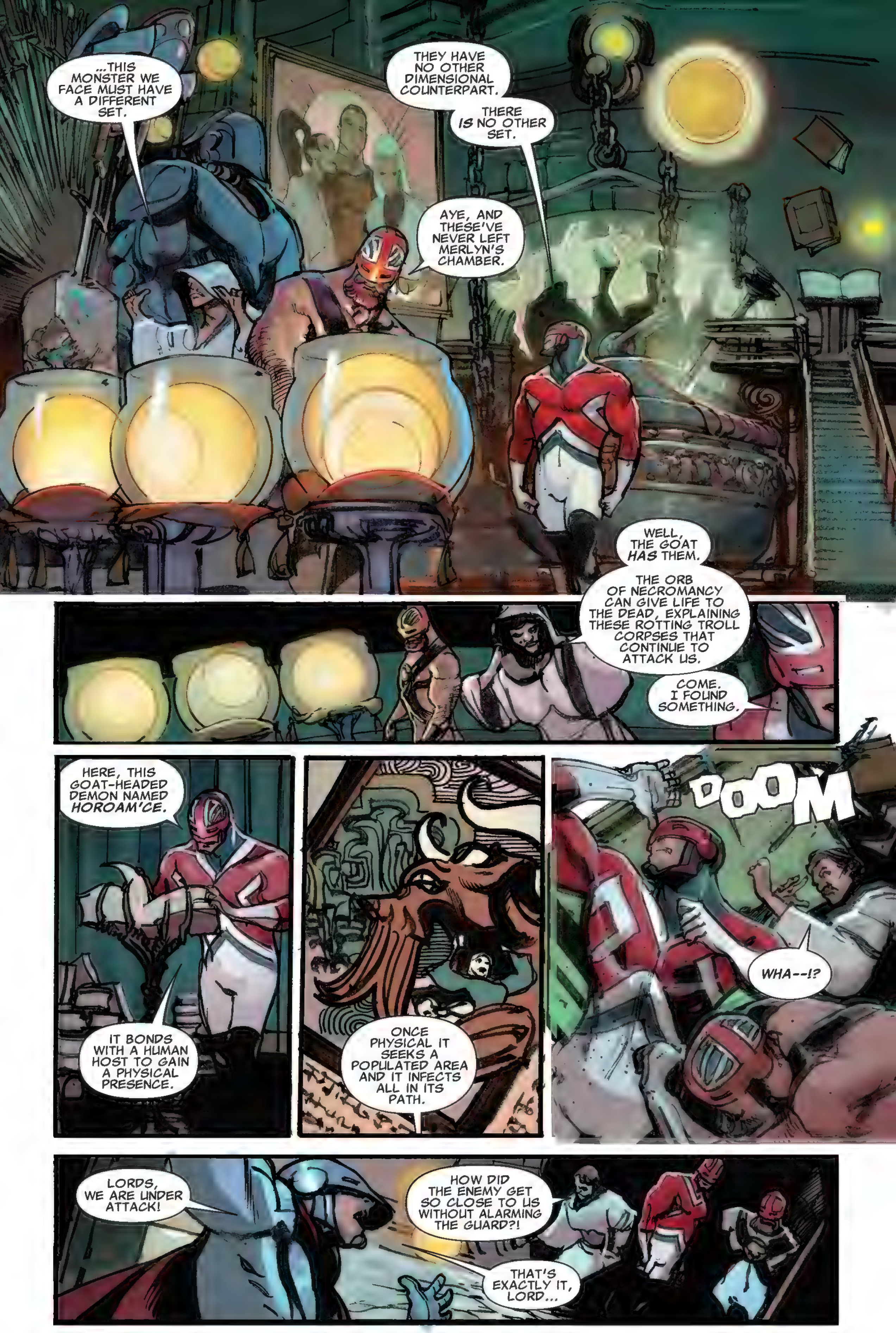

WE *CANNOT*, BRIAN.
THE GOAT'S GOAL IS *HERE*, THE STARLIGHT CITADEL AND THE OMNIVERSAL DOORWAYS.
IF WE FAIL HE WILL BE ABLE TO EXPAND HIS EVIL TO EVERY OTHER DIMENSION TO SPREAD ACROSS ALL OF REALITY, INFECTING IT WITH HIS MADNESS.
A TOTAL *REALITY STORM*.
THEN I WILL GO. *ALONE*.
YOU'RE NEEDED HERE, BRIAN. WE DON'T KNOW HOW THE GOAT WILL ATTACK NEXT.
I SAW THE BEAST'S WEAPONS, YOUR WHYNESS.
THREE ORBS.
ONE CONTROLLED THE *EARTH* AND *METAL*, ONE CONTROLLED *THE LAWS OF PHYSICS*...
...THE LAST BROUGHT *LIFE TO THE DEAD*.
BY MERLIN'S GRACE, *HOW?!*
THERE IS ONLY ONE ANSWER...
"...OUR ENEMY HOLDS THE ORBS OF NECROMON."
HEY, LOGAN, DO ME A FAVOR, REACH INTO THE THIRD POUCH OVER ON MY BELT AND GRAB MY 20-SIDED DIE AND ROLL TO SEE WHICH ONE OF YOU I KILL FIRST.
ARE YOU ANGRY WITH ME FOR CONTINUING YOUR SAD EXISTENCE, WADE?
MOSTLY I'M SORE ABOUT YOU STABBING ME IN THE HEAD, PLUCKING MY NOGGIN OFF THE GROUND LIKE A GARBAGE MAN.

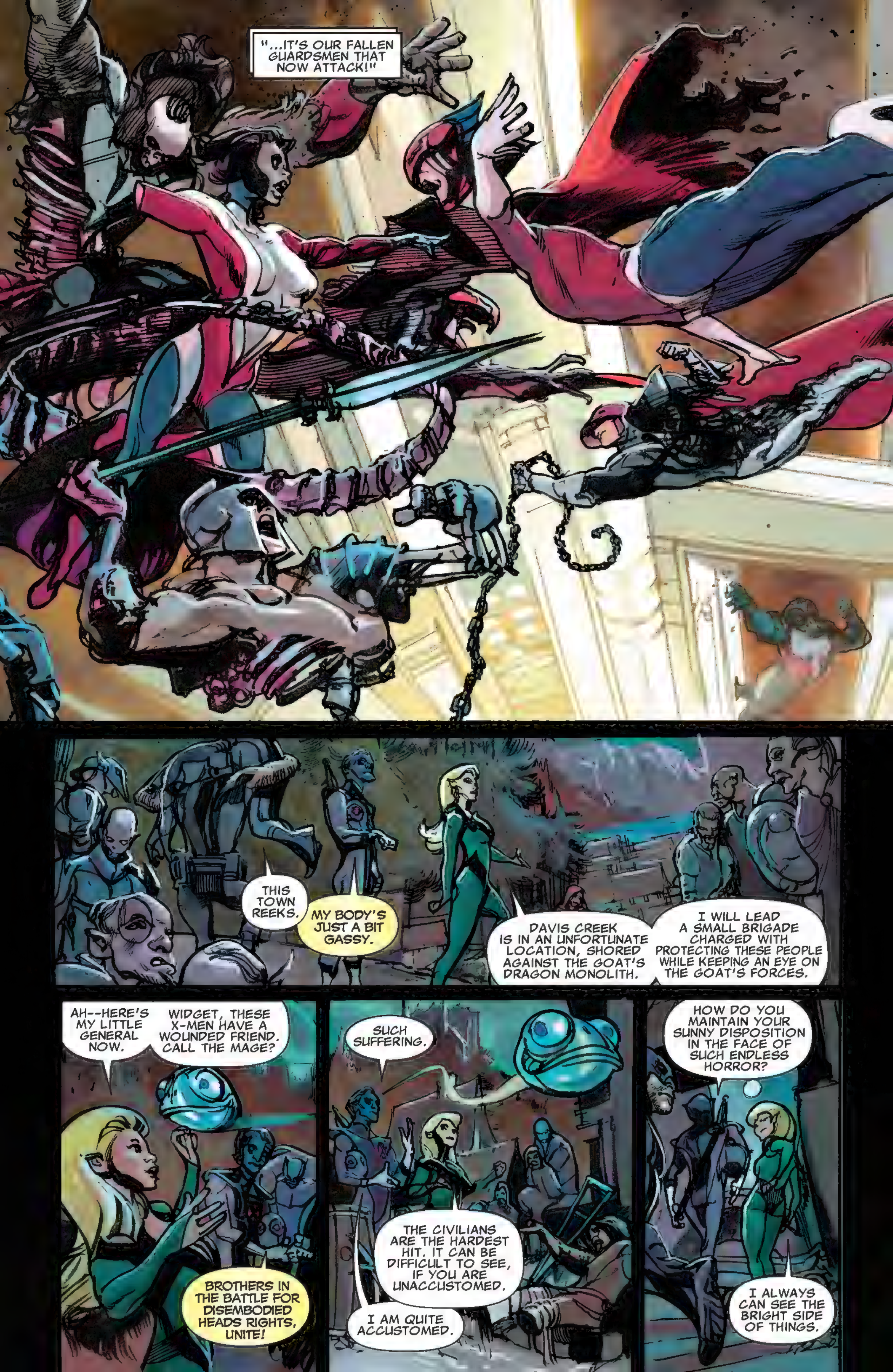

I'M GLAD THE *SYMBOLISM* ISN'T LOST ON YOU.
YOU KNOW WHAT ELSE ISN'T LOST ON ME? OUR IDIOT LEADER PREPPING ME FOR THE SHIRE THEN DROPPING ME IN MORDOR.
THAT WAS SOME GNARLY BATTLE BACK THERE.
THOSE KNIGHTS SEEMED TO BE OUT OF THEIR DEPTH AGAINST GOAT-HEAD AND HIS MENAGERIE OF FRAZETTA VAN PAINTINGS.
AIN'T OUR CONCERN.
WE'RE HERE TO GET OUR PEOPLE HOME. WE'RE NOT GETTING INVOLVED...
...IN ANY MORE TROUBLE.
YOU.
WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?!
ME? IT'S A GOOD QUESTION WITH A VERY LONG ANSWER--
MURGHLE!

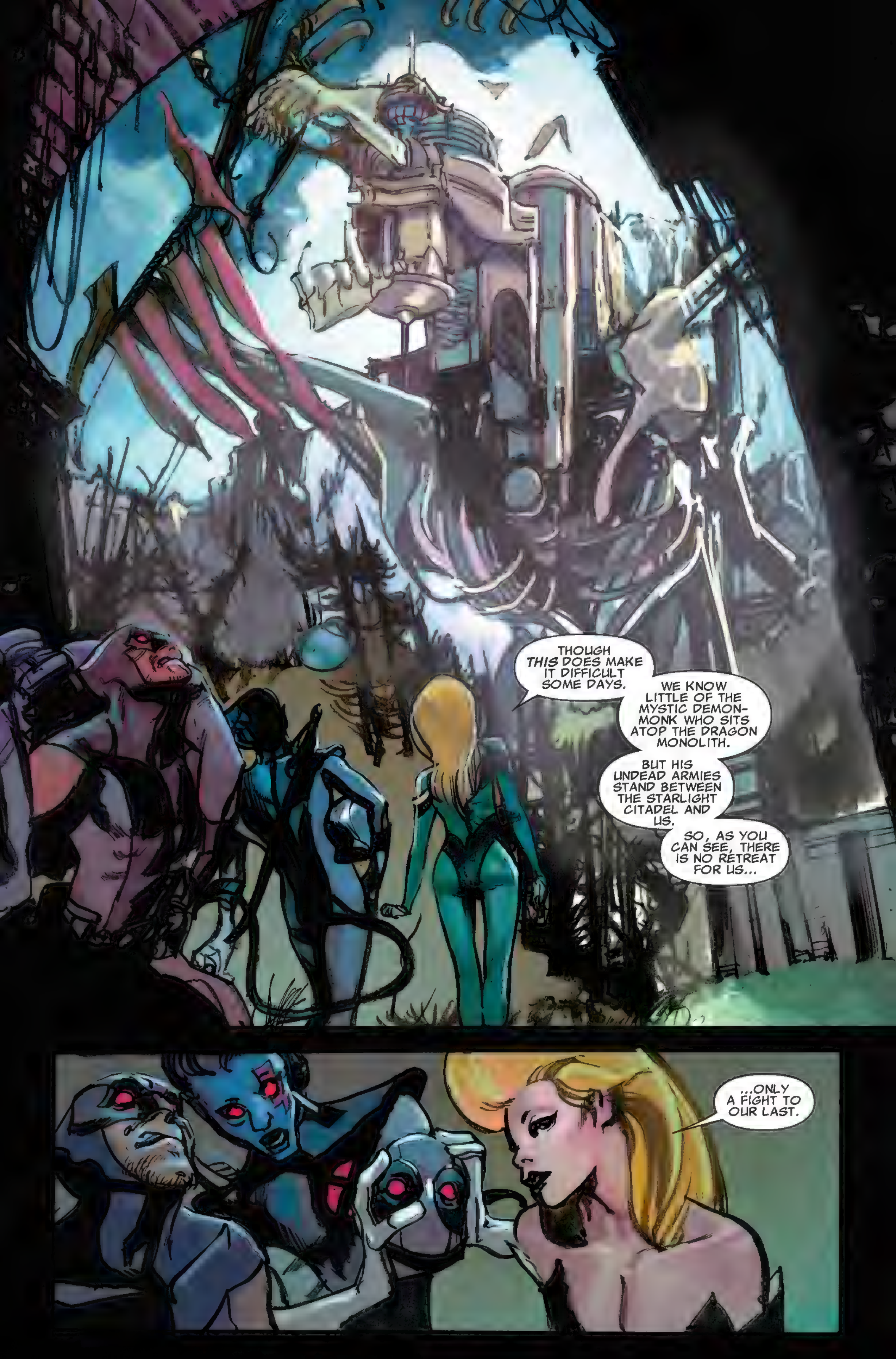

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW RELIEVED I AM TO SEE YOU, KURT!
CAN'T BE MORE RELIEVED THAN I AM TO SEE YOU *AFTER* THAT KISS...
BUT I'M AFRAID I'M NOT THE MAN YOU THINK I AM.
WHOEVER YOU ARE, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE!
I WAS AFRAID BRIAN WOULD BE TOO PROUD TO ASK THE X-MEN FOR HELP, BUT WE SORELY NEED IT.
HE DIDN'T ASK US FOR HELP BUT HE *DID* SNATCH TWO OF MY PEOPLE.
NEED TO FIND OUT WHERE HE HAS THEM, MEGGAN.
THERE WAS TALK OF A TRIAL... A MAN FROM OUR WORLD.
ON TRIAL, HAVING TEA, OR WHATEVER--ONE WAY OR ANOTHER I'M TAKING PSYLOCKE AND FANTOMEX HOME.
AND IF BRIAN STANDS IN MY WAY...
"....YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A WHOLE OTHER WAR ON YOUR HANDS."
...NO... DON'T WANT TO GO...NO MORE SCHOOL, MOTHER...
I'D READ OF THE FOREST OF SORROWS, BUT IT COULDN'T HAVE PREPARED ME.
THE WEEPING OF THE THORNY HUSKS AND DEAD TREES BATTER MY MIND.
EONS OF SPONGED AGONY PERMEATING THE AIR.
THIS IS A MISTAKE...

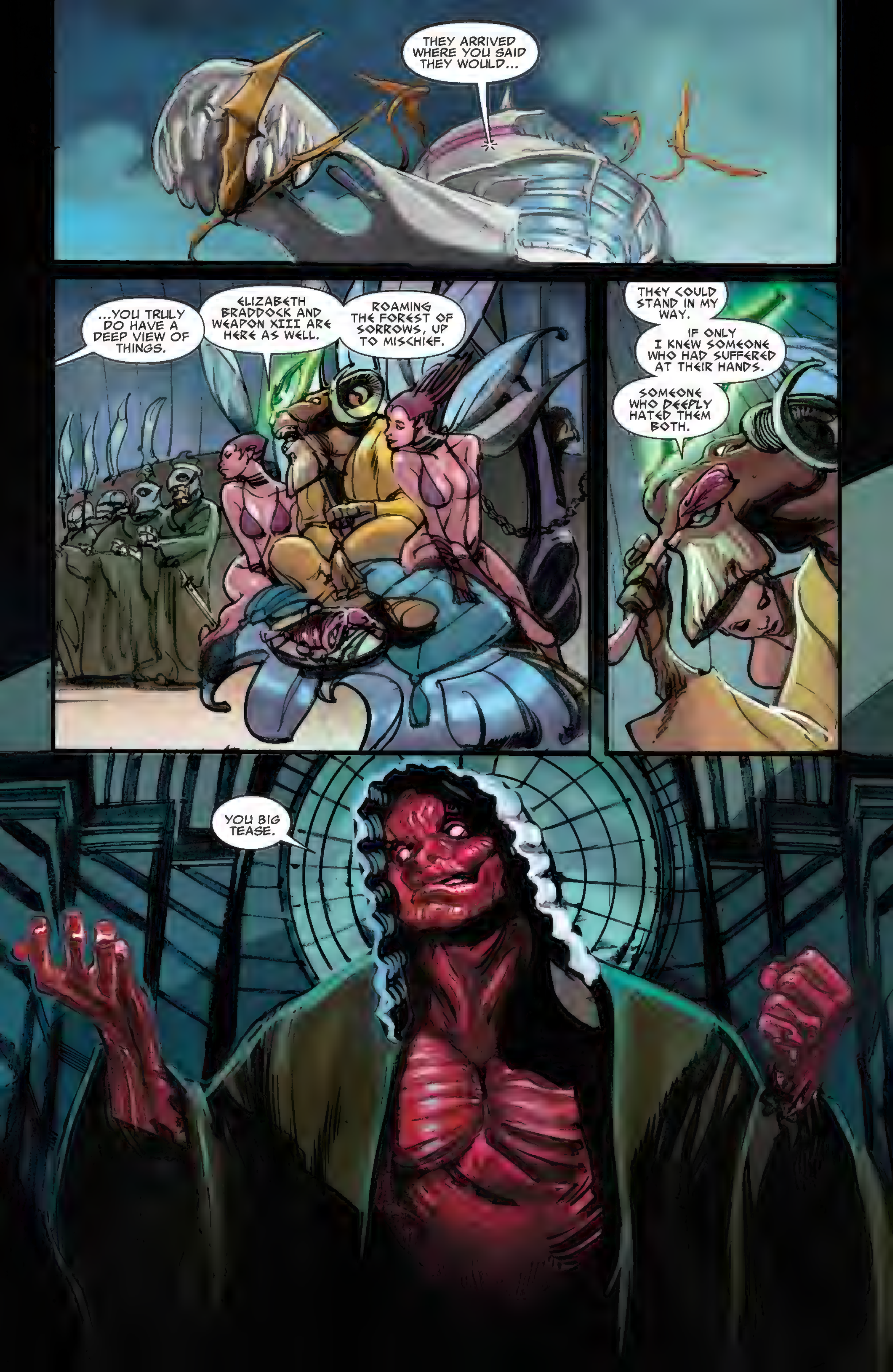

...BUT THE ONLY OPTION LEFT.
ANCIENT LORDS OF THE THOUSAND SORROWS-- I SEEK COUNSEL WITH YOUR MASTER KROKWEL.
OUR ONLY MASTER IS THE SORROW OF THE FOREST, ENSURING THE TREES ARE NOURISHED, AND THAT THEY NOT BE BOTHERED BY PESTERING MAGES.
THOUGH THE SUFFERING OF YOUR BRIGHT BRETHREN OFFERS THE FOREST MUCH SUSTENANCE THESE DAYS.
DO AS YOU'RE TOLD, ANCIENT KNIGHTS.
INFORM KROKWEL THE DAUGHTER OF JAMES BRADDOCK IS HERE...
"...HE WILL WANT TO HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO OFFER."
WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE HERE, DAUGHTER OF BRIGHT LIES?
YOUR FAMILY HAS IGNORED THESE WOODS AND ITS KEEPER FOR FAR TOO LONG.
I COME SEEKING YOUR AID, GREAT KROKWEL.
YOU WERE ONCE A SERVANT OF OTHERWORLD, I TURN TO YOUR SENSE OF DUTY NOW.
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO UNDO THE POISONS AILING MY COMPANION.
YOUR FATHER EJECTED ME FROM THE CORPS DUE TO HIS MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE MAGICS I INGESTED.
HE AND MERLYN RELEGATED ME HERE, TIED TO THE FOREST AND ITS UNQUENCHABLE APPETITE FOR SORROW.
NOW HIS DAUGHTER TURNS TO ME, INSISTING I USE THOSE SAME FORBIDDEN MAGICS TO MEND FALLEN COMRADES?!
BAH!
I INSIST ON NOTHING. I OFFER A TRADE.
HEAL HIM AND I'LL SEE THAT YOU'RE RELEASED FROM THIS PLACE.


THIS MAN IS MADE OF SCIENCE... AND HE IS INFECTED WITH ANTI-REALITY.
HIS EXISTENCE WILL SOON BE EXPUNGED ENTIRELY.
THERE IS NOTHING TO BE DONE.
TAKE SOLACE, SOON YOU WON'T REMEMBER HE EVER EXISTED.
SANDWICH FOR LUNCH...TO THE PLAYGROUND, MOTHER...
BUT UNTIL THAT TIME YOUR DEEP SUFFERING AT HIS SLOW ERADICATION WILL NOURISH THE FOREST--AND ME.
TAKE HER. EXPOSE HER MIND TO OUR CHILDREN IN THE WOODS.
PLEASE!
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING I CAN DO, SOME PRICE TO BE PAID FOR YOUR FAVOR, LORD OF SORROW?
HMMH.
THERE IS ONE THING.
IT WILL DETERMINE JUST HOW IMPORTANT THIS HALF-MAN IS TO YOU...
"...FOR THE COST WILL BE STEEPER THAN YOU COULD POSSIBLY EXPECT."
THE ORBS ARE WHERE THEY BELONG...


...THIS MONSTER WE FACE MUST HAVE A DIFFERENT SET.
THEY HAVE NO OTHER DIMENSIONAL COUNTERPART.
THERE *IS* NO OTHER SET.
AYE, AND THESE'VE NEVER LEFT MERLYN'S CHAMBER.
WELL, THE GOAT *HAS* THEM.
THE ORB OF NECROMANCY CAN GIVE LIFE TO THE DEAD, EXPLAINING THESE ROTTING TROLL CORPSES THAT CONTINUE TO ATTACK US.
COME. I FOUND SOMETHING.
HERE, THIS GOAT-HEADED DEMON NAMED *HOROAM'CE*.
IT BONDS WITH A HUMAN HOST TO GAIN A PHYSICAL PRESENCE.
ONCE PHYSICAL IT SEEKS A POPULATED AREA AND IT INFECTS ALL IN ITS PATH.
DOOOM
WHA--!?
LORDS, WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!
HOW DID THE ENEMY GET SO CLOSE TO US WITHOUT ALARMING THE GUARD?!
THAT'S EXACTLY IT, LORD...

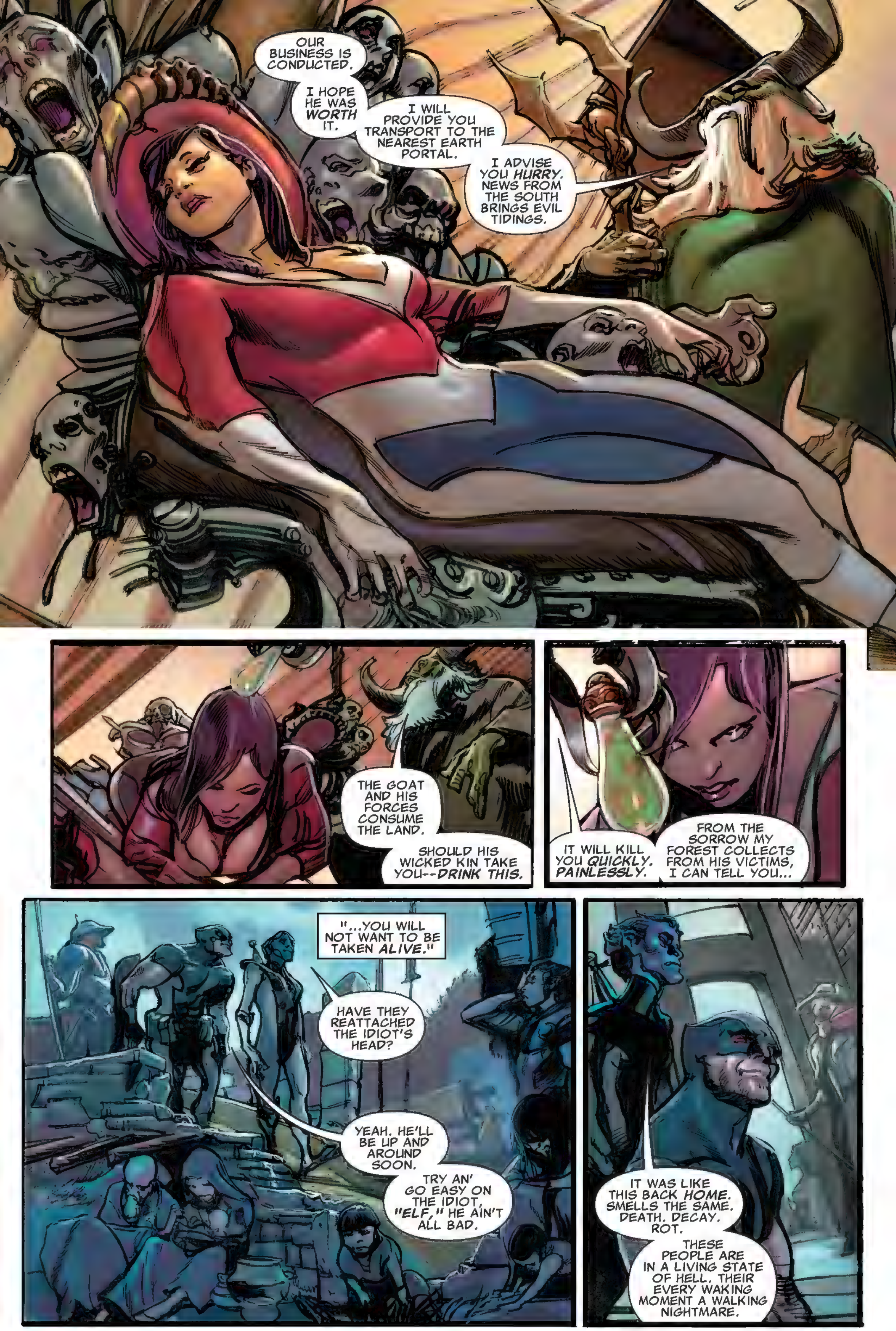

"...IT'S OUR FALLEN GUARDSMEN THAT NOW ATTACK!"
THIS TOWN REEKS.
MY BODY'S JUST A BIT GASSY.
DAVIS CREEK IS IN AN UNFORTUNATE LOCATION, SHORED AGAINST THE GOAT'S DRAGON MONOLITH.
I WILL LEAD A SMALL BRIGADE CHARGED WITH PROTECTING THESE PEOPLE WHILE KEEPING AN EYE ON THE GOAT'S FORCES.
AH--HERE'S MY LITTLE GENERAL NOW.
WIDGET, THESE X-MEN HAVE A WOUNDED FRIEND. CALL THE MAGE?
BROTHERS IN THE BATTLE FOR DISEMBODIED HEADS RIGHTS, UNITE!
SUCH SUFFERING.
THE CIVILIANS ARE THE HARDEST HIT. IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO SEE, IF YOU ARE UNACCUSTOMED.
I AM QUITE ACCUSTOMED.
HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN YOUR SUNNY DISPOSITION IN THE FACE OF SUCH ENDLESS HORROR?
I ALWAYS CAN SEE THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THINGS.

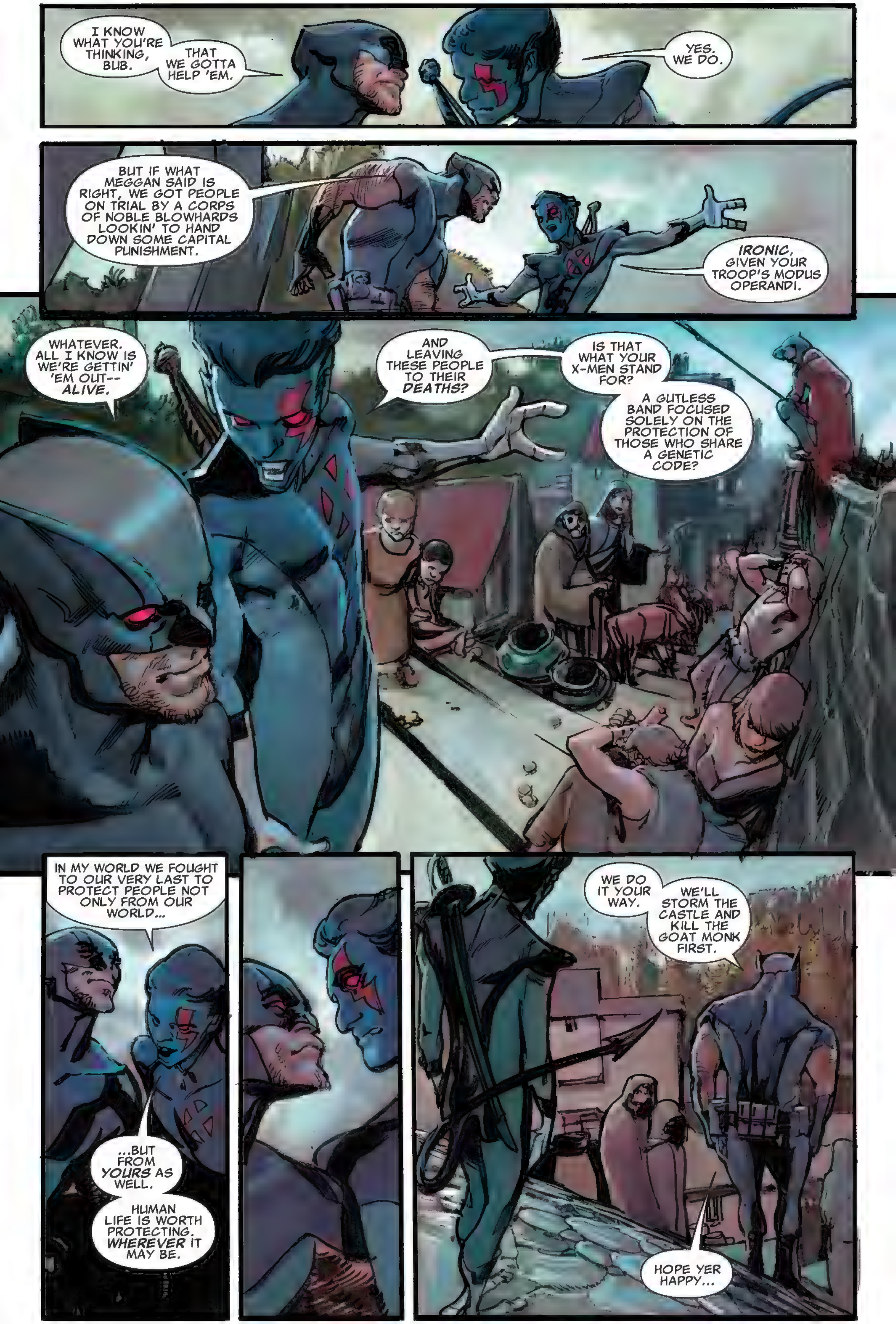

THOUGH *THIS* DOES MAKE IT DIFFICULT SOME DAYS.
WE KNOW LITTLE OF THE MYSTIC DEMON-MONK WHO SITS ATOP THE DRAGON MONOLITH.
BUT HIS UNDEAD ARMIES STAND BETWEEN THE STARLIGHT CITADEL AND US.
SO, AS YOU CAN SEE, THERE IS NO RETREAT FOR US...
...ONLY A FIGHT TO OUR LAST.

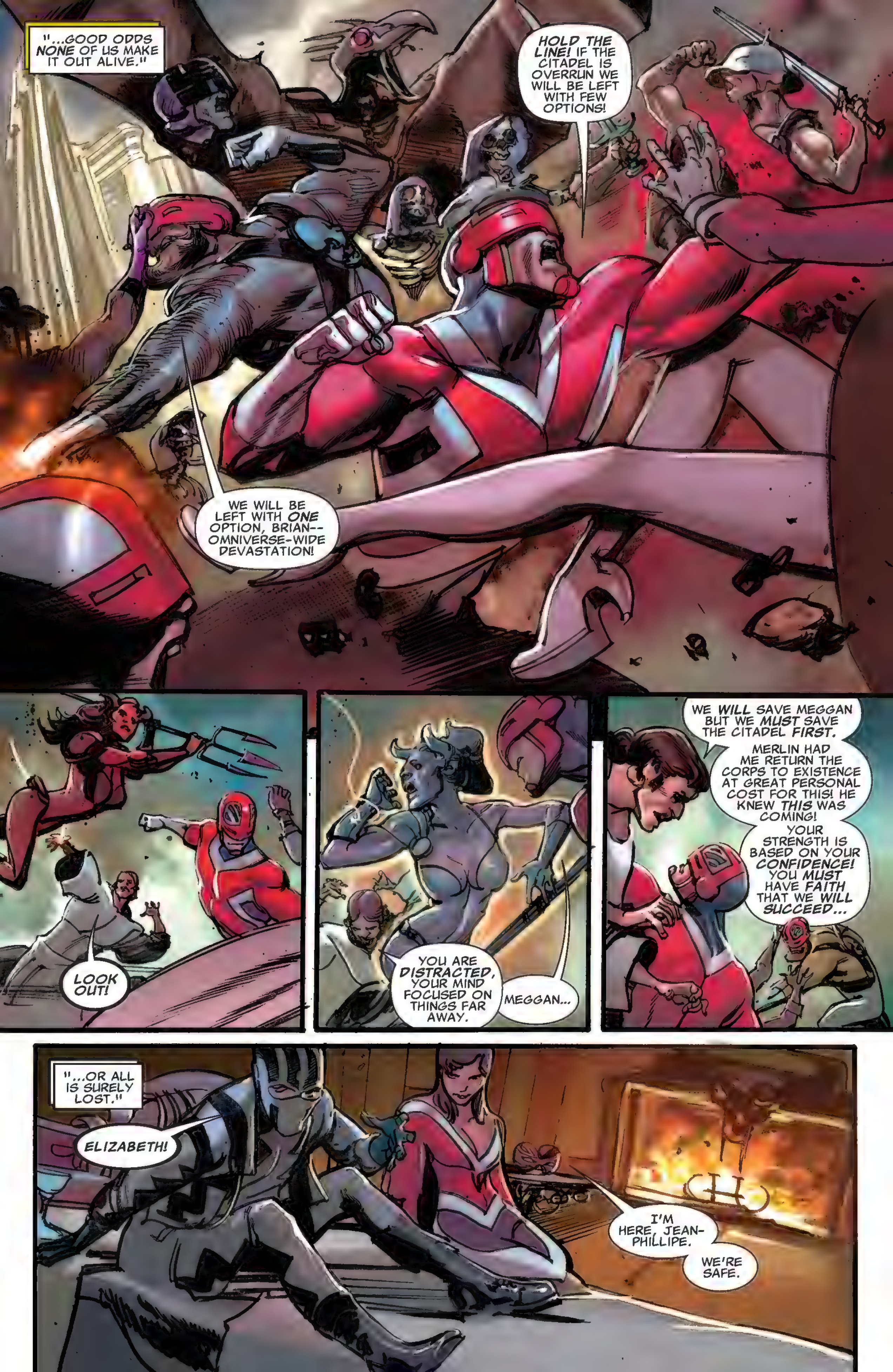

THEY ARRIVED WHERE YOU SAID THEY WOULD...
...YOU TRULY DO HAVE A DEEP VIEW OF THINGS.
ELIZABETH BRADDOCK AND WEAPON XIII ARE HERE AS WELL.
ROAMING THE FOREST OF SORROWS, UP TO MISCHIEF.
THEY COULD STAND IN MY WAY.
IF ONLY I KNEW SOMEONE WHO HAD SUFFERED AT THEIR HANDS.
SOMEONE WHO DEEPLY HATED THEM BOTH.
YOU BIG TEASE.

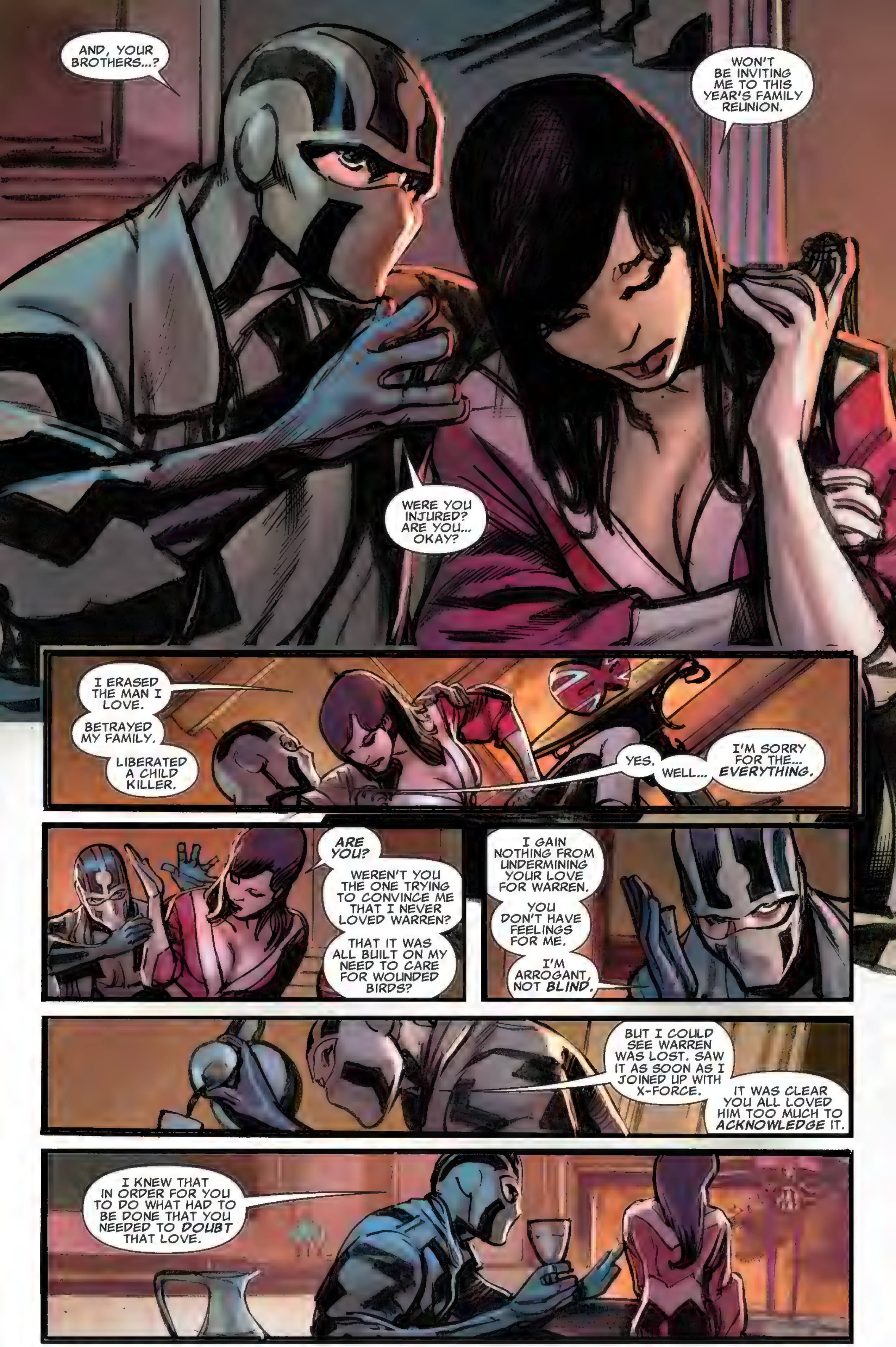
22 OTHERWORLD

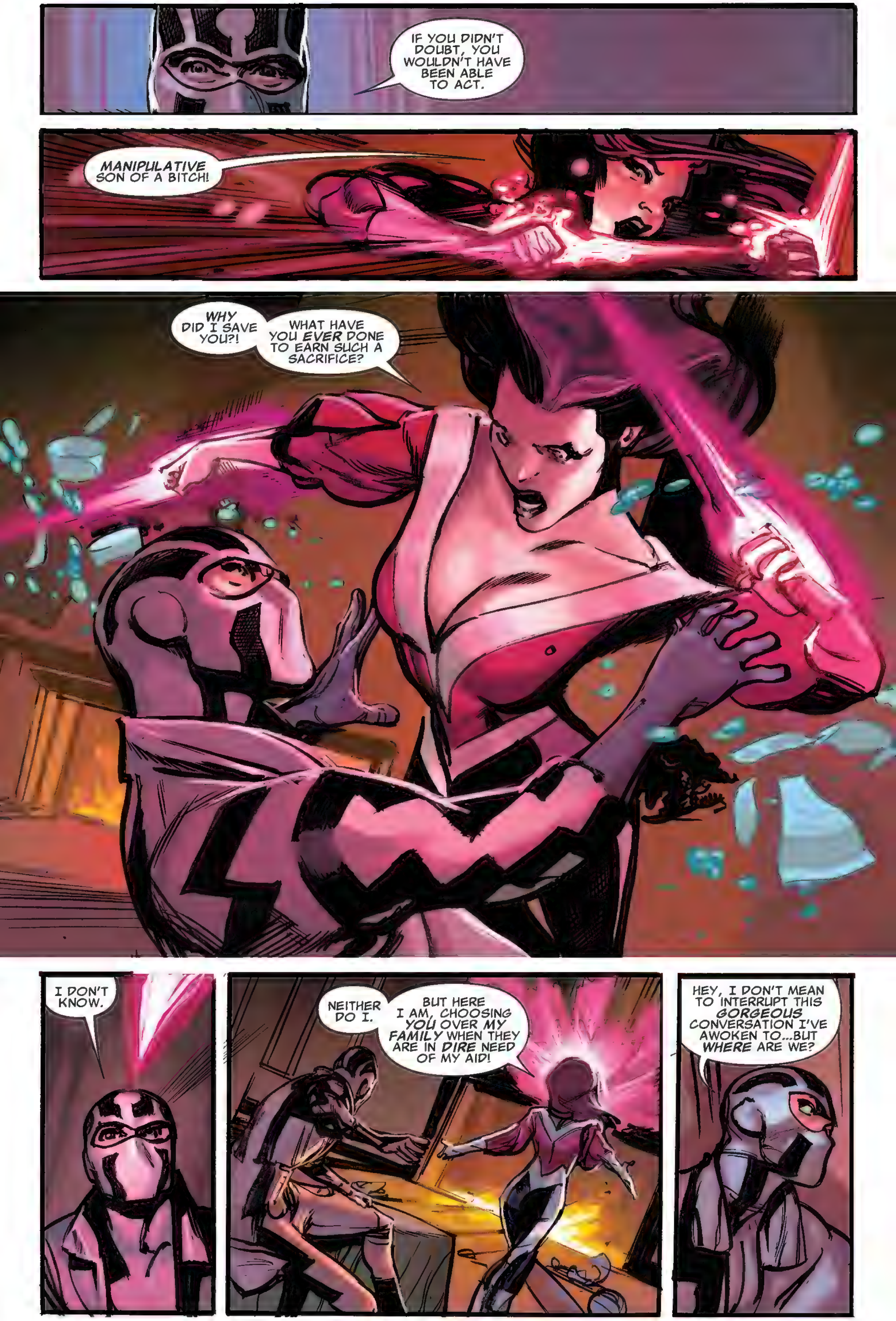
CHAPTER 3

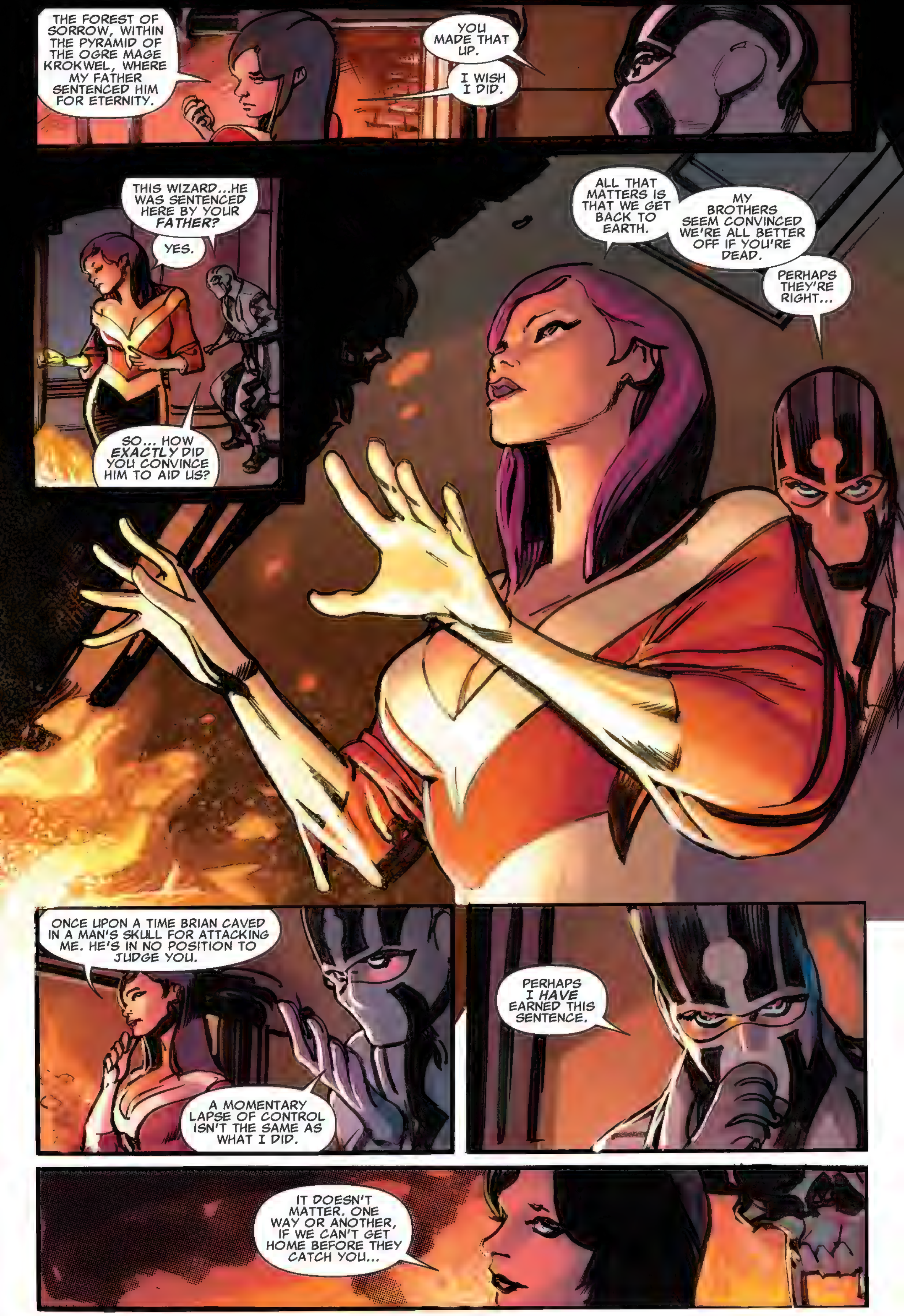

OUR BUSINESS IS CONDUCTED.
I HOPE HE WAS *WORTH* IT.
I WILL PROVIDE YOU TRANSPORT TO THE NEAREST EARTH PORTAL.
I ADVISE YOU *HURRY*. NEWS FROM THE SOUTH BRINGS EVIL TIDINGS.
THE GOAT AND HIS FORCES CONSUME THE LAND.
SHOULD HIS WICKED KIN TAKE YOU--*DRINK THIS.*
IT WILL KILL YOU *QUICKLY*. *PAINLESSLY*.
FROM THE SORROW MY FOREST COLLECTS FROM HIS VICTIMS, I CAN TELL YOU...
"...YOU WILL NOT WANT TO BE TAKEN *ALIVE*."
HAVE THEY REATTACHED THE IDIOT'S HEAD?
YEAH. HE'LL BE UP AND AROUND SOON.
TRY AN' GO EASY ON THE IDIOT, *"ELF,"* HE AIN'T ALL BAD.
IT WAS LIKE THIS BACK *HOME*. SMELLS THE SAME. DEATH. DECAY. ROT.
THESE PEOPLE ARE IN A LIVING STATE OF HELL. THEIR EVERY WAKING MOMENT A WALKING NIGHTMARE.

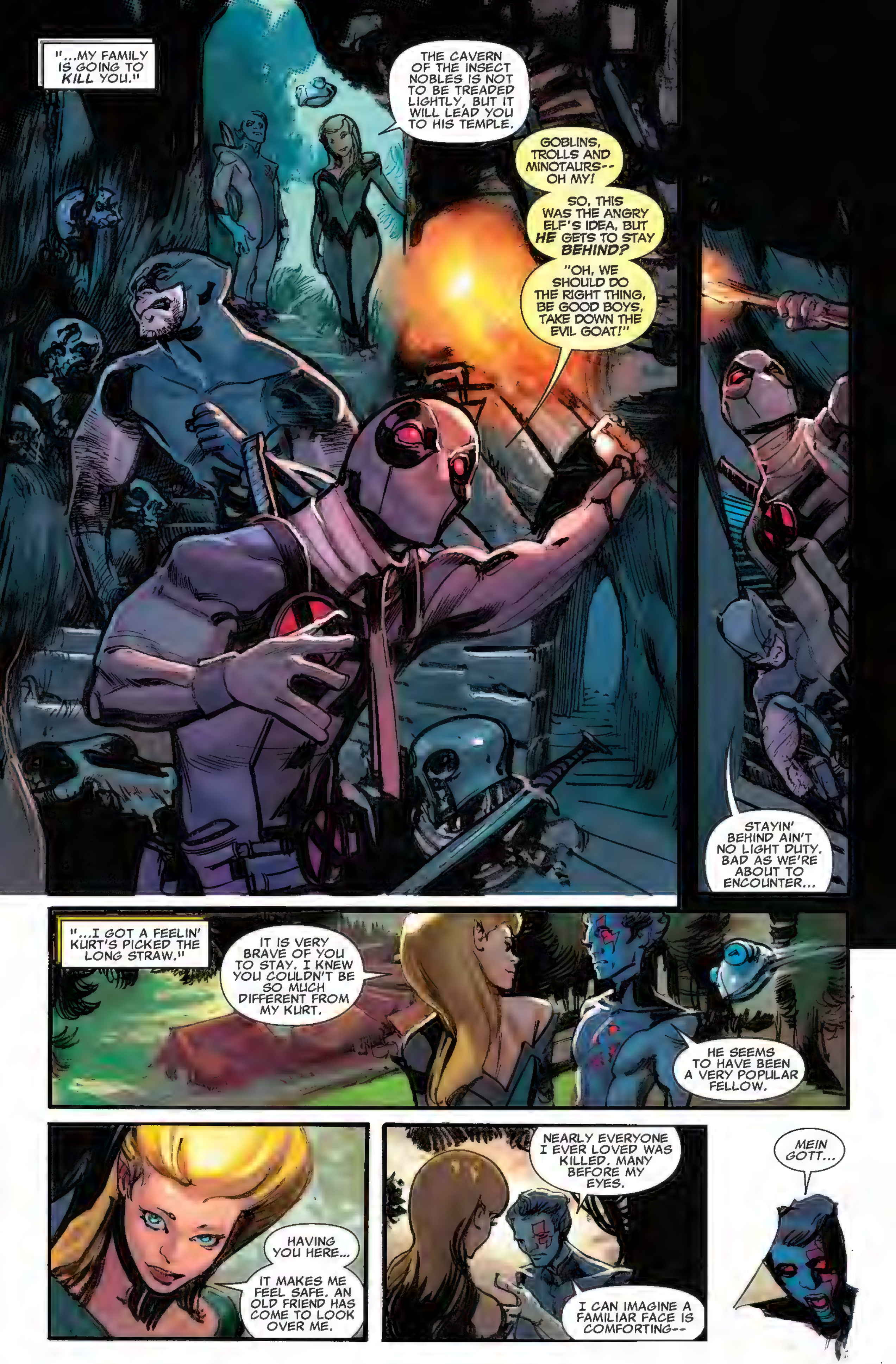

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, BUB.
THAT WE GOTTA HELP 'EM.
YES. WE DO.
BUT IF WHAT MEGGAN SAID IS RIGHT, WE GOT PEOPLE ON TRIAL BY A CORPS OF NOBLE BLOWHARDS LOOKIN' TO HAND DOWN SOME CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.
IRONIC, GIVEN YOUR TROOP'S MODUS OPERANDI.
WHATEVER. ALL I KNOW IS WE'RE GETTIN' 'EM OUT-- *ALIVE.*
AND LEAVING THESE PEOPLE TO THEIR *DEATHS?*
IS THAT WHAT YOUR X-MEN STAND FOR?
A GUTLESS BAND FOCUSED SOLELY ON THE PROTECTION OF THOSE WHO SHARE A GENETIC CODE?
IN MY WORLD WE FOUGHT TO OUR VERY LAST TO PROTECT PEOPLE NOT ONLY FROM OUR WORLD...
...BUT FROM *YOURS* AS WELL.
HUMAN LIFE IS WORTH PROTECTING. *WHEREVER* IT MAY BE.
WE DO IT YOUR WAY.
WE'LL STORM THE CASTLE AND KILL THE GOAT MONK FIRST.
HOPE YER HAPPY...

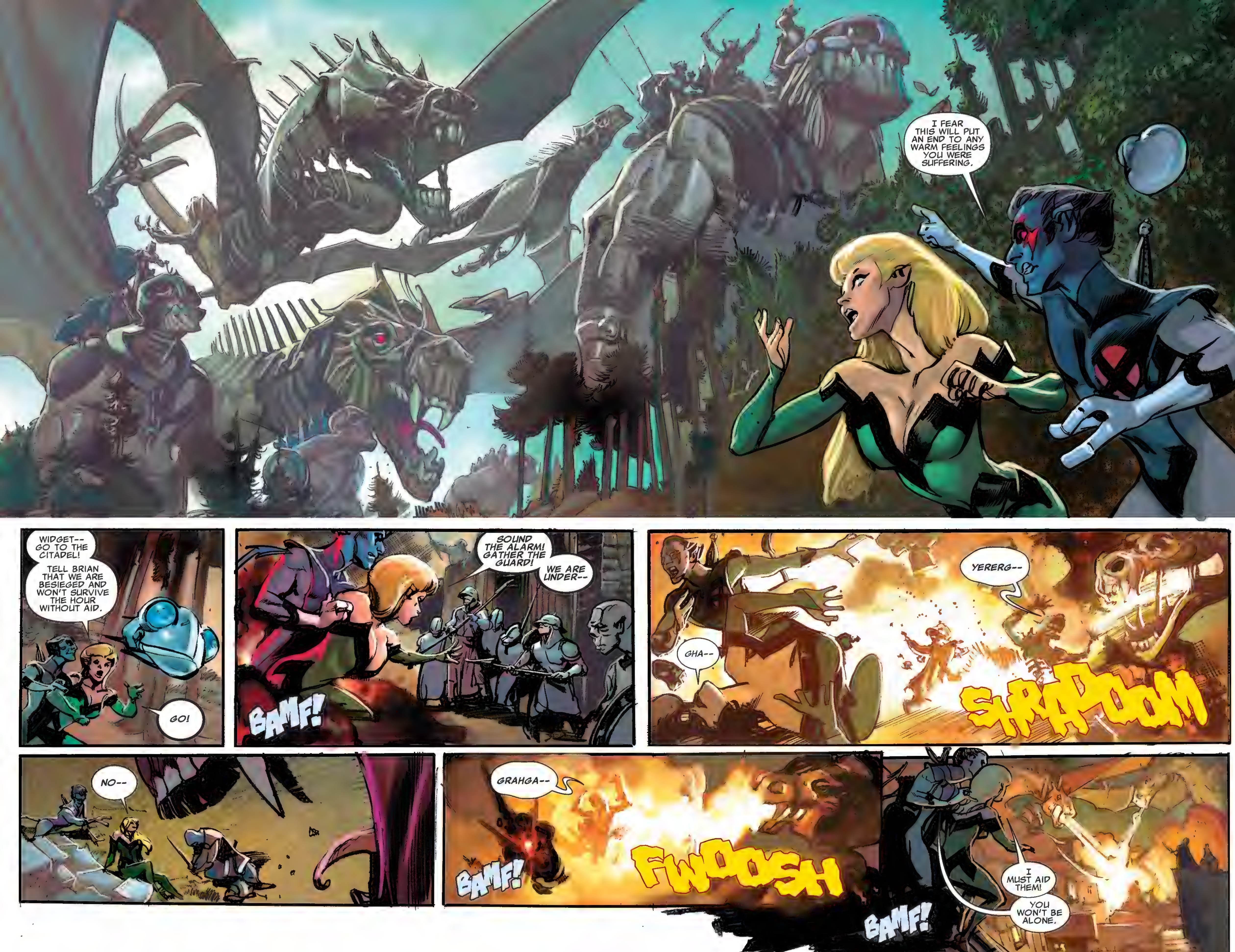

"...GOOD ODDS *NONE* OF US MAKE IT OUT ALIVE."
HOLD THE LINE! IF THE CITADEL IS OVERRUN WE WILL BE LEFT WITH FEW OPTIONS!
WE WILL BE LEFT WITH *ONE* OPTION, BRIAN-- OMNIVERSE-WIDE DEVASTATION!
LOOK OUT!
YOU ARE *DISTRACTED*, YOUR MIND FOCUSED ON THINGS FAR AWAY.
MEGGAN...
WE *WILL* SAVE MEGGAN BUT WE *MUST* SAVE THE CITADEL *FIRST.*
MERLIN HAD ME RETURN THE CORPS TO EXISTENCE AT GREAT PERSONAL COST FOR THIS! HE KNEW *THIS* WAS COMING!
YOUR STRENGTH IS BASED ON YOUR *CONFIDENCE!* YOU *MUST* HAVE *FAITH* THAT WE *WILL SUCCEED...*
"...OR ALL IS SURELY LOST."
ELIZABETH!
I'M HERE, JEAN-PHILLIPE.
WE'RE SAFE.

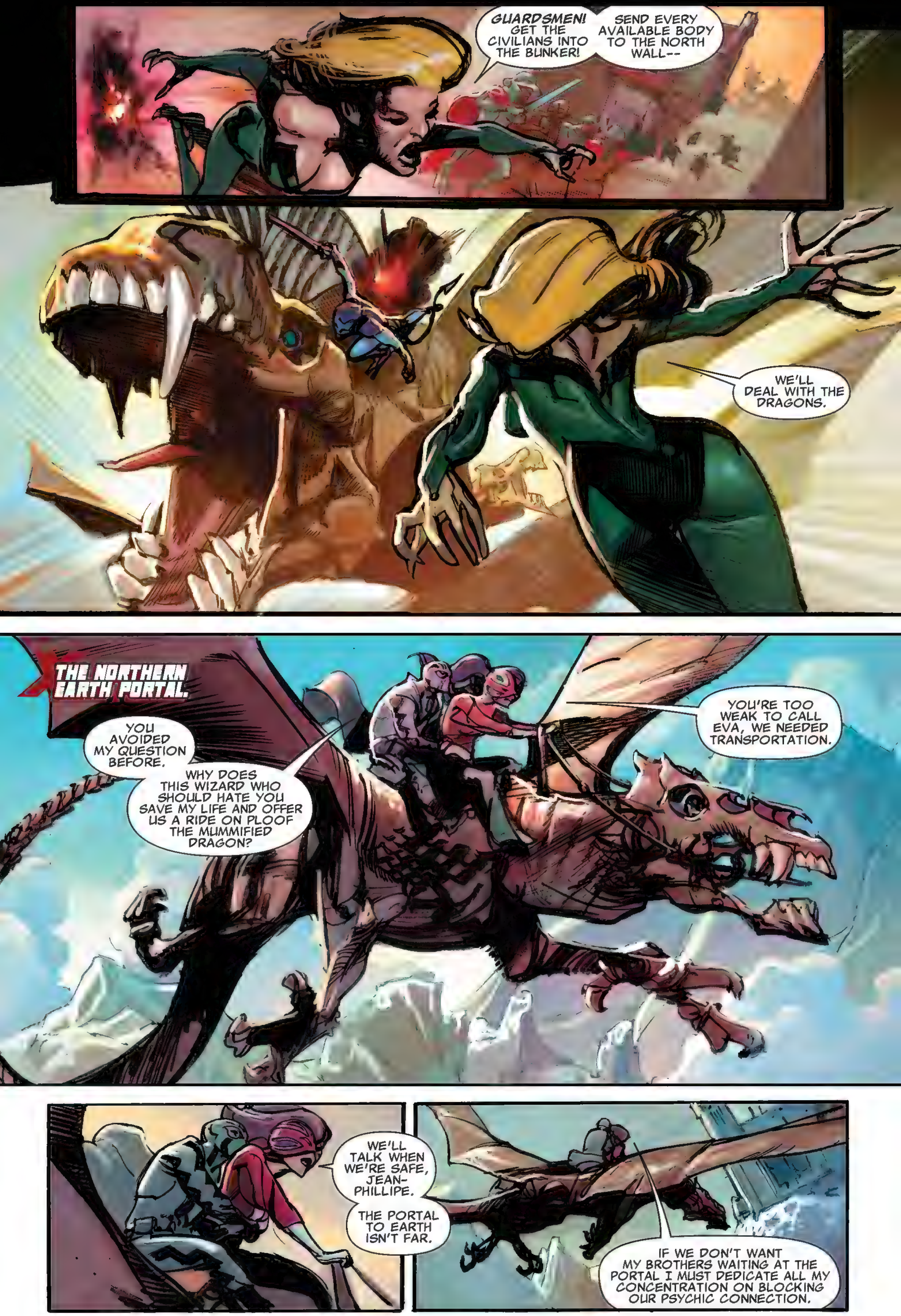

AND, YOUR BROTHERS...?
WON'T BE INVITING ME TO THIS YEAR'S FAMILY REUNION.
WERE YOU INJURED? ARE YOU... OKAY?
I ERASED THE MAN I LOVE.
BETRAYED MY FAMILY.
LIBERATED A CHILD KILLER.
YES.
WELL...
I'M SORRY FOR THE... *EVERYTHING.*
ARE YOU?
WEREN'T YOU THE ONE TRYING TO CONVINCE ME THAT I NEVER LOVED WARREN?
THAT IT WAS ALL BUILT ON MY NEED TO CARE FOR WOUNDED BIRDS?
I GAIN NOTHING FROM UNDERMINING YOUR LOVE FOR WARREN.
YOU DON'T HAVE FEELINGS FOR ME.
I'M ARROGANT, NOT *BLIND.*
BUT I COULD SEE WARREN WAS LOST. SAW IT AS SOON AS I JOINED UP WITH X-FORCE.
IT WAS CLEAR YOU ALL LOVED HIM TOO MUCH TO *ACKNOWLEDGE* IT.
I KNEW THAT IN ORDER FOR YOU TO DO WHAT HAD TO BE DONE THAT YOU NEEDED TO *DOUBT* THAT LOVE.

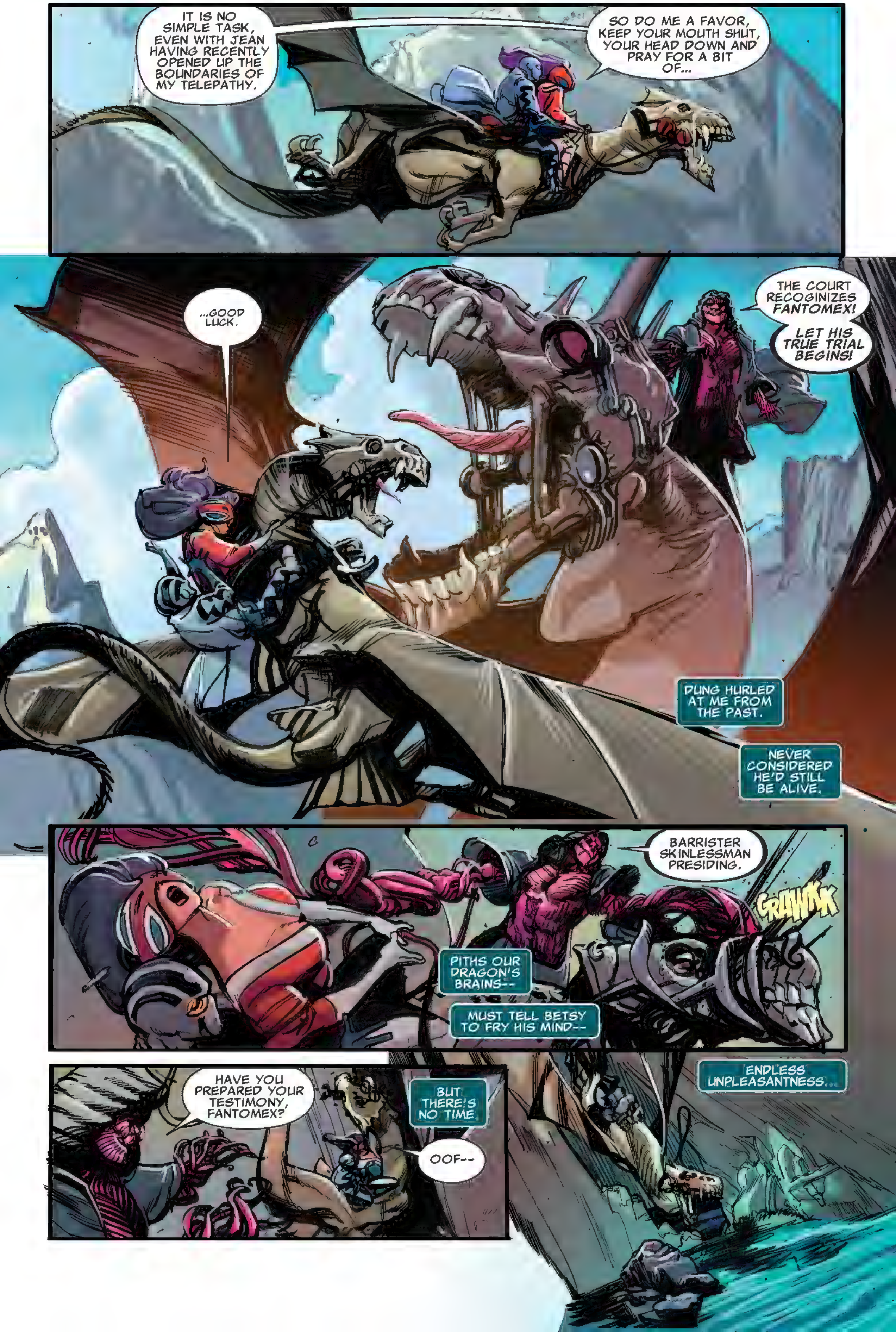

IF YOU DIDN'T DOUBT, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACT.
MANIPULATIVE SON OF A BITCH!
WHY DID I SAVE YOU?!
WHAT HAVE YOU *EVER* DONE TO EARN SUCH A SACRIFICE?
I DON'T KNOW.
NEITHER DO I.
BUT HERE I AM, CHOOSING *YOU* OVER *MY FAMILY* WHEN THEY ARE IN *DIRE* NEED OF MY AID!
HEY, I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT THIS *GORGEOUS* CONVERSATION I'VE AWOKEN TO...BUT *WHERE* ARE WE?

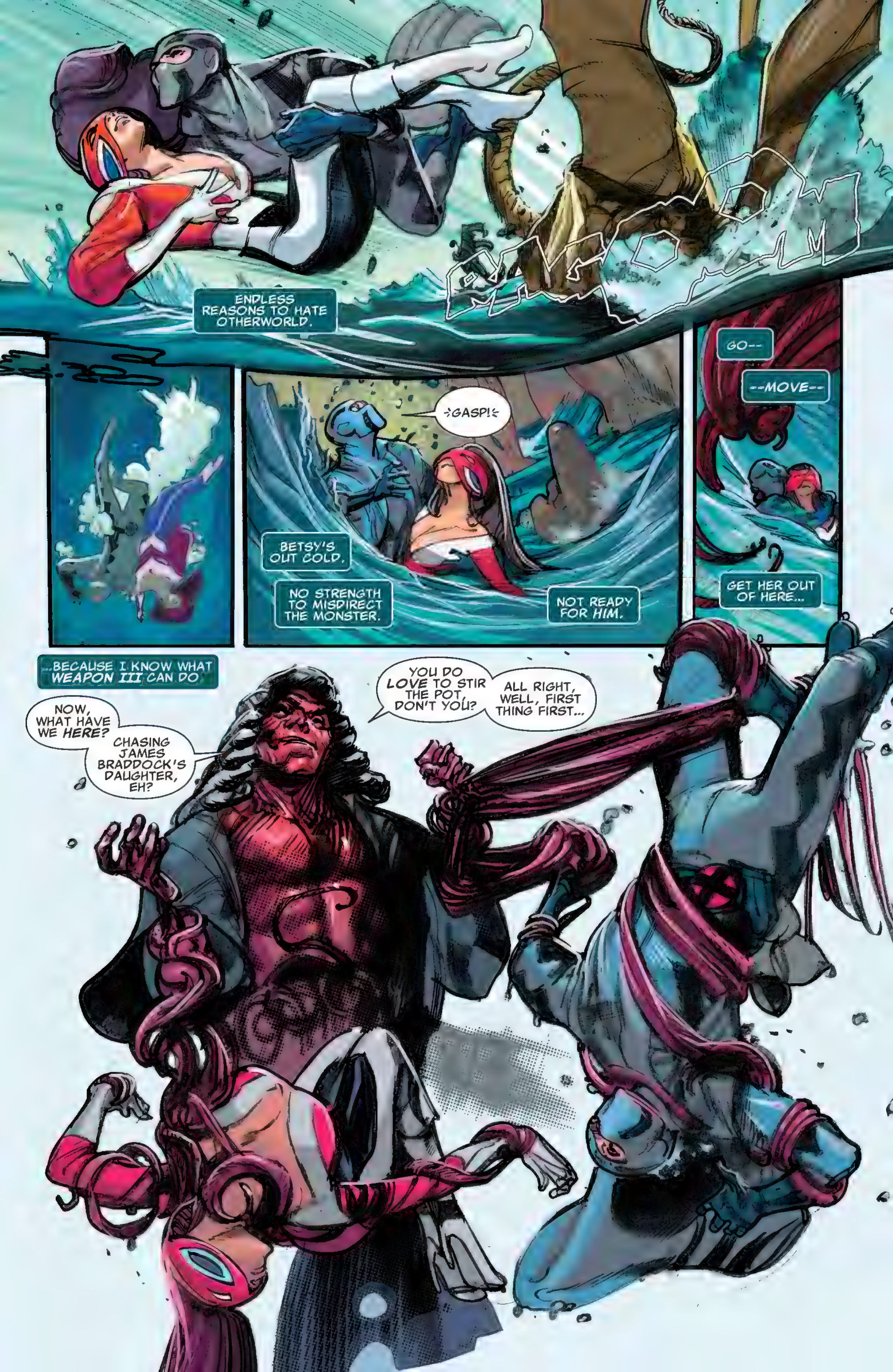

THE FOREST OF SORROW, WITHIN THE PYRAMID OF THE OGRE MAGE KROKWEL, WHERE MY FATHER SENTENCED HIM FOR ETERNITY.
YOU MADE THAT UP.
I WISH I DID.
THIS WIZARD...HE WAS SENTENCED HERE BY YOUR *FATHER?*
YES.
SO... HOW *EXACTLY* DID YOU CONVINCE HIM TO AID US?
ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT WE GET BACK TO EARTH.
MY BROTHERS SEEM CONVINCED WE'RE ALL BETTER OFF IF YOU'RE DEAD.
PERHAPS THEY'RE RIGHT...
ONCE UPON A TIME BRIAN CAVED IN A MAN'S SKULL FOR ATTACKING ME. HE'S IN NO POSITION TO JUDGE YOU.
A MOMENTARY LAPSE OF CONTROL ISN'T THE SAME AS WHAT I DID.
PERHAPS I *HAVE* EARNED THIS SENTENCE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, IF WE CAN'T GET HOME BEFORE THEY CATCH YOU...

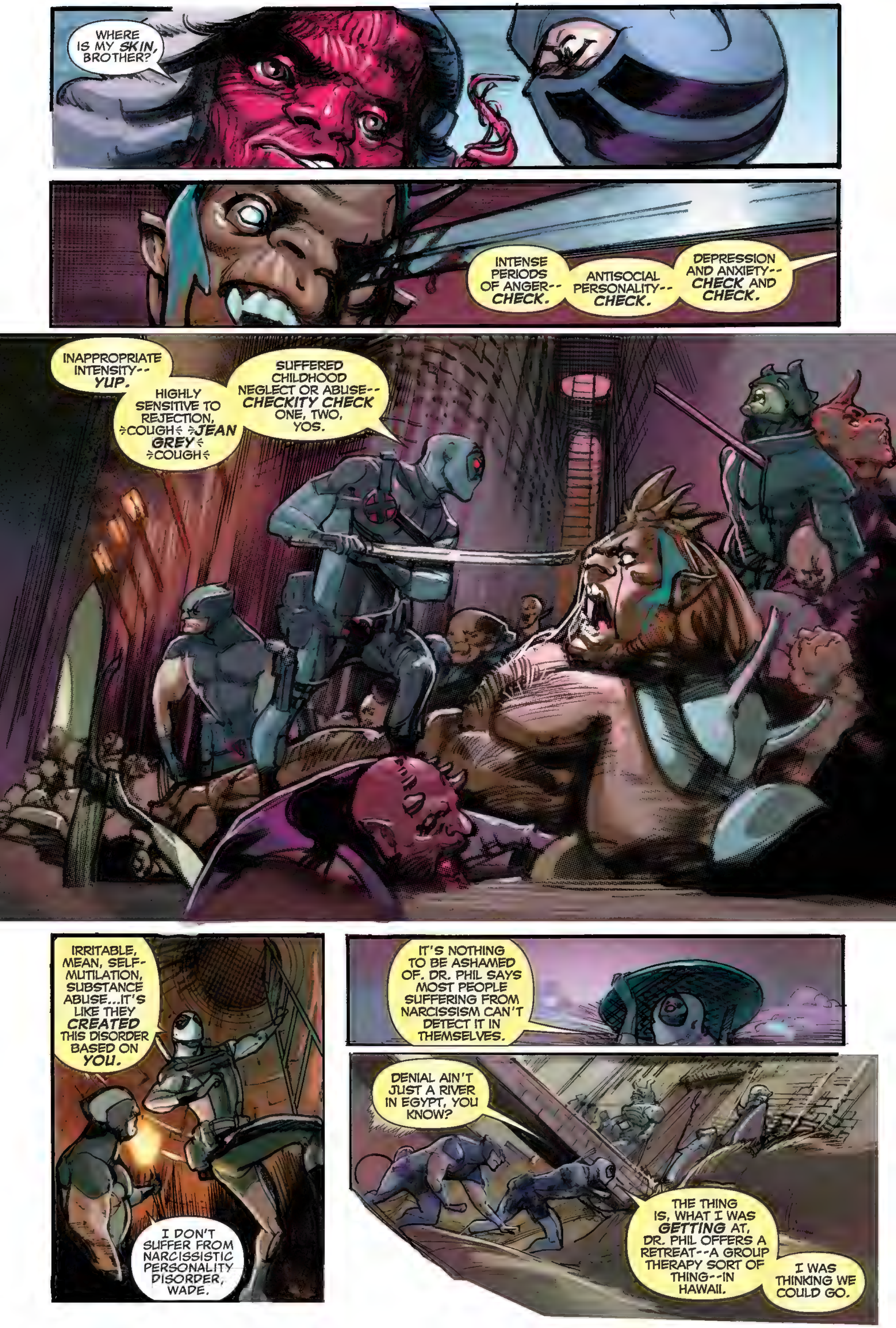

"...MY FAMILY IS GOING TO *KILL* YOU."
THE CAVERN OF THE INSECT NOBLES IS NOT TO BE TREADED LIGHTLY, BUT IT WILL LEAD YOU TO HIS TEMPLE.
GOBLINS, TROLLS AND MINOTAURS-- OH MY!
SO, THIS WAS THE ANGRY ELF'S IDEA, BUT ***HE*** GETS TO STAY ***BEHIND?***
"OH, WE SHOULD DO THE RIGHT THING, BE GOOD BOYS, TAKE DOWN THE EVIL GOAT!"
STAYIN' BEHIND AIN'T NO LIGHT DUTY. BAD AS WE'RE ABOUT TO ENCOUNTER...
"...I GOT A FEELIN' KURT'S PICKED THE LONG STRAW."
IT IS VERY BRAVE OF YOU TO STAY. I KNEW YOU COULDN'T BE SO MUCH DIFFERENT FROM MY KURT.
HE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A VERY POPULAR FELLOW.
HAVING YOU HERE...
IT MAKES ME FEEL SAFE. AN OLD FRIEND HAS COME TO LOOK OVER ME.
NEARLY EVERYONE I EVER LOVED WAS KILLED. MANY BEFORE MY EYES.
I CAN IMAGINE A FAMILIAR FACE IS COMFORTING--
MEIN GOTT...

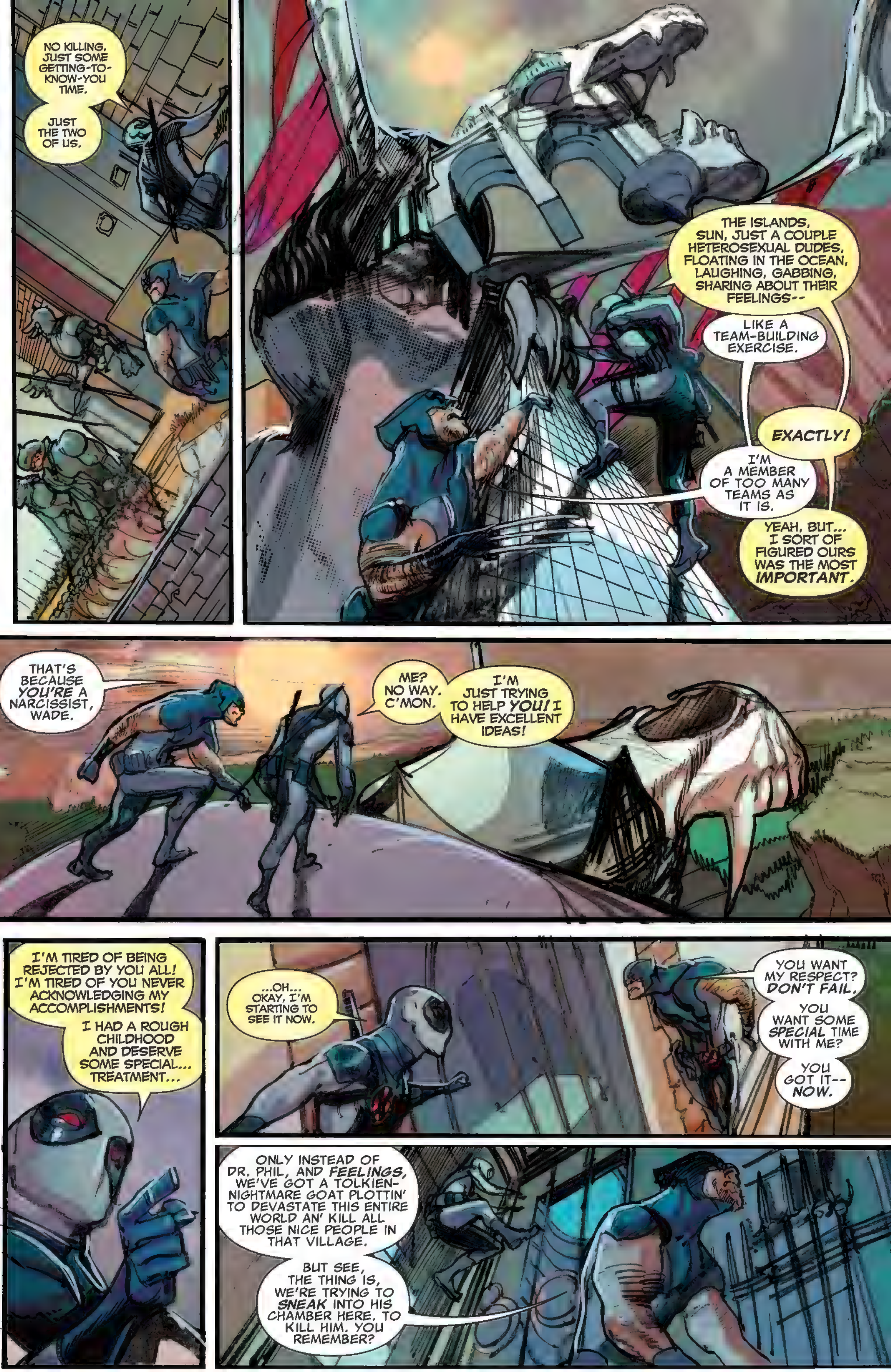

I FEAR THIS WILL PUT AN END TO ANY WARM FEELINGS YOU WERE SUFFERING.
WIDGET-- GO TO THE CITADEL!
TELL BRIAN THAT WE ARE BESIEGED AND WON'T SURVIVE THE HOUR WITHOUT AID.
GO!
SOUND THE ALARM! GATHER THE GUARD!
WE ARE UNDER--
BAMF!
YERERG--
GHA--
SHRAPOOM
NO--
GRAHGA--
BAMF!
FWOOSH
BAMF!
I MUST AID THEM!
YOU WON'T BE ALONE.

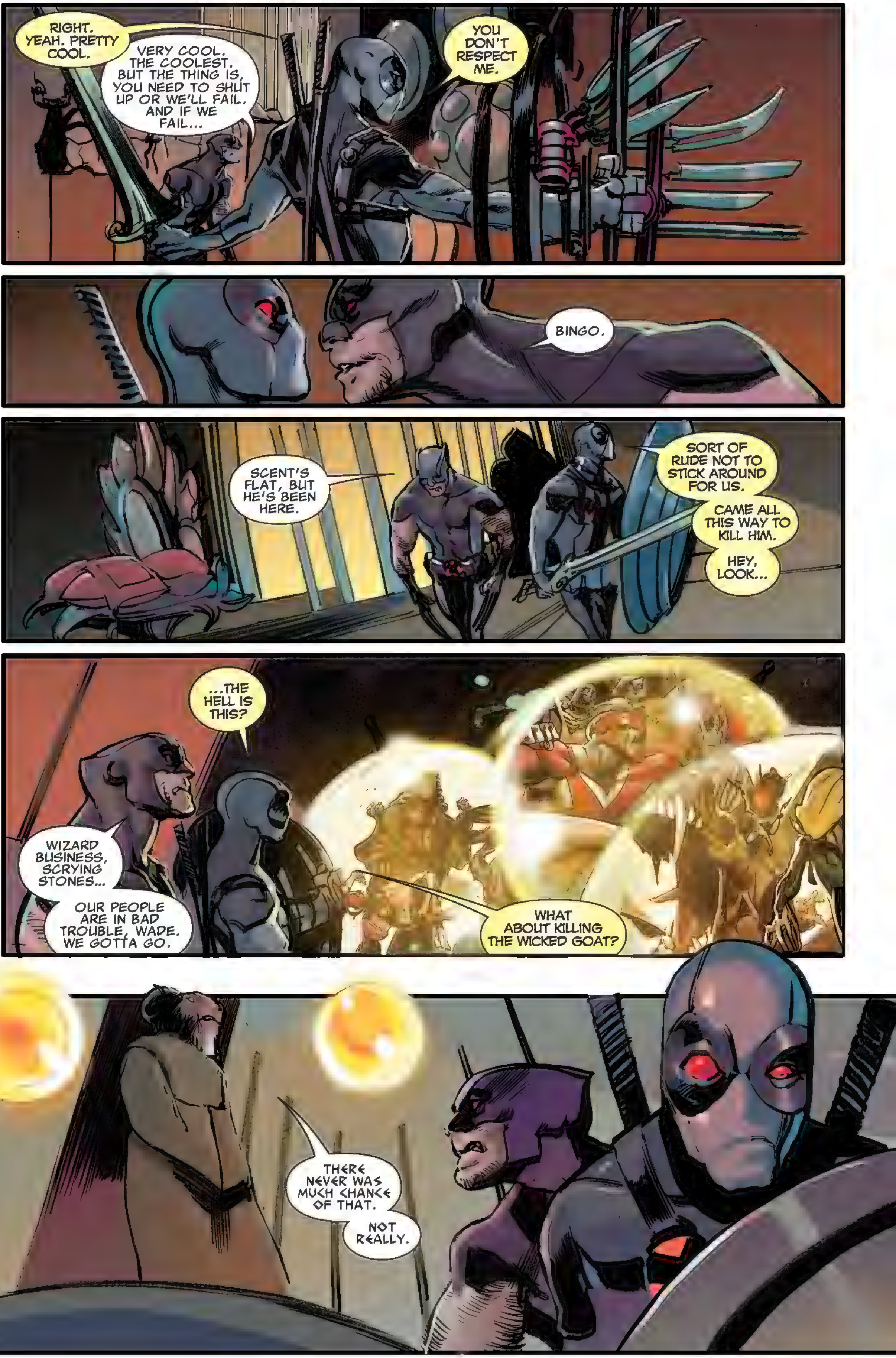

GUARDSMEN! GET THE CIVILIANS INTO THE BUNKER!
SEND EVERY AVAILABLE BODY TO THE NORTH WALL--
WE'LL DEAL WITH THE DRAGONS.
THE NORTHERN EARTH PORTAL.
YOU AVOIDED MY QUESTION BEFORE.
WHY DOES THIS WIZARD WHO SHOULD HATE YOU SAVE MY LIFE AND OFFER US A RIDE ON PLOOF THE MUMMIFIED DRAGON?
YOU'RE TOO WEAK TO CALL EVA, WE NEEDED TRANSPORTATION.
WE'LL TALK WHEN WE'RE SAFE, JEAN-PHILLIPE.
THE PORTAL TO EARTH ISN'T FAR.
IF WE DON'T WANT MY BROTHERS WAITING AT THE PORTAL I MUST DEDICATE ALL MY CONCENTRATION ON BLOCKING OUR PSYCHIC CONNECTION.

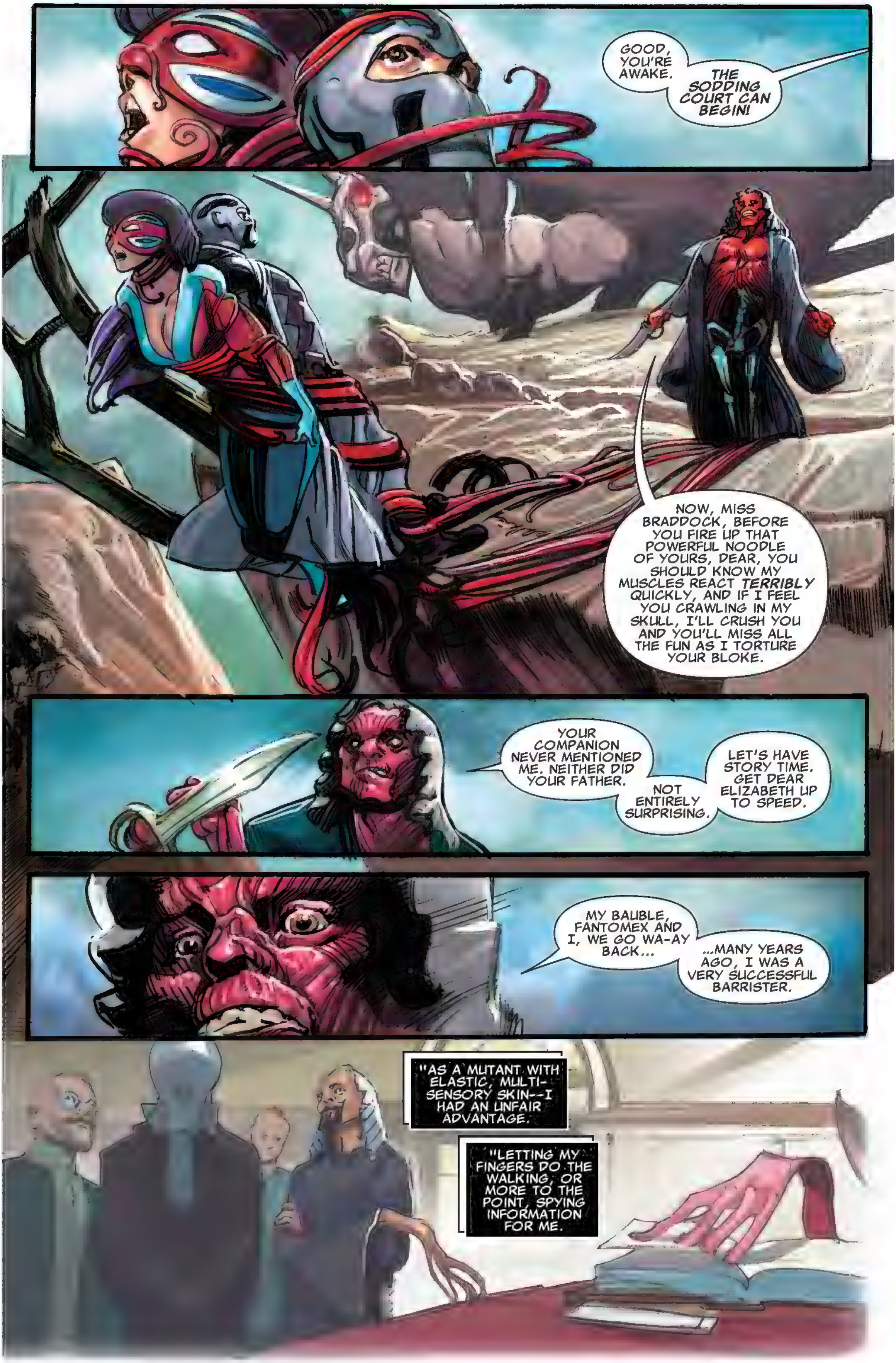

IT IS NO SIMPLE TASK, EVEN WITH JEAN HAVING RECENTLY OPENED UP THE BOUNDARIES OF MY TELEPATHY.
SO DO ME A FAVOR, KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT, YOUR HEAD DOWN AND PRAY FOR A BIT OF...
...GOOD LUCK.
THE COURT RECOGNIZES FANTOMEX!
LET HIS TRUE TRIAL BEGINS!
DUNG HURLED AT ME FROM THE PAST.
NEVER CONSIDERED HE'D STILL BE ALIVE.
BARRISTER SKINLESSMAN PRESIDING.
GRAWKK
PITHS OUR DRAGON'S BRAINS--
MUST TELL BETSY TO FRY HIS MIND--
HAVE YOU PREPARED YOUR TESTIMONY, FANTOMEX?
BUT THERE'S NO TIME
OOF--
ENDLESS UNPLEASANTNESS...

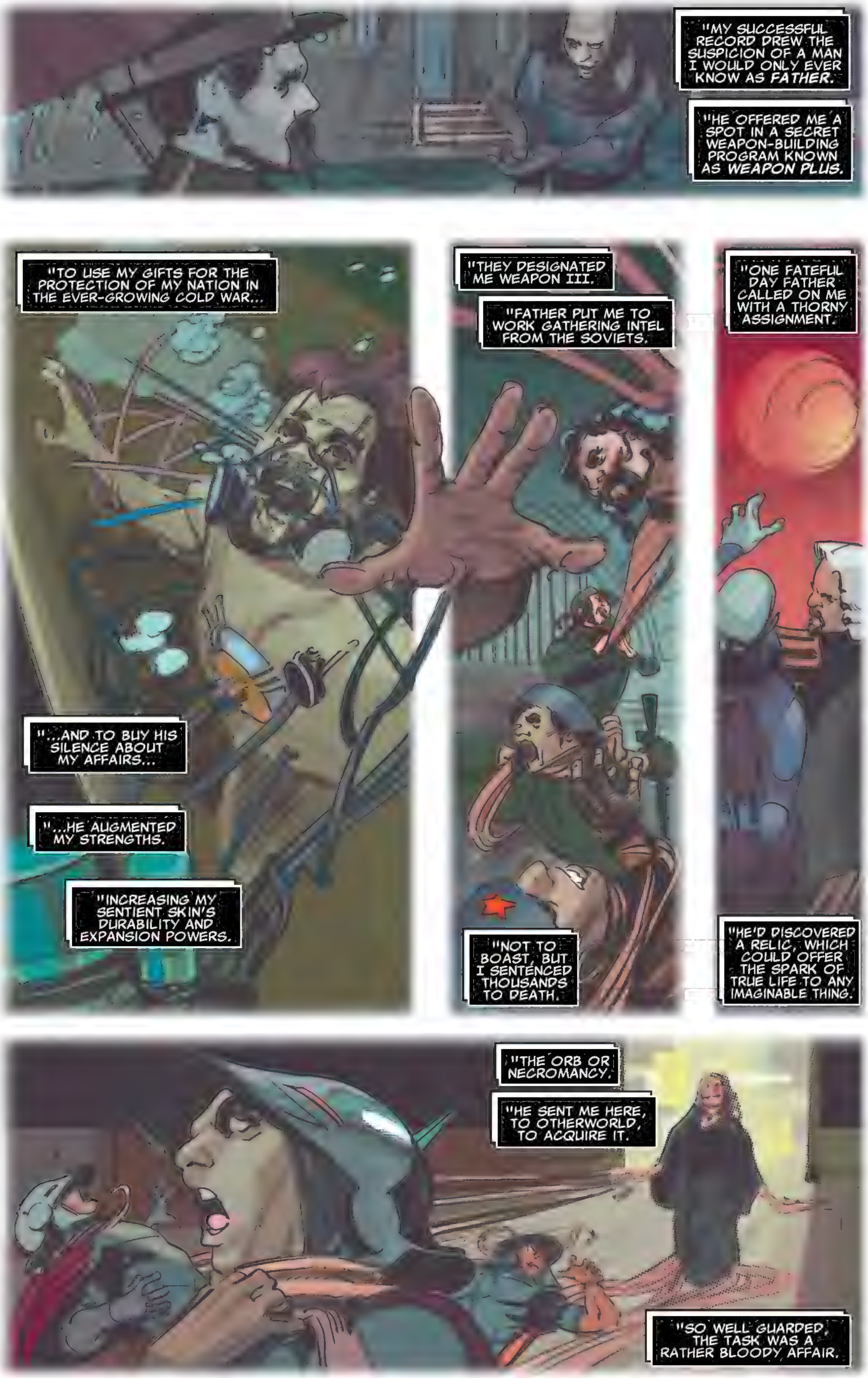

BWOOOM
ENDLESS REASONS TO HATE OTHERWORLD.
GO--
--MOVE--
⚡GASP!⚡
BETSY'S OUT COLD.
NO STRENGTH TO MISDIRECT THE MONSTER.
NOT READY FOR *HIM*.
GET HER OUT OF HERE...
...BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT *WEAPON III* CAN DO.
NOW, WHAT HAVE WE *HERE*?
CHASING JAMES BRADDOCK'S DAUGHTER, EH?
YOU DO *LOVE* TO STIR THE POT, DON'T YOU?
ALL RIGHT, WELL, FIRST THING FIRST...

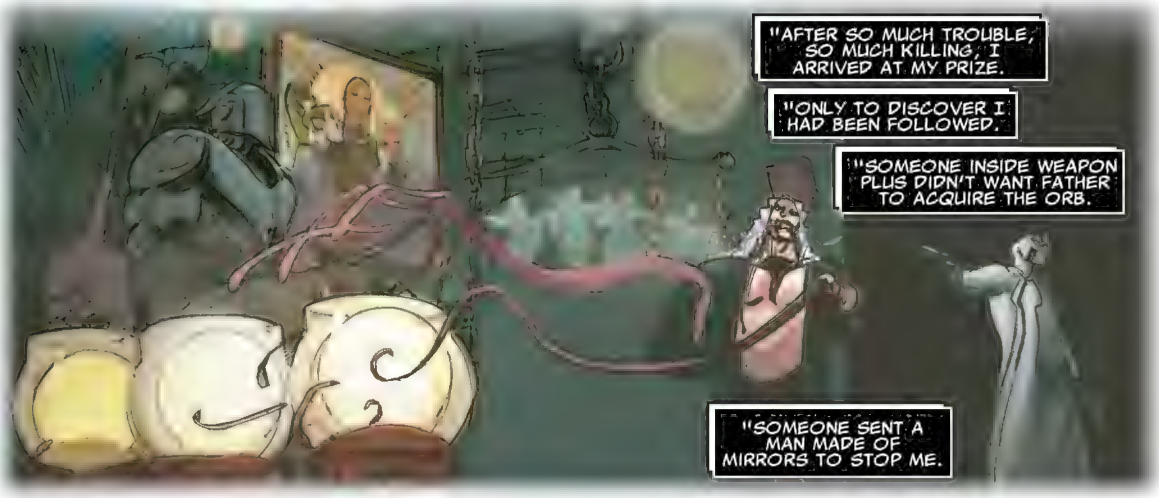

WHERE IS MY SKIN, BROTHER?
INTENSE PERIODS OF ANGER-- CHECK.
ANTISOCIAL PERSONALITY-- CHECK.
DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY-- CHECK AND CHECK.
INAPPROPRIATE INTENSITY-- YUP.
HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO REJECTION, ≯COUGH≮ ≯JEAN GREY≮ ≯COUGH≮
SUFFERED CHILDHOOD NEGLECT OR ABUSE-- CHECKITY CHECK ONE, TWO, YOS.
IRRITABLE, MEAN, SELF-MUTILATION, SUBSTANCE ABUSE...IT'S LIKE THEY CREATED THIS DISORDER BASED ON YOU.
I DON'T SUFFER FROM NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER, WADE.
IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF. DR. PHIL SAYS MOST PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM NARCISSISM CAN'T DETECT IT IN THEMSELVES.
DENIAL AIN'T JUST A RIVER IN EGYPT, YOU KNOW?
THE THING IS, WHAT I WAS GETTING AT, DR. PHIL OFFERS A RETREAT--A GROUP THERAPY SORT OF THING--IN HAWAII.
I WAS THINKING WE COULD GO.

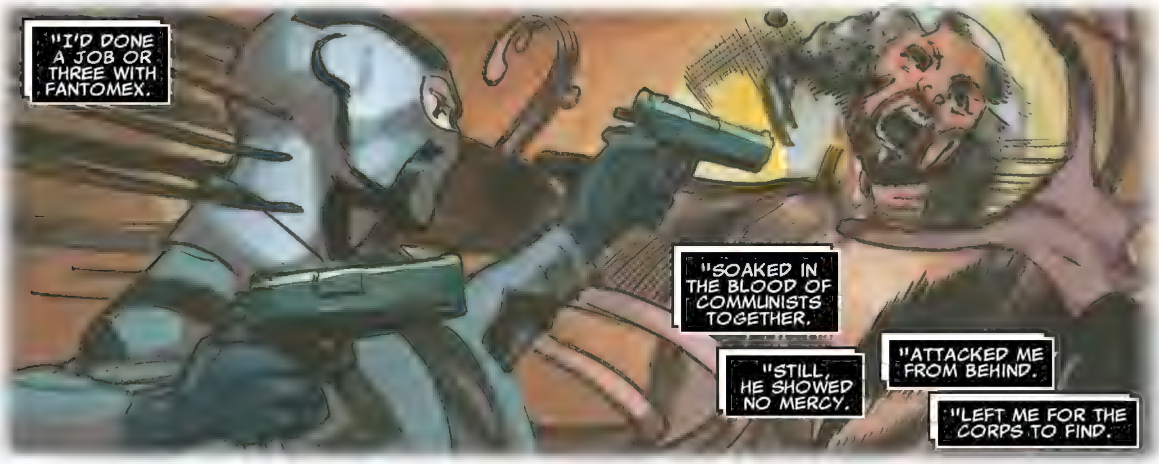

NO KILLING, JUST SOME GETTING-TO-KNOW-YOU TIME.
JUST THE TWO OF US.
THE ISLANDS, SUN, JUST A COUPLE HETEROSEXUAL DUDES, FLOATING IN THE OCEAN, LAUGHING, GABBING, SHARING ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS--
LIKE A TEAM-BUILDING EXERCISE.
EXACTLY!
I'M A MEMBER OF TOO MANY TEAMS AS IT IS.
YEAH, BUT... I SORT OF FIGURED OURS WAS THE MOST ***IMPORTANT***.
THAT'S BECAUSE ***YOU'RE*** A NARCISSIST, WADE.
ME? NO WAY. C'MON.
I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP ***YOU!*** I HAVE EXCELLENT IDEAS!
I'M TIRED OF BEING REJECTED BY YOU ALL! I'M TIRED OF YOU NEVER ACKNOWLEDGING MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS!
I HAD A ROUGH CHILDHOOD AND DESERVE SOME SPECIAL... TREATMENT...
...OH... OKAY, I'M STARTING TO SEE IT NOW.
YOU WANT MY RESPECT? ***DON'T FAIL.***
YOU WANT SOME ***SPECIAL*** TIME WITH ME?
YOU GOT IT-- ***NOW.***
ONLY INSTEAD OF DR. PHIL, AND ***FEELINGS,*** WE'VE GOT A TOLKIEN-NIGHTMARE GOAT PLOTTIN' TO DEVASTATE THIS ENTIRE WORLD AN' KILL ALL THOSE NICE PEOPLE IN THAT VILLAGE.
BUT SEE, THE THING IS, WE'RE TRYING TO ***SNEAK*** INTO HIS CHAMBER HERE. TO KILL HIM. YOU REMEMBER?

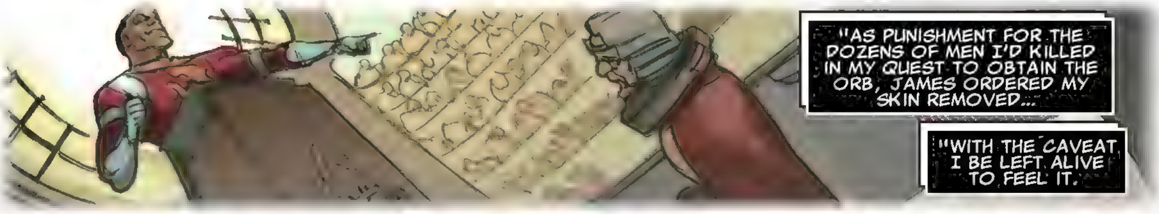

RIGHT. YEAH. PRETTY COOL.
VERY COOL. THE COOLEST. BUT THE THING IS, YOU NEED TO SHUT UP OR WE'LL FAIL. AND IF WE FAIL...
YOU DON'T RESPECT ME.
BINGO.
SCENT'S FLAT, BUT HE'S BEEN HERE.
SORT OF RUDE NOT TO STICK AROUND FOR US.
CAME ALL THIS WAY TO KILL HIM.
HEY, LOOK...
...THE HELL IS THIS?
WIZARD BUSINESS, SCRYING STONES...
OUR PEOPLE ARE IN BAD TROUBLE, WADE. WE GOTTA GO.
WHAT ABOUT KILLING THE WICKED GOAT?
THERE NEVER WAS MUCH CHANCE OF THAT.
NOT REALLY.

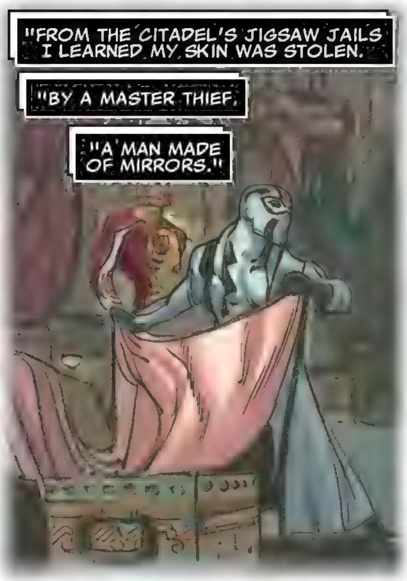

GOOD, YOU'RE AWAKE.
THE SODDING COURT CAN BEGIN!
NOW, MISS BRADDOCK, BEFORE YOU FIRE UP THAT POWERFUL NOODLE OF YOURS, DEAR, YOU SHOULD KNOW MY MUSCLES REACT *TERRIBLY* QUICKLY, AND IF I FEEL YOU CRAWLING IN MY SKULL, I'LL CRUSH YOU AND YOU'LL MISS ALL THE FUN AS I TORTURE YOUR BLOKE.
YOUR COMPANION NEVER MENTIONED ME. NEITHER DID YOUR FATHER.
NOT ENTIRELY SURPRISING.
LET'S HAVE STORY TIME. GET DEAR ELIZABETH UP TO SPEED.
MY BAUBLE, FANTOMEX AND I, WE GO WA-AY BACK...
...MANY YEARS AGO, I WAS A VERY SUCCESSFUL BARRISTER.
"AS A MUTANT WITH ELASTIC, MULTI-SENSORY SKIN--I HAD AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE.
"LETTING MY FINGERS DO THE WALKING, OR MORE TO THE POINT, SPYING INFORMATION FOR ME.

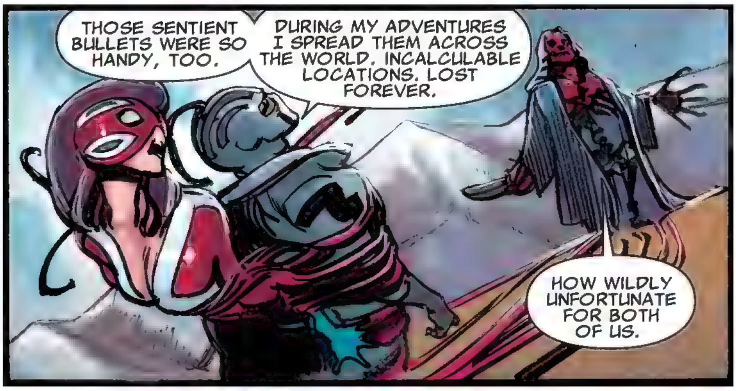

"MY SUCCESSFUL RECORD DREW THE SUSPICION OF A MAN I WOULD ONLY EVER KNOW AS *FATHER.*
"HE OFFERED ME A SPOT IN A SECRET WEAPON-BUILDING PROGRAM KNOWN AS ***WEAPON PLUS.***
"TO USE MY GIFTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF MY NATION IN THE EVER-GROWING COLD WAR...
"...AND TO BUY HIS SILENCE ABOUT MY AFFAIRS...
"...HE AUGMENTED MY STRENGTHS.
"INCREASING MY SENTIENT SKIN'S DURABILITY AND EXPANSION POWERS.
"THEY DESIGNATED ME WEAPON III.
"FATHER PUT ME TO WORK GATHERING INTEL FROM THE SOVIETS.
"NOT TO BOAST, BUT I SENTENCED THOUSANDS TO DEATH.
"ONE FATEFUL DAY FATHER CALLED ON ME WITH A THORNY ASSIGNMENT.
"HE'D DISCOVERED A RELIC, WHICH COULD OFFER THE SPARK OF TRUE LIFE TO ANY IMAGINABLE THING.
"THE ORB OR NECROMANCY.
"HE SENT ME HERE, TO OTHERWORLD, TO ACQUIRE IT.
"SO WELL GUARDED, THE TASK WAS A RATHER BLOODY AFFAIR.

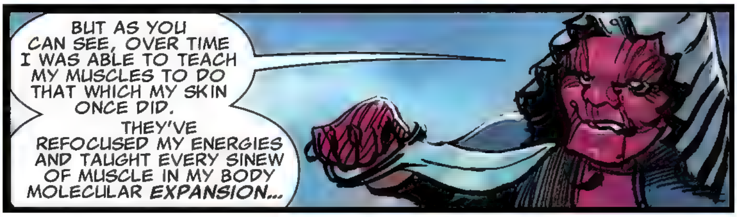

"AFTER SO MUCH TROUBLE, SO MUCH KILLING, I ARRIVED AT MY PRIZE.
"ONLY TO DISCOVER I HAD BEEN FOLLOWED.
"SOMEONE INSIDE WEAPON PLUS DIDN'T WANT FATHER TO ACQUIRE THE ORB.
"SOMEONE SENT A MAN MADE OF MIRRORS TO STOP ME.

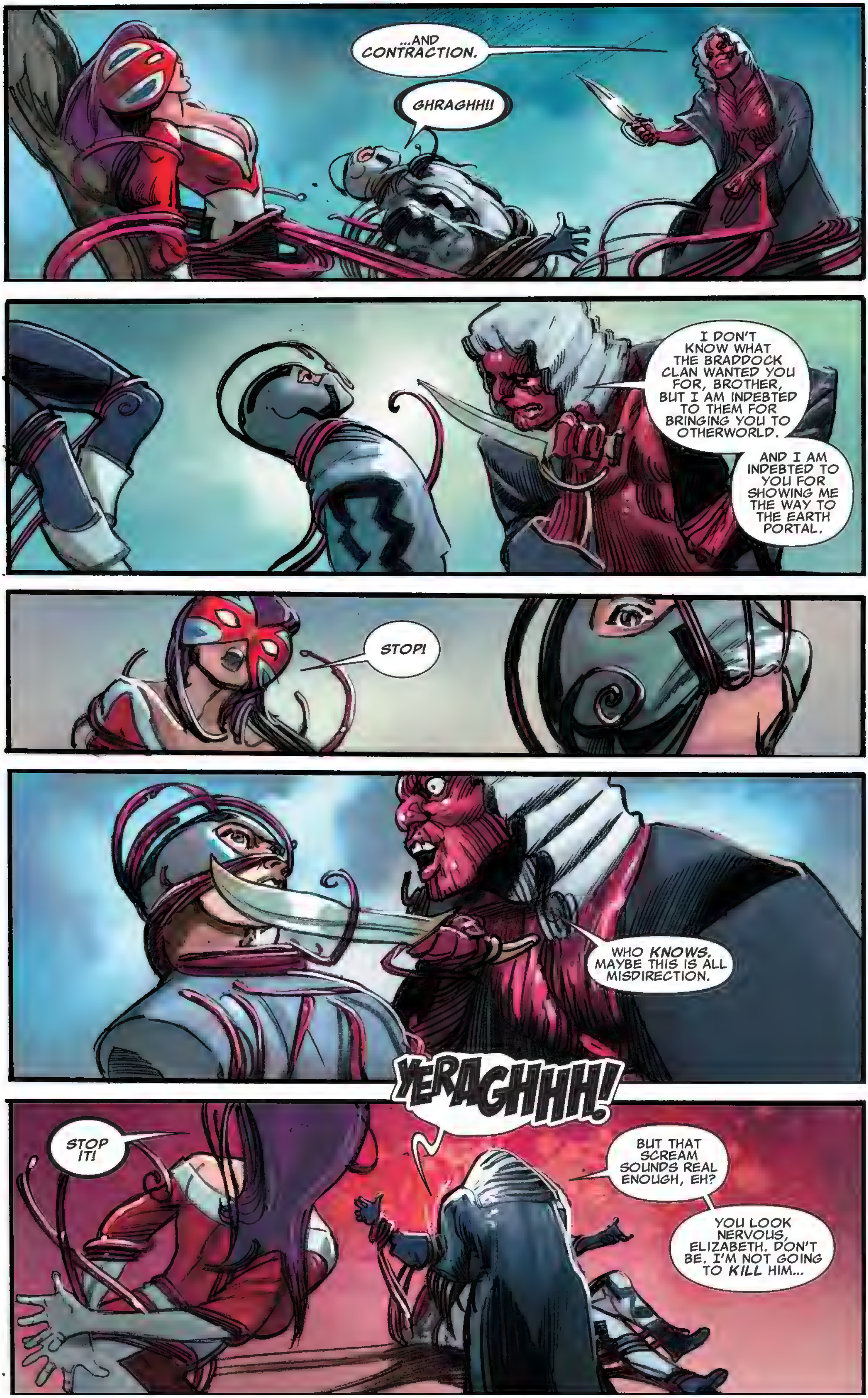

"I'D DONE A JOB OR THREE WITH FANTOMEX.
"SOAKED IN THE BLOOD OF COMMUNISTS TOGETHER.
"STILL, HE SHOWED NO MERCY.
"ATTACKED ME FROM BEHIND.
"LEFT ME FOR THE CORPS TO FIND.

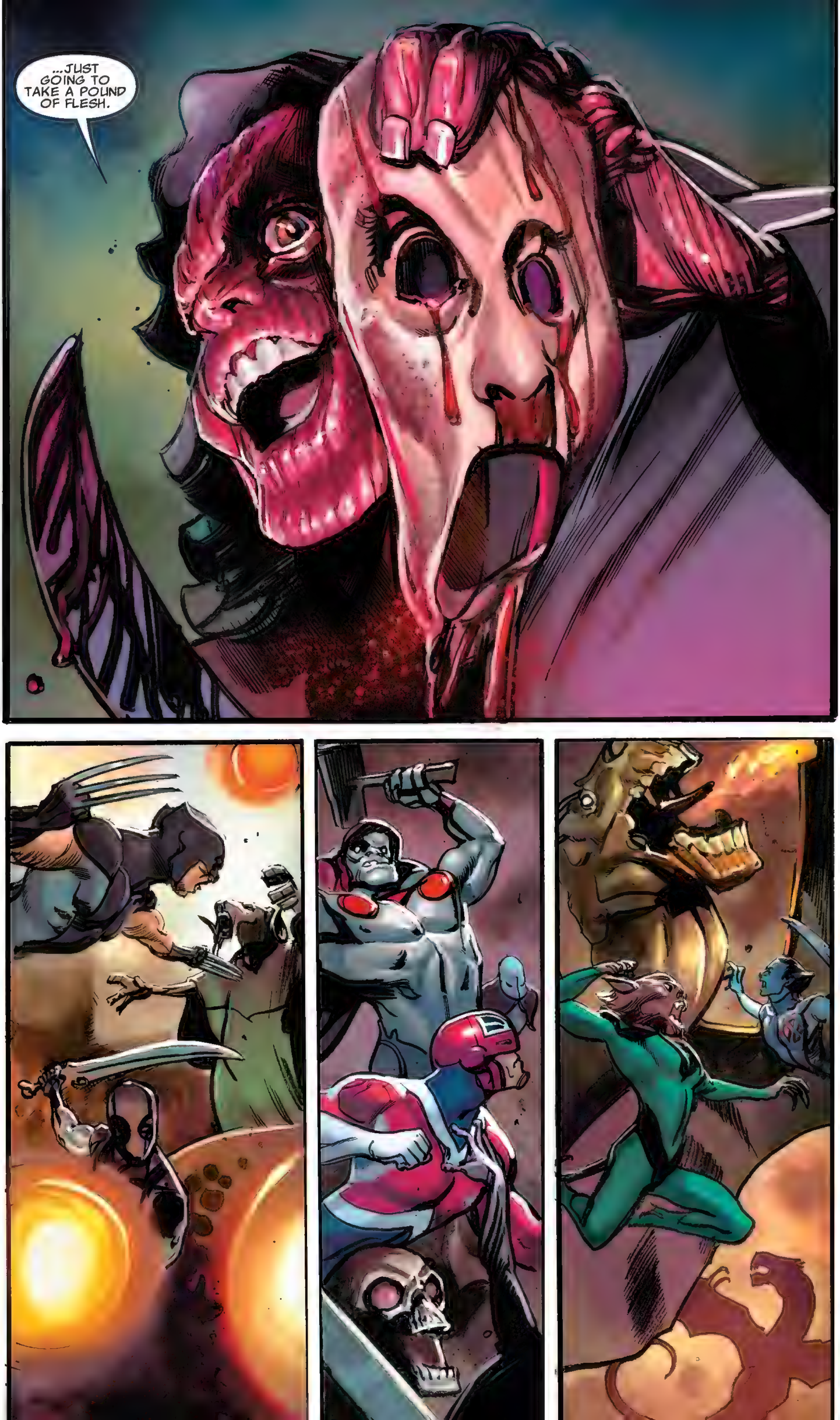

"AS PUNISHMENT FOR THE DOZENS OF MEN I'D KILLED IN MY QUEST TO OBTAIN THE ORB, JAMES ORDERED MY SKIN REMOVED...
"WITH THE CAVEAT I BE LEFT ALIVE TO FEEL IT.


"FROM THE CITADEL'S JIGSAW JAILS I LEARNED MY SKIN WAS STOLEN.
"BY A MASTER THIEF.
"A MAN MADE OF MIRRORS."


THOSE SENTIENT BULLETS WERE SO HANDY, TOO.
DURING MY ADVENTURES I SPREAD THEM ACROSS THE WORLD. INCALCULABLE LOCATIONS. LOST FOREVER.
HOW WILDLY UNFORTUNATE FOR BOTH OF US.


BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, OVER TIME I WAS ABLE TO TEACH MY MUSCLES TO DO THAT WHICH MY SKIN ONCE DID.
THEY'VE REFOCUSED MY ENERGIES AND TAUGHT EVERY SINEW OF MUSCLE IN MY BODY MOLECULAR *EXPANSION*...

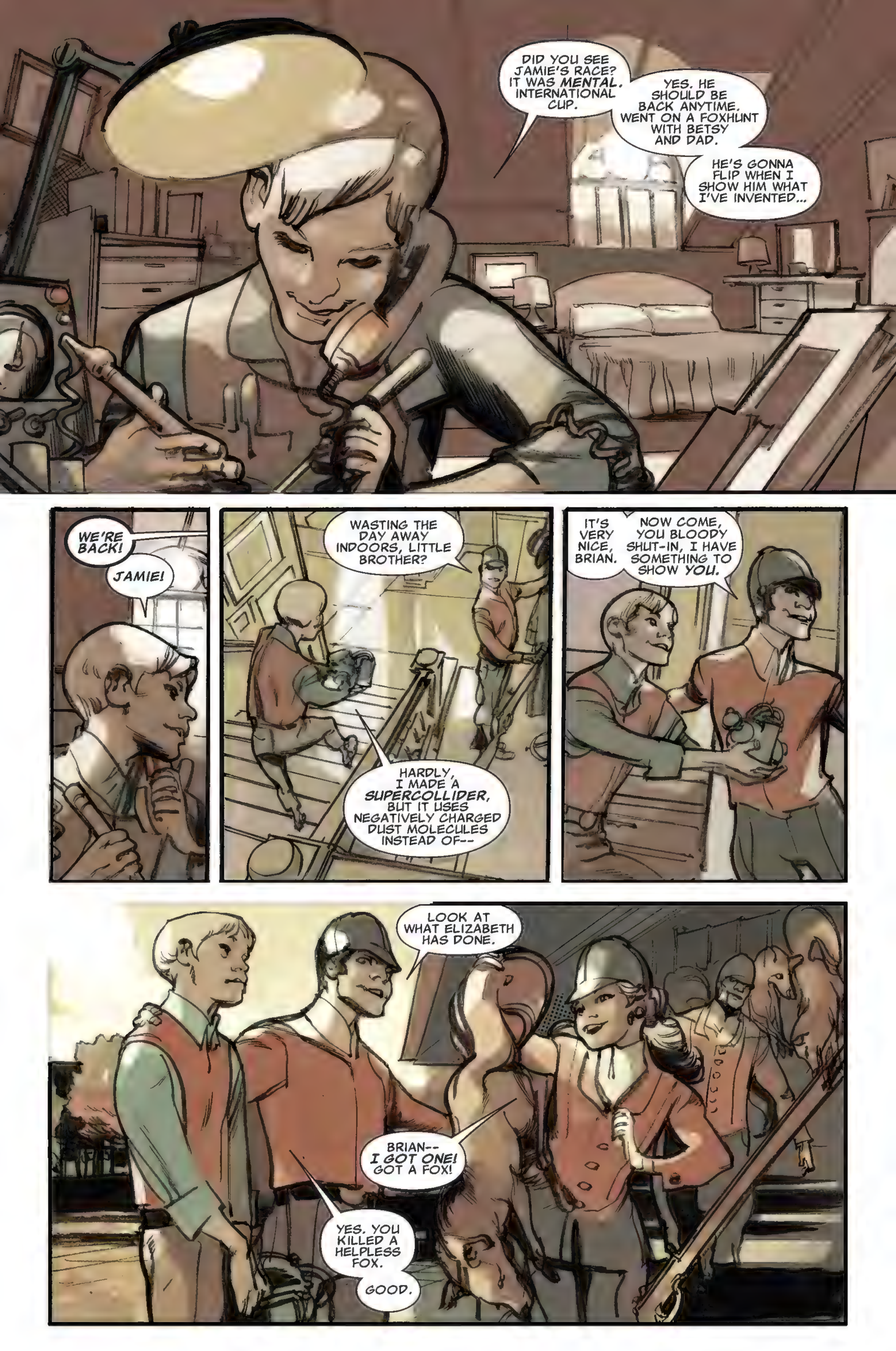

...AND CONTRACTION.
GHRAGHH!!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE BRADDOCK CLAN WANTED YOU FOR, BROTHER, BUT I AM INDEBTED TO THEM FOR BRINGING YOU TO OTHERWORLD.
AND I AM INDEBTED TO YOU FOR SHOWING ME THE WAY TO THE EARTH PORTAL.
STOP!
WHO KNOWS. MAYBE THIS IS ALL MISDIRECTION.
YERAGHHH!
STOP IT!
BUT THAT SCREAM SOUNDS REAL ENOUGH, EH?
YOU LOOK NERVOUS, ELIZABETH. DON'T BE. I'M NOT GOING TO KILL HIM...

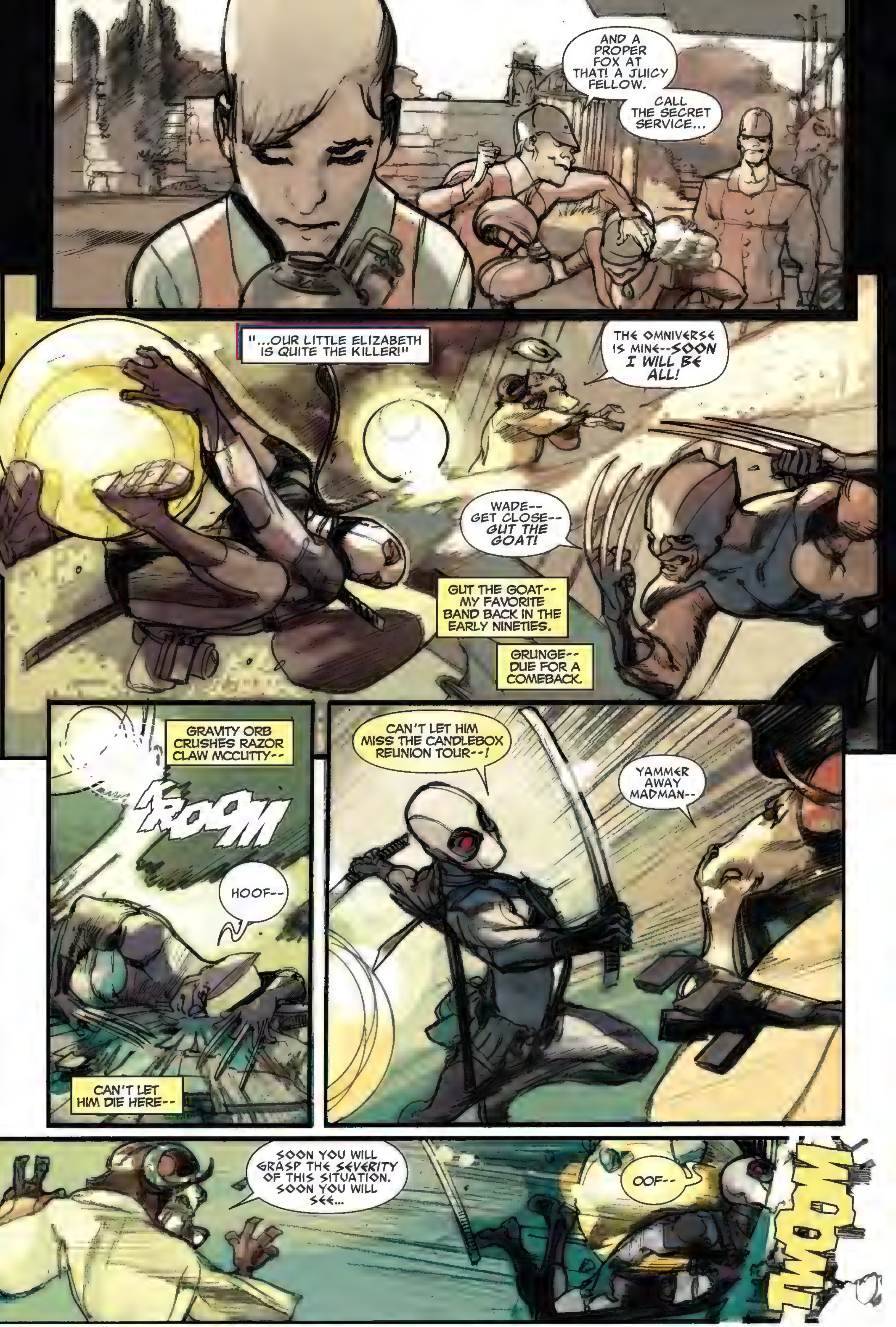

...JUST GOING TO TAKE A POUND OF FLESH.

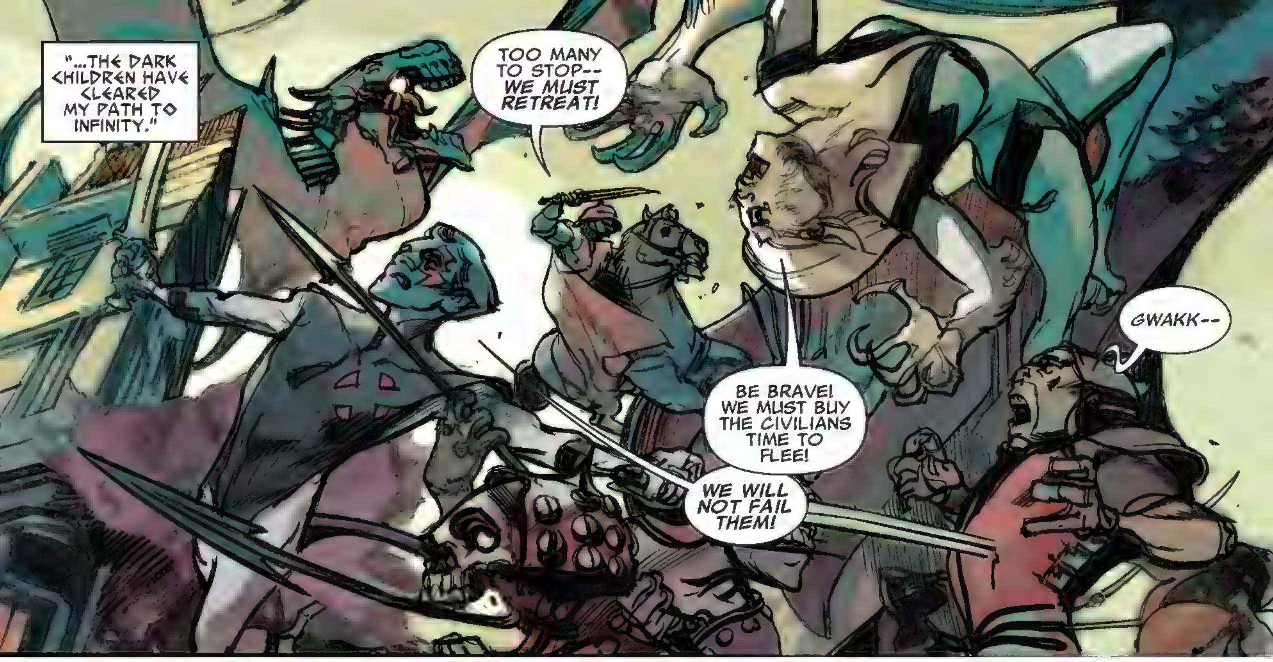
23

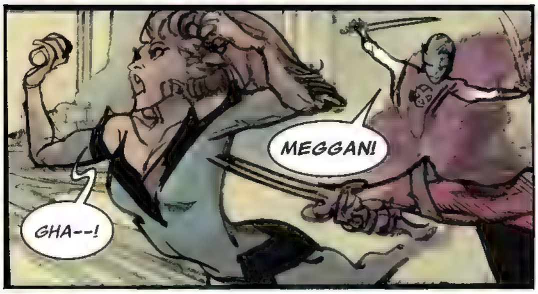
OTHERWORLD

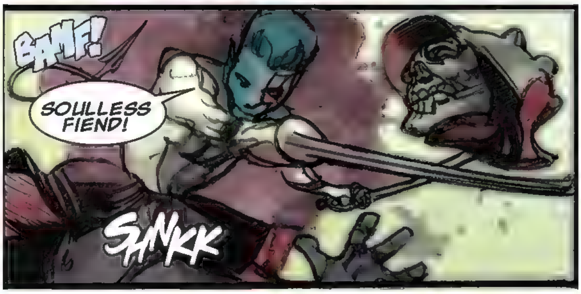
CHAPTER 4

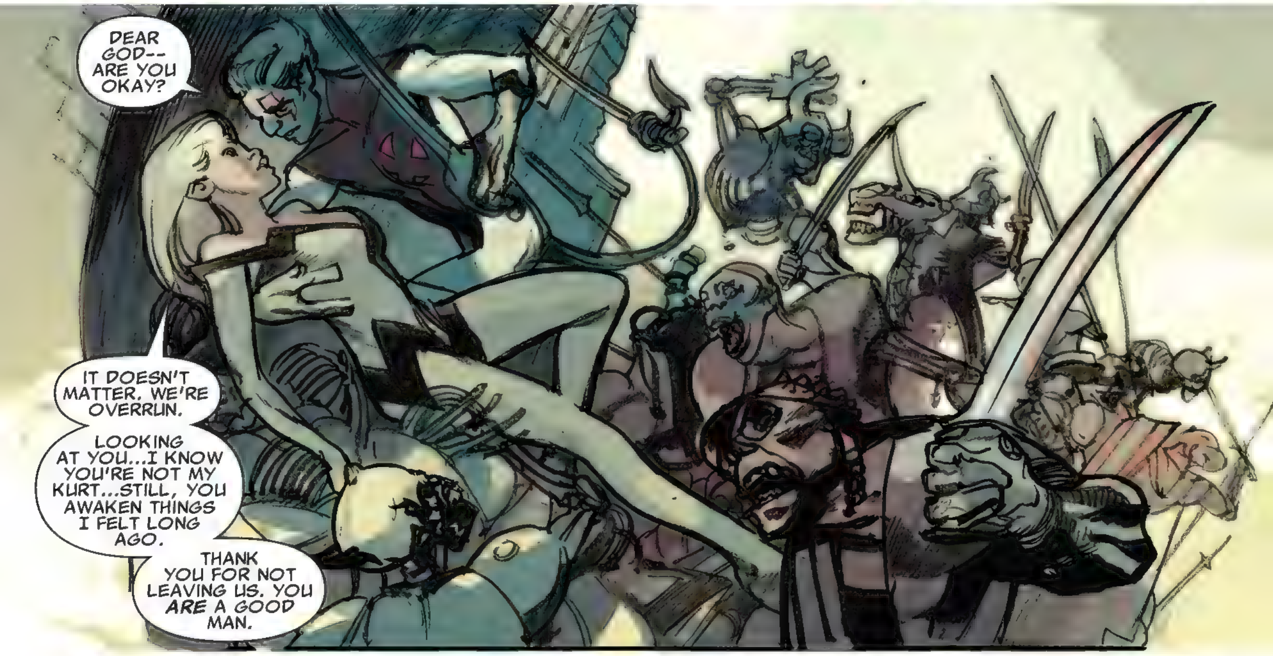

DID YOU SEE JAMIE'S RACE? IT WAS *MENTAL.* INTERNATIONAL CUP.
YES. HE SHOULD BE BACK ANYTIME. WENT ON A FOXHUNT WITH BETSY AND DAD.
HE'S GONNA FLIP WHEN I SHOW HIM WHAT I'VE INVENTED...
WE'RE BACK!
JAMIE!
WASTING THE DAY AWAY INDOORS, LITTLE BROTHER?
HARDLY, I MADE A *SUPERCOLLIDER,* BUT IT USES NEGATIVELY CHARGED DUST MOLECULES INSTEAD OF--
IT'S VERY NICE, BRIAN.
NOW COME, YOU BLOODY SHUT-IN, I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW *YOU.*
LOOK AT WHAT ELIZABETH HAS DONE.
BRIAN-- *I GOT ONE!* GOT A FOX!
YES. YOU KILLED A HELPLESS FOX.
GOOD.

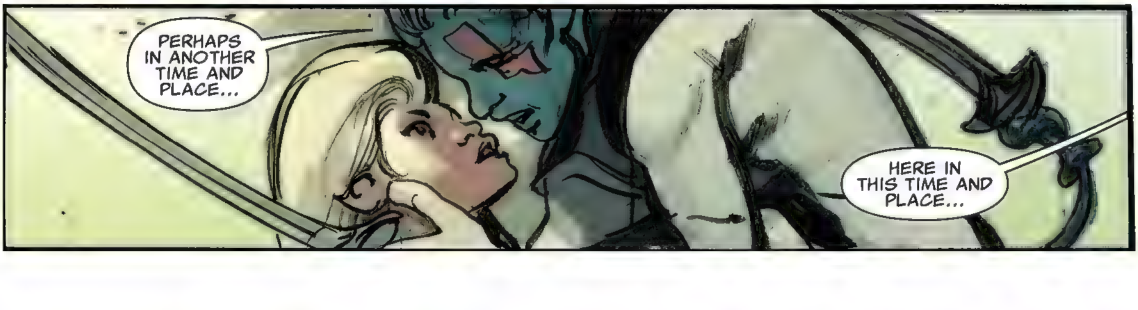

AND A PROPER FOX AT THAT! A JUICY FELLOW.
CALL THE SECRET SERVICE...
"...OUR LITTLE ELIZABETH IS QUITE THE KILLER!"
THE OMNIVERSE IS MINE--SOON I WILL BE ALL!
WADE-- GET CLOSE-- GUT THE GOAT!
GUT THE GOAT-- MY FAVORITE BAND BACK IN THE EARLY NINETIES.
GRUNGE-- DUE FOR A COMEBACK.
GRAVITY ORB CRUSHES RAZOR CLAW MCCUTTY--
FROOM
HOOF--
CAN'T LET HIM DIE HERE--
CAN'T LET HIM MISS THE CANDLEBOX REUNION TOUR--!
YAMMER AWAY MADMAN--
SOON YOU WILL GRASP THE SEVERITY OF THIS SITUATION. SOON YOU WILL SEE...
OOF--
WOOM

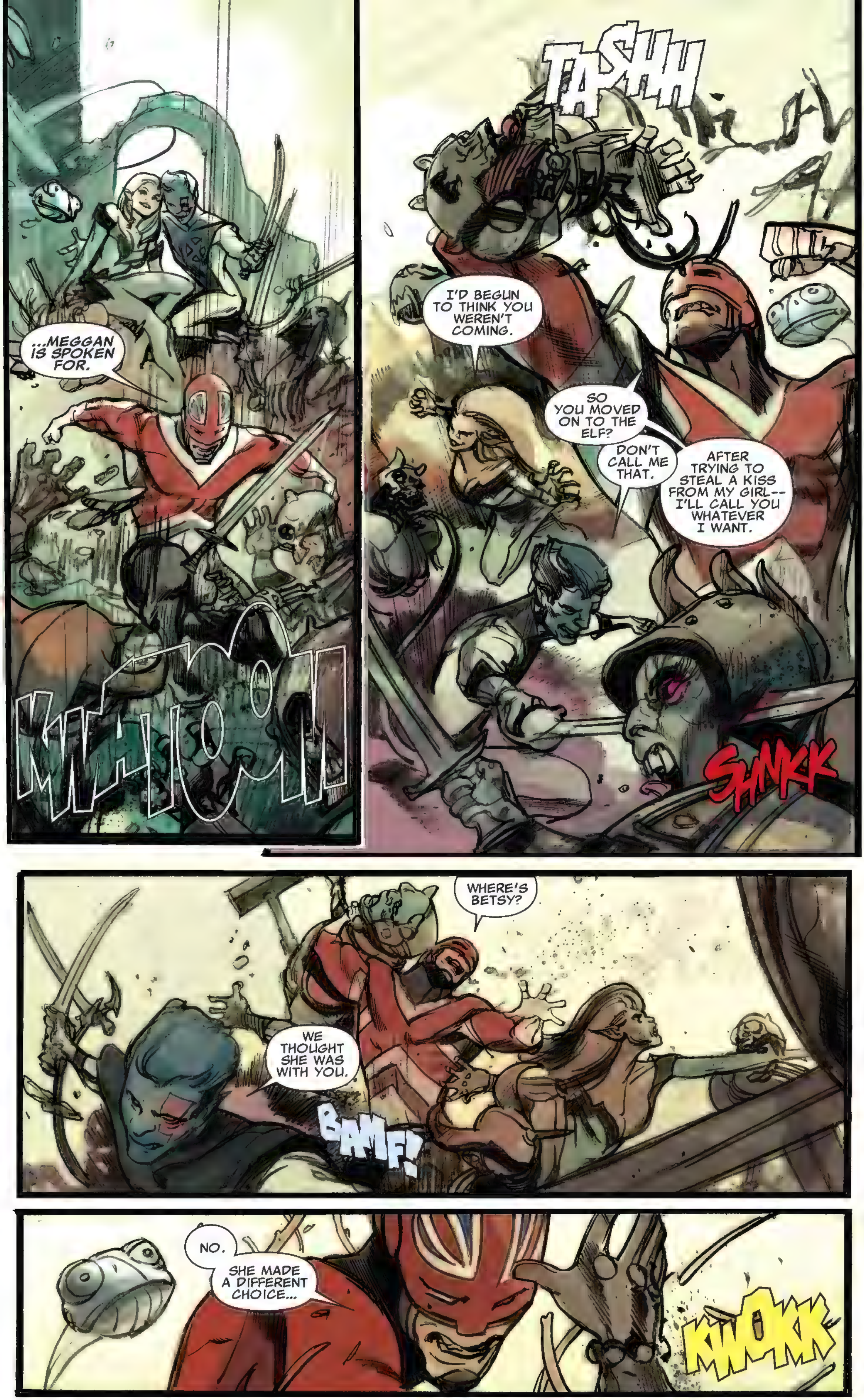

"...THE DARK CHILDREN HAVE CLEARED MY PATH TO INFINITY."
TOO MANY TO STOP-- WE MUST RETREAT!
BE BRAVE! WE MUST BUY THE CIVILIANS TIME TO FLEE!
WE WILL NOT FAIL THEM!
GWAKK--

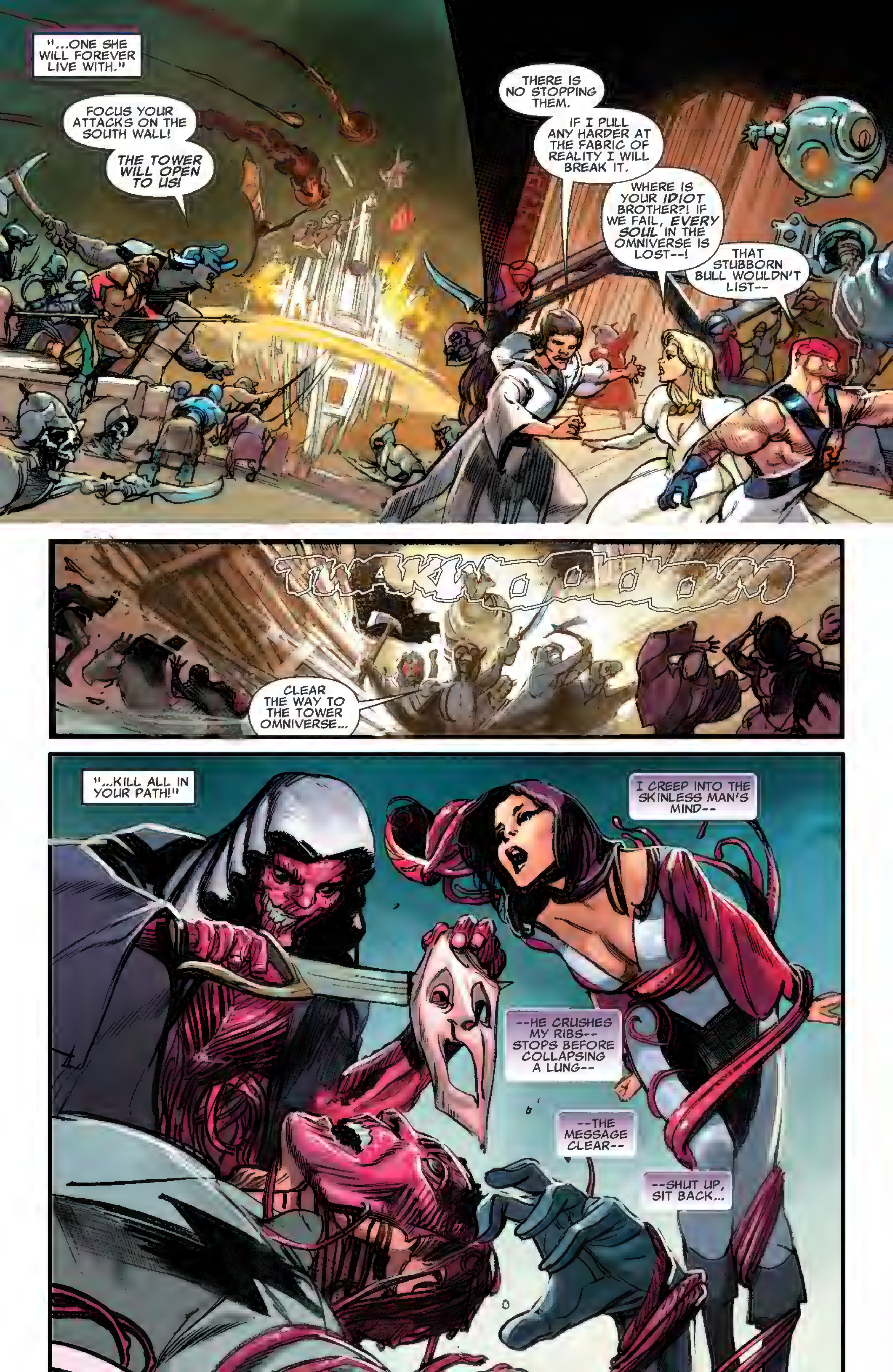

MEGGAN!
GHA--!

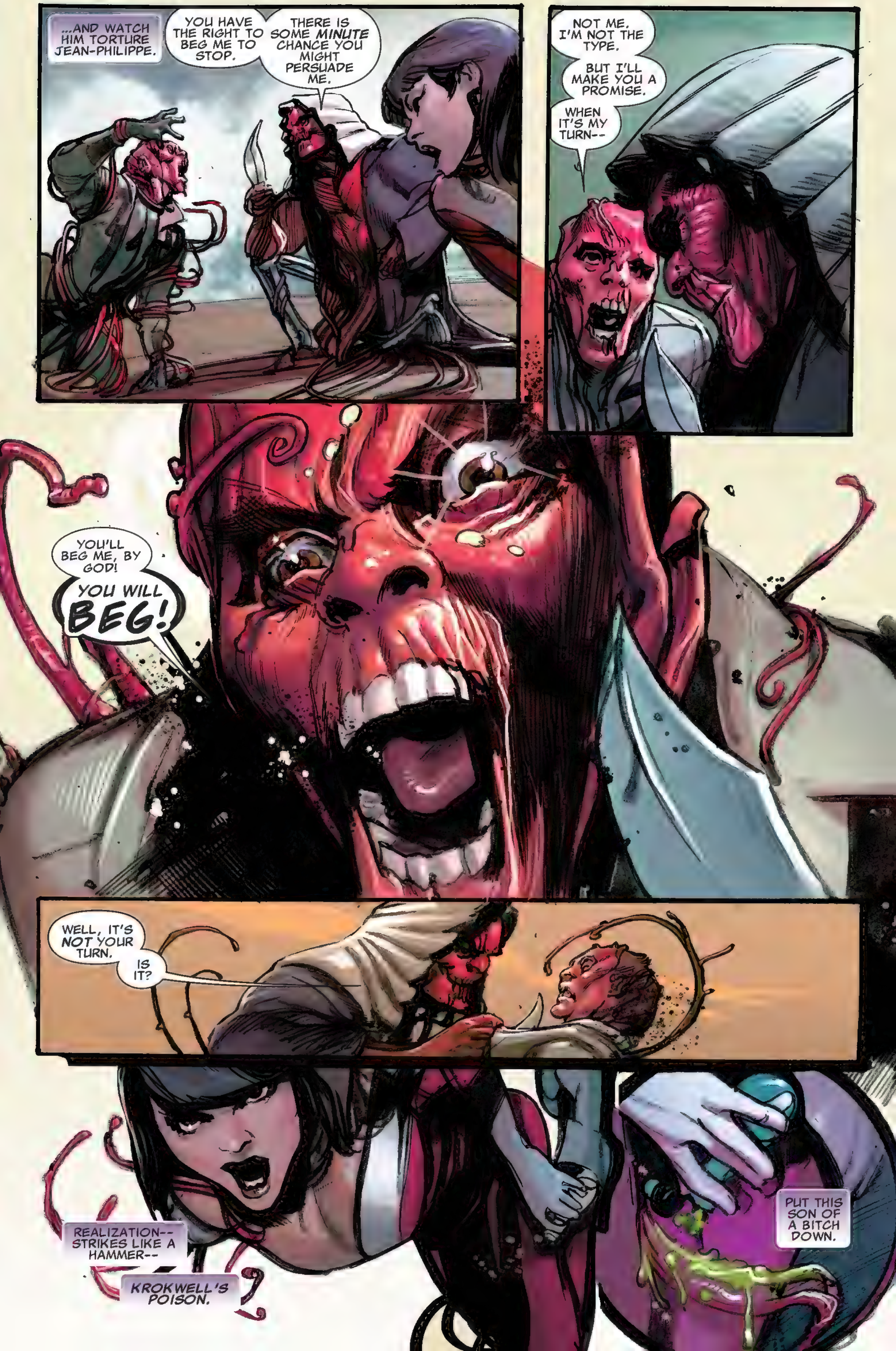

BAMF!
SOULLESS FIEND!
SHNKK

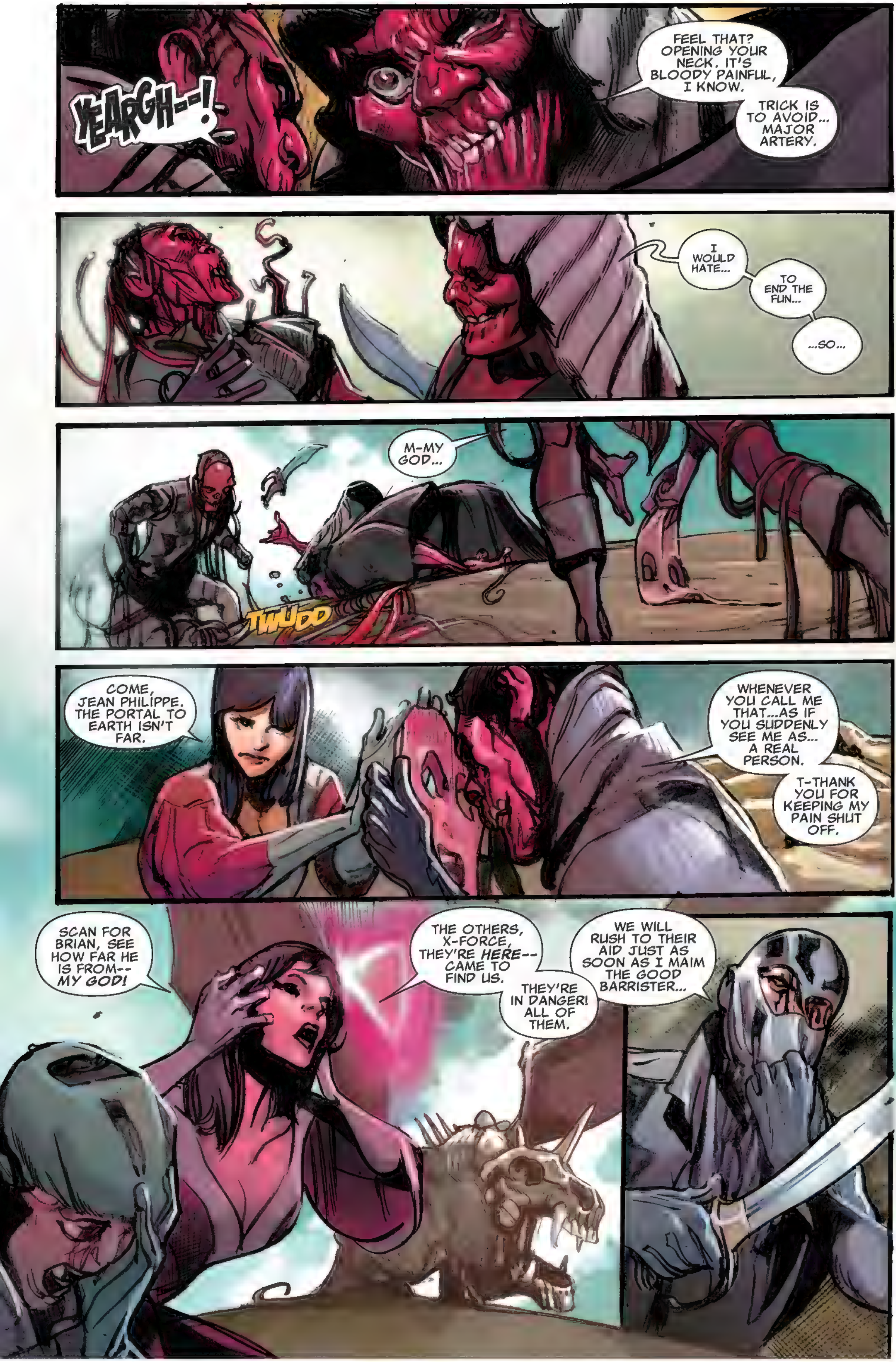

DEAR GOD-- ARE YOU OKAY?
IT DOESN'T MATTER. WE'RE OVERRUN.
LOOKING AT YOU...I KNOW YOU'RE NOT MY KURT...STILL, YOU AWAKEN THINGS I FELT LONG AGO.
THANK YOU FOR NOT LEAVING US. YOU *ARE* A GOOD MAN.

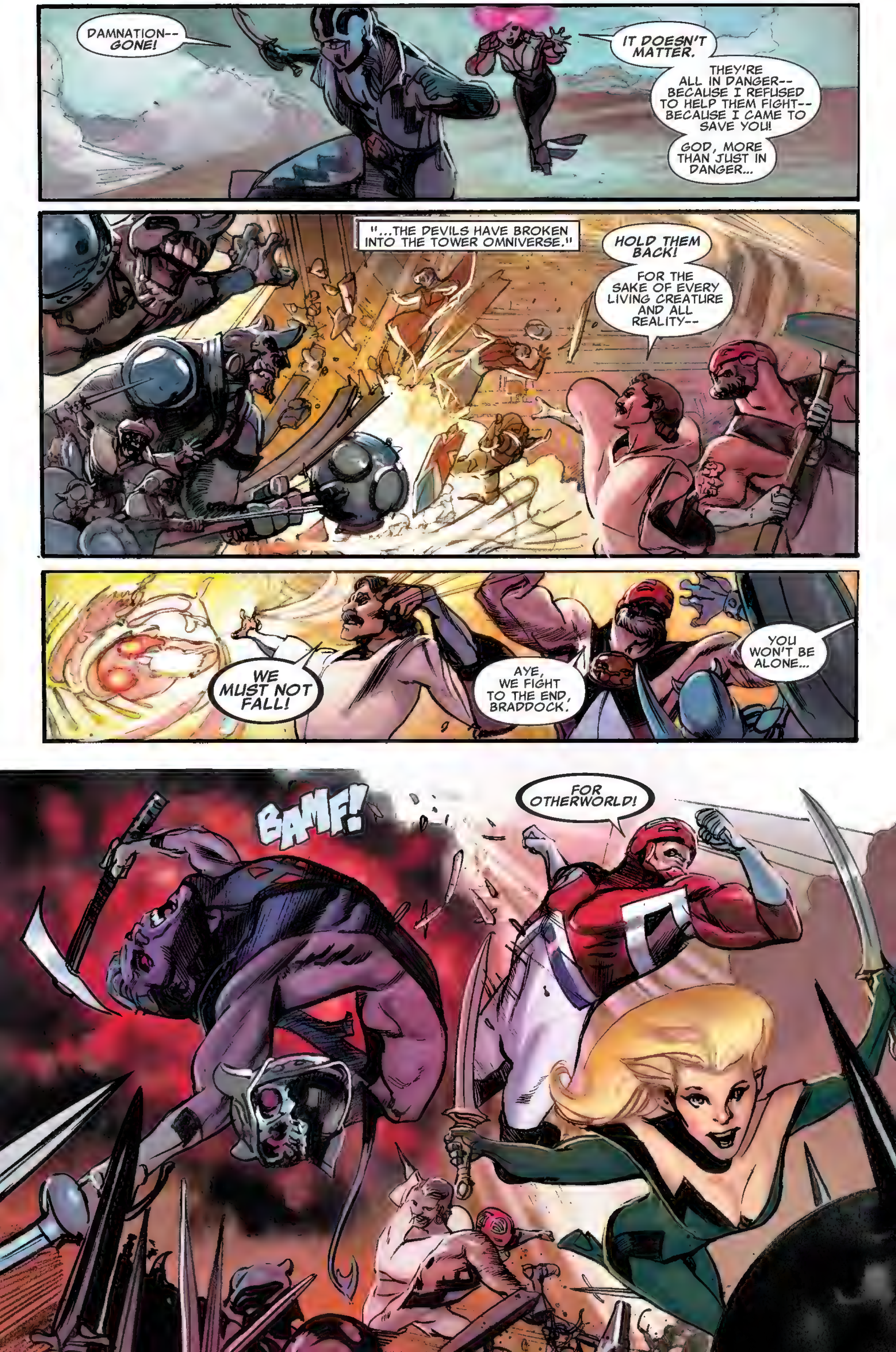

PERHAPS IN ANOTHER TIME AND PLACE...
HERE IN THIS TIME AND PLACE...

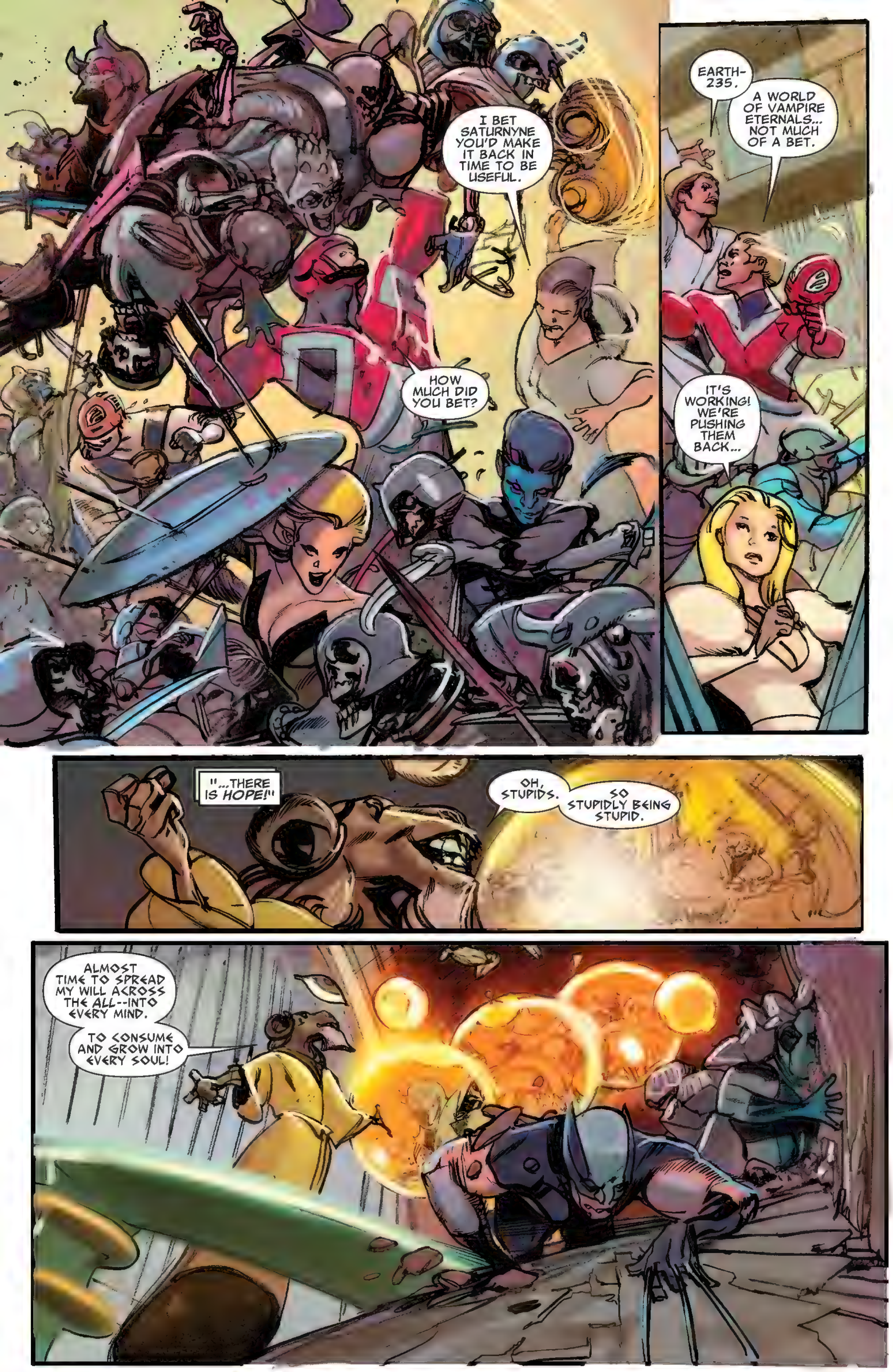

...MEGGAN IS SPOKEN FOR.
KWHOOM
TASHH
I'D BEGUN TO THINK YOU WEREN'T COMING.
SO YOU MOVED ON TO THE ELF?
DON'T CALL ME THAT.
AFTER TRYING TO STEAL A KISS FROM MY GIRL-- I'LL CALL YOU WHATEVER I WANT.
SHNKK
WHERE'S BETSY?
WE THOUGHT SHE WAS WITH YOU.
BAMF!
NO.
SHE MADE A DIFFERENT CHOICE...
KWOKK

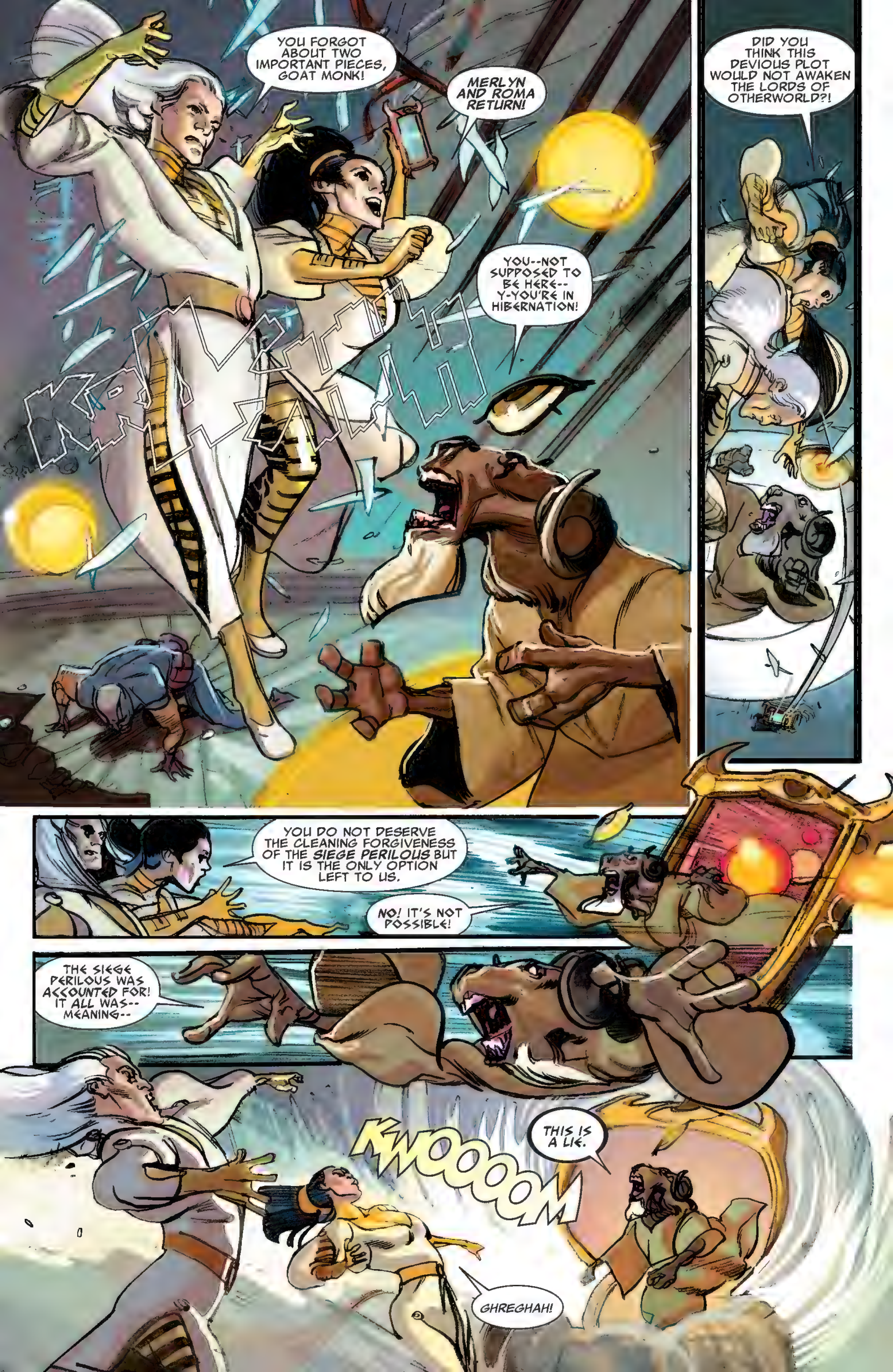

"...ONE SHE WILL FOREVER LIVE WITH."
FOCUS YOUR ATTACKS ON THE SOUTH WALL!
THE TOWER WILL OPEN TO US!
THERE IS NO STOPPING THEM.
IF I PULL ANY HARDER AT THE FABRIC OF REALITY I WILL BREAK IT.
WHERE IS YOUR IDIOT BROTHER?! IF WE FAIL, EVERY SOUL IN THE OMNIVERSE IS LOST--!
THAT STUBBORN BULL WOULDN'T LIST--
THAKROOOOM
CLEAR THE WAY TO THE TOWER OMNIVERSE...
"...KILL ALL IN YOUR PATH!"
I CREEP INTO THE SKINLESS MAN'S MIND--
--HE CRUSHES MY RIBS-- STOPS BEFORE COLLAPSING A LUNG--
--THE MESSAGE CLEAR--
--SHUT UP, SIT BACK...

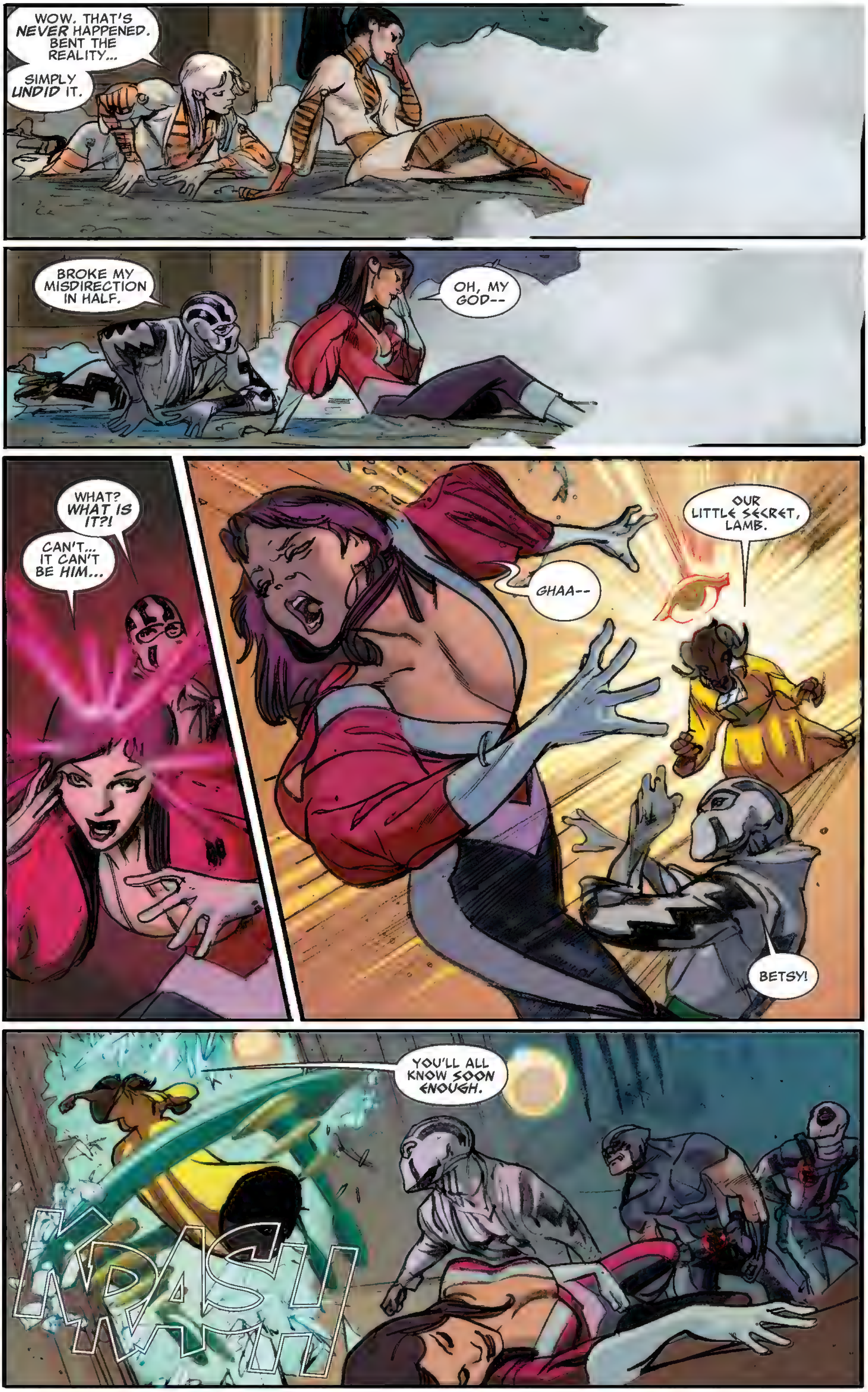

...AND WATCH HIM TORTURE JEAN-PHILIPPE.
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BEG ME TO STOP.
THERE IS SOME *MINUTE* CHANCE YOU MIGHT PERSUADE ME.
NOT ME. I'M NOT THE TYPE.
BUT I'LL MAKE YOU A PROMISE.
WHEN IT'S MY TURN--
YOU'LL BEG ME, BY GOD!
YOU WILL BEG!
WELL, IT'S *NOT* YOUR TURN.
IS IT?
REALIZATION-- STRIKES LIKE A HAMMER--
KROKWELL'S POISON.
PUT THIS SON OF A BITCH DOWN.

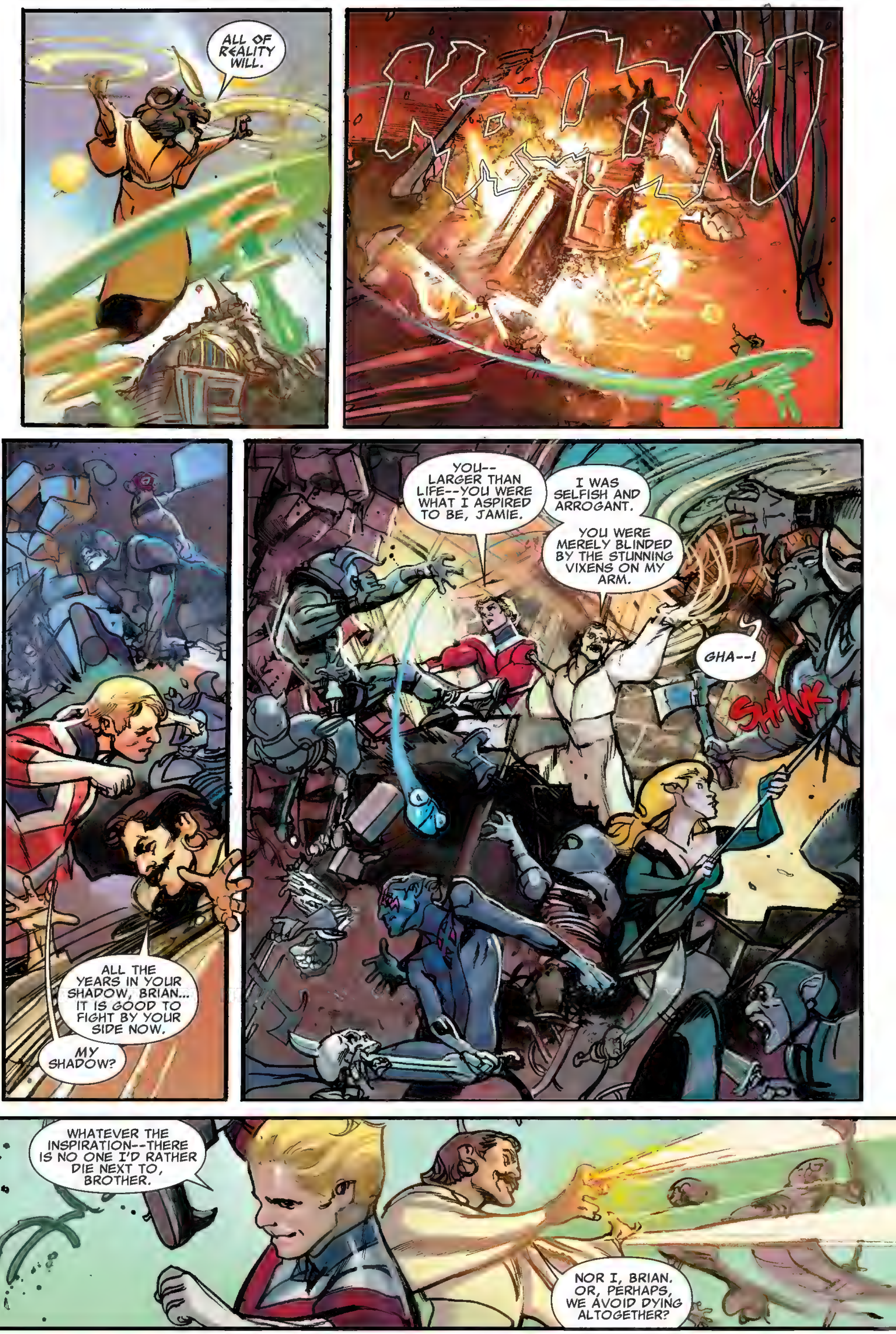

YEARGH--!
FEEL THAT? OPENING YOUR NECK. IT'S BLOODY PAINFUL, I KNOW.
TRICK IS TO AVOID... MAJOR ARTERY.
I WOULD HATE...
TO END THE FUN...
...SO...
M-MY GOD...
TWUDD
COME, JEAN PHILIPPE. THE PORTAL TO EARTH ISN'T FAR.
WHENEVER YOU CALL ME THAT...AS IF YOU SUDDENLY SEE ME AS... A REAL PERSON.
T-THANK YOU FOR KEEPING MY PAIN SHUT OFF.
SCAN FOR BRIAN, SEE HOW FAR HE IS FROM-- MY GOD!
THE OTHERS, X-FORCE, THEY'RE HERE-- CAME TO FIND US.
THEY'RE IN DANGER! ALL OF THEM.
WE WILL RUSH TO THEIR AID JUST AS SOON AS I MAIM THE GOOD BARRISTER...

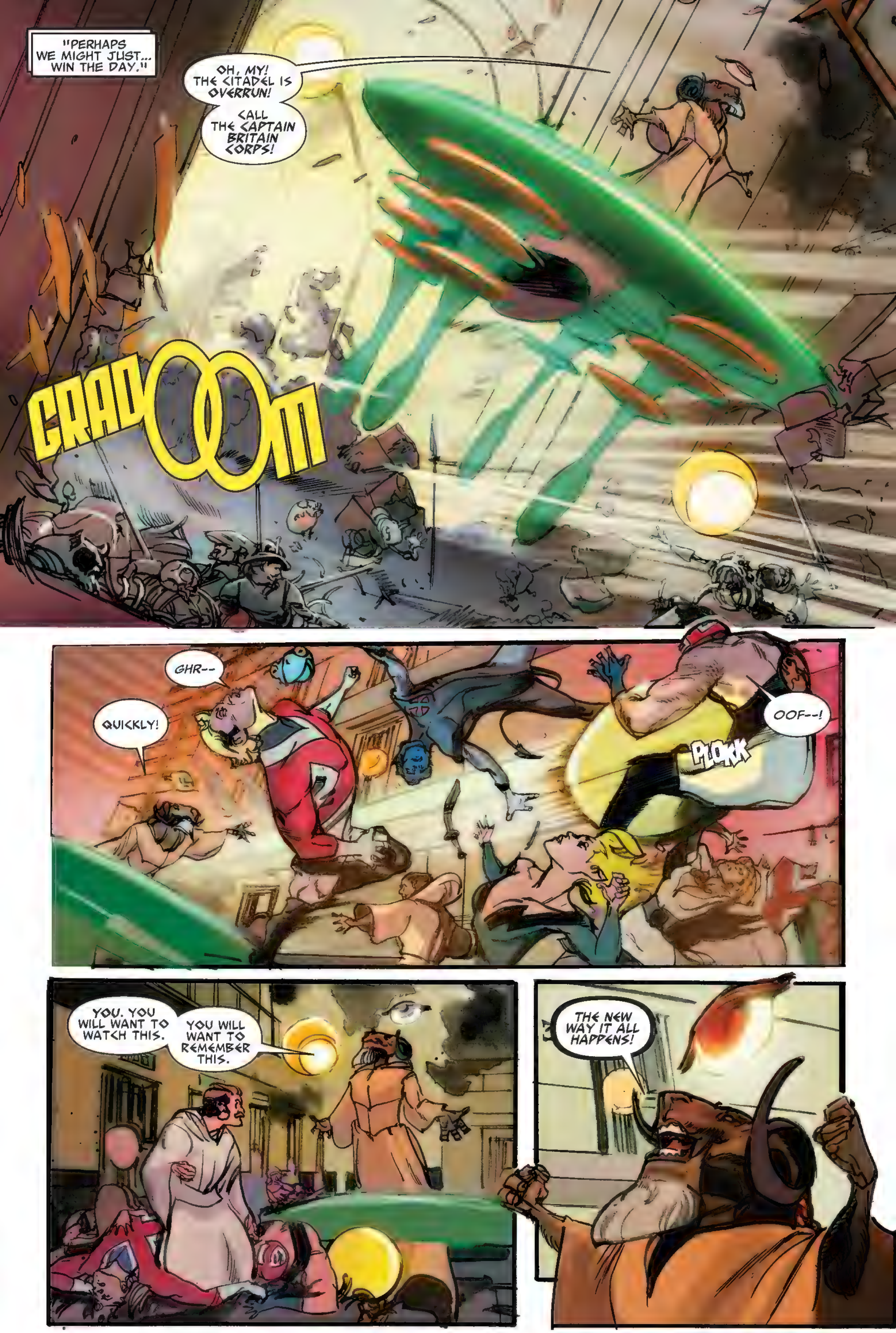

DAMNATION-- GONE!
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
THEY'RE ALL IN DANGER-- BECAUSE I REFUSED TO HELP THEM FIGHT-- BECAUSE I CAME TO SAVE YOU!
GOD, MORE THAN JUST IN DANGER...
"...THE DEVILS HAVE BROKEN INTO THE TOWER OMNIVERSE."
HOLD THEM BACK!
FOR THE SAKE OF EVERY LIVING CREATURE AND ALL REALITY--
WE MUST NOT FALL!
AYE, WE FIGHT TO THE END, BRADDOCK.
YOU WON'T BE ALONE...
BAMF!
FOR OTHERWORLD!

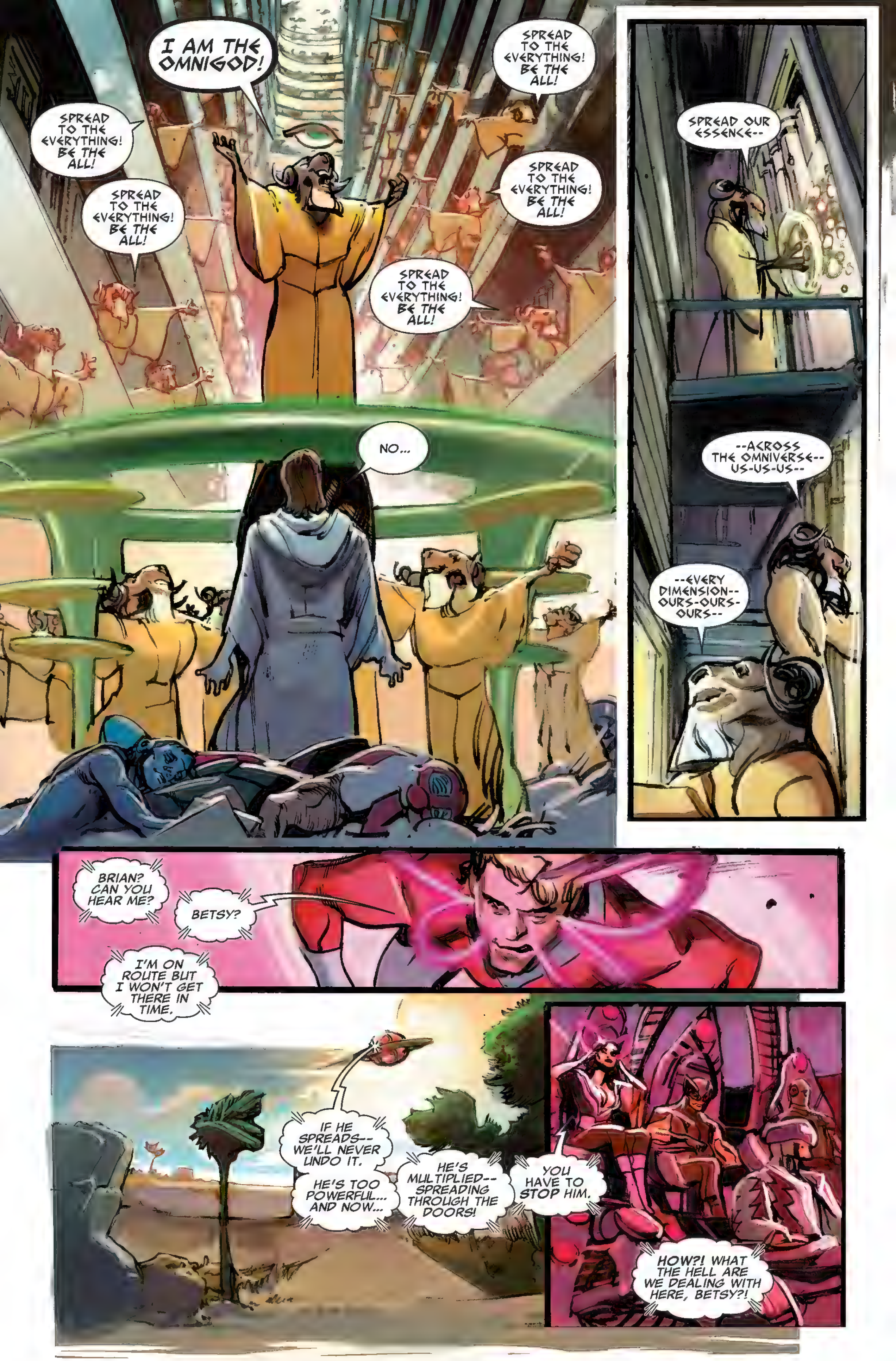

I BET SATURNYNE YOU'D MAKE IT BACK IN TIME TO BE USEFUL.
HOW MUCH DID YOU BET?
EARTH-235.
A WORLD OF VAMPIRE ETERNALS... NOT MUCH OF A BET.
IT'S WORKING! WE'RE PUSHING THEM BACK...
"...THERE IS *HOPE!*"
OH, STUPIDS.
SO STUPIDLY BEING STUPID.
ALMOST TIME TO SPREAD MY WILL ACROSS THE ALL--INTO EVERY MIND.
TO CONSUME AND GROW INTO EVERY SOUL!

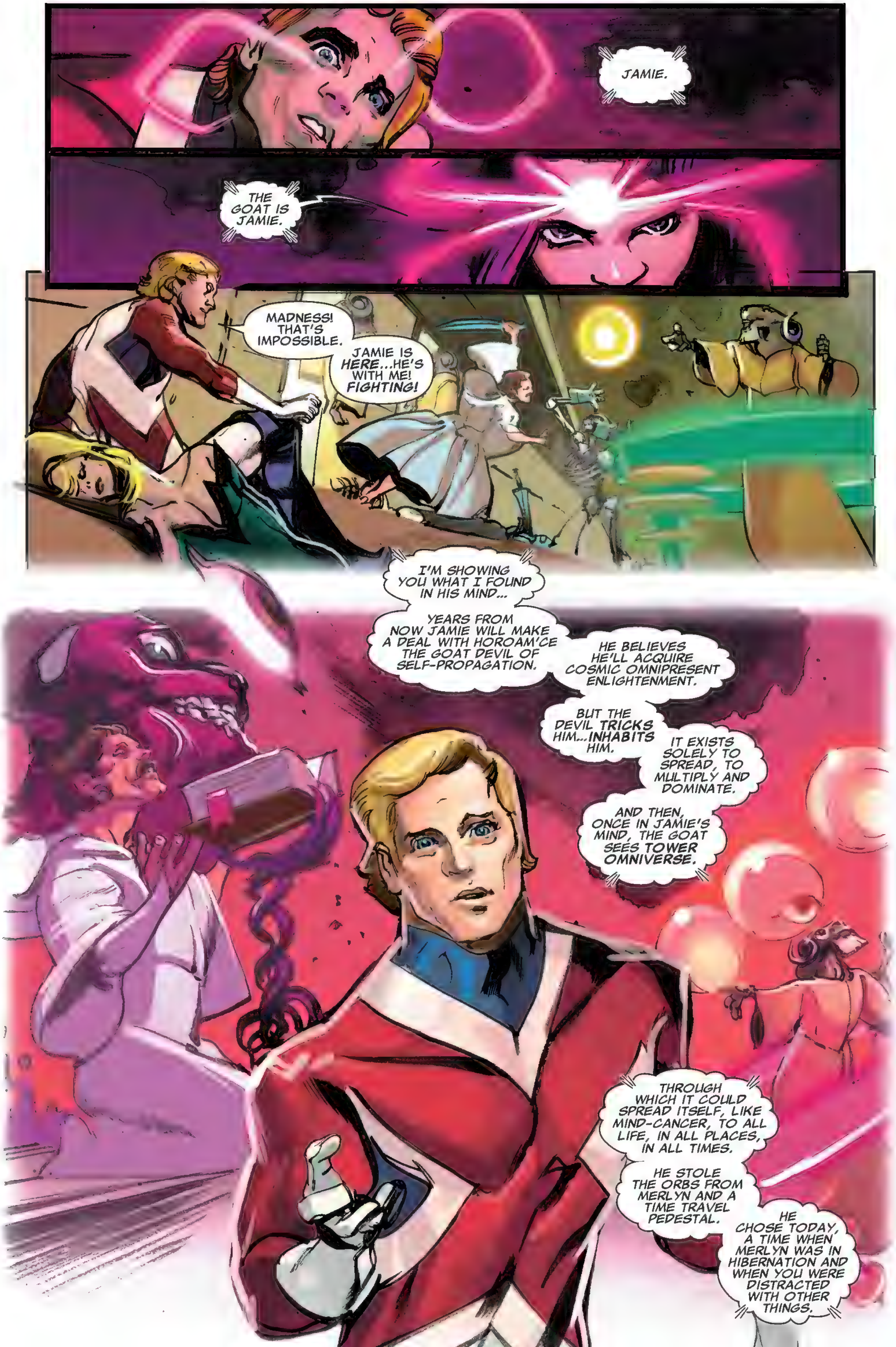

YOU FORGOT ABOUT TWO IMPORTANT PIECES, GOAT MONK!
MERLYN AND ROMA RETURN!
YOU--NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE-- Y-YOU'RE IN HIBERNATION!
DID YOU THINK THIS DEVIOUS PLOT WOULD NOT AWAKEN THE LORDS OF OTHERWORLD?!
YOU DO NOT DESERVE THE CLEANING FORGIVENESS OF THE *SIEGE PERILOUS* BUT IT IS THE ONLY OPTION LEFT TO US.
NO! IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
THE SIEGE PERILOUS WAS ACCOUNTED FOR! IT *ALL* WAS-- MEANING--
KWOOOOM
THIS IS A LIE.
GHREGHAH!

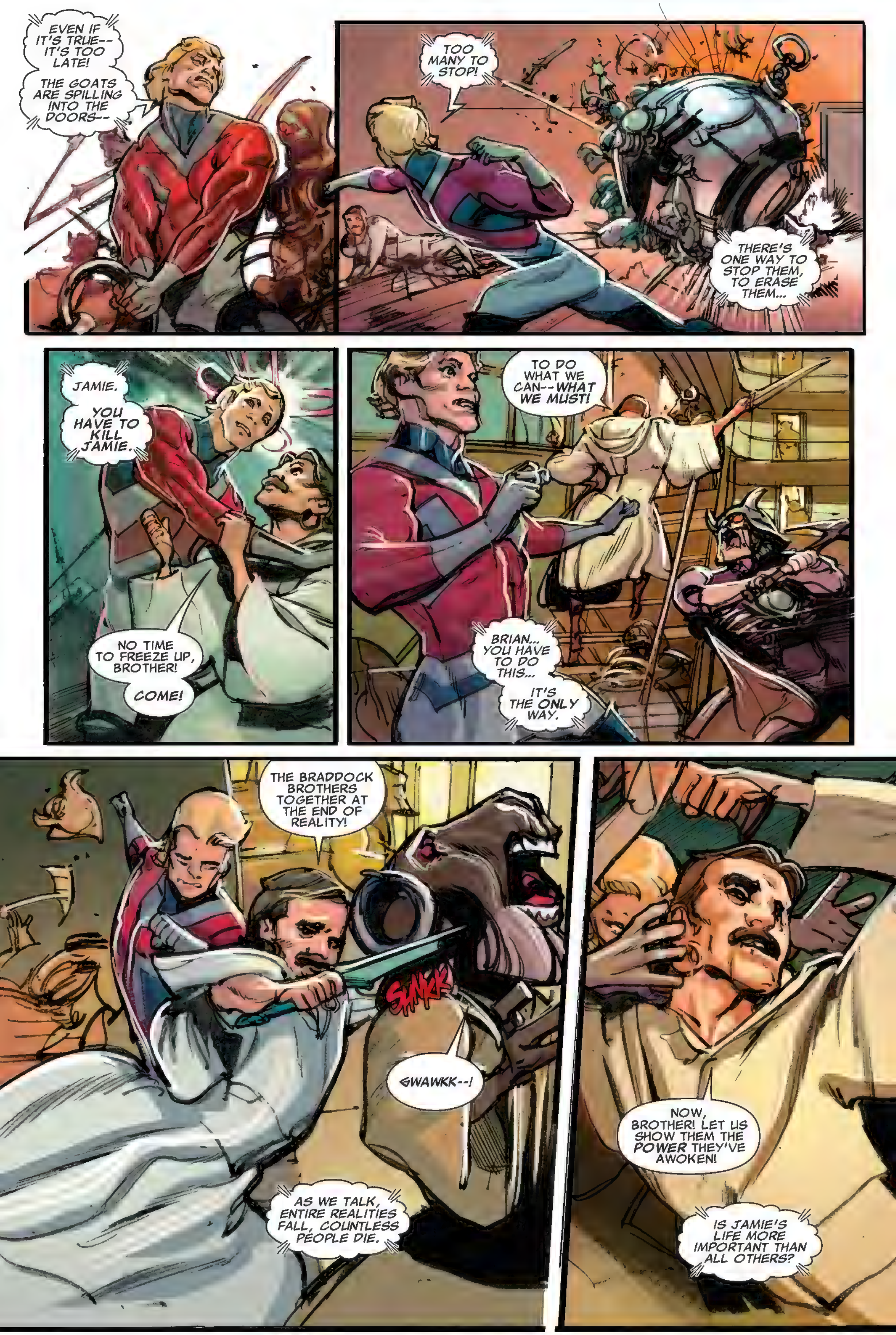

WOW. THAT'S *NEVER* HAPPENED. BENT THE REALITY...
SIMPLY *UNDID* IT.
BROKE MY MISDIRECTION IN HALF.
OH, MY GOD--
WHAT? *WHAT IS IT?!*
CAN'T... IT CAN'T BE *HIM*...
GHAA--
OUR LITTLE SECRET, LAMB.
BETSY!
YOU'LL ALL KNOW SOON ENOUGH.
KRASH

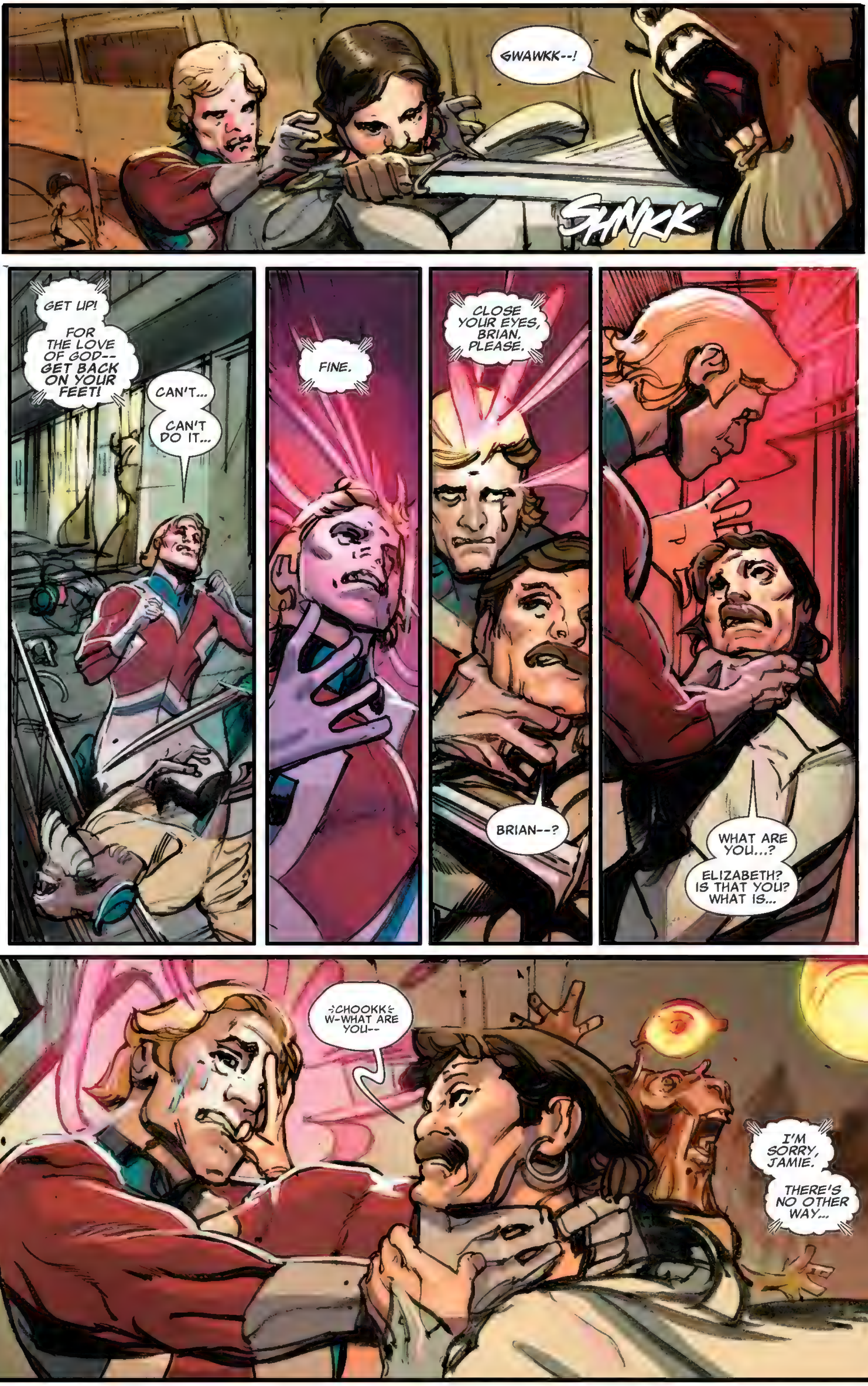

ALL OF REALITY WILL.
YOU-- LARGER THAN LIFE--YOU WERE WHAT I ASPIRED TO BE, JAMIE.
I WAS SELFISH AND ARROGANT.
YOU WERE MERELY BLINDED BY THE STUNNING VIXENS ON MY ARM.
GHA--!
SHINK
ALL THE YEARS IN YOUR SHADOW, BRIAN... IT IS GOOD TO FIGHT BY YOUR SIDE NOW.
MY SHADOW?
WHATEVER THE INSPIRATION--THERE IS NO ONE I'D RATHER DIE NEXT TO, BROTHER.
NOR I, BRIAN. OR, PERHAPS, WE AVOID DYING ALTOGETHER?

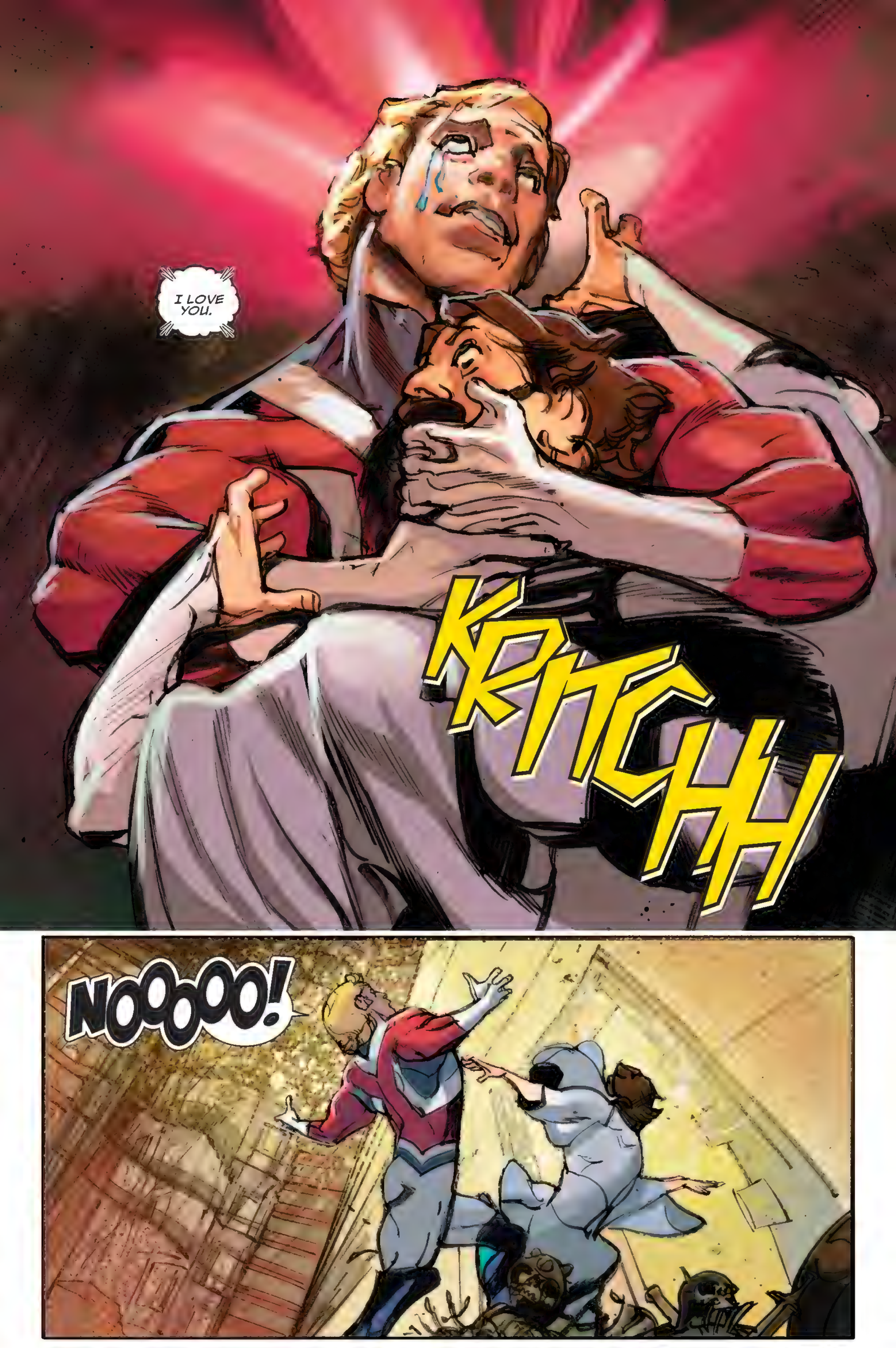

"PERHAPS WE MIGHT JUST... WIN THE DAY."
OH, MY! THE CITADEL IS OVERRUN!
CALL THE CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPS!
CRADOOOM
GHR--
QUICKLY!
OOF--!
PLOKK
YOU. YOU WILL WANT TO WATCH THIS.
YOU WILL WANT TO REMEMBER THIS.
THE NEW WAY IT ALL HAPPENS!

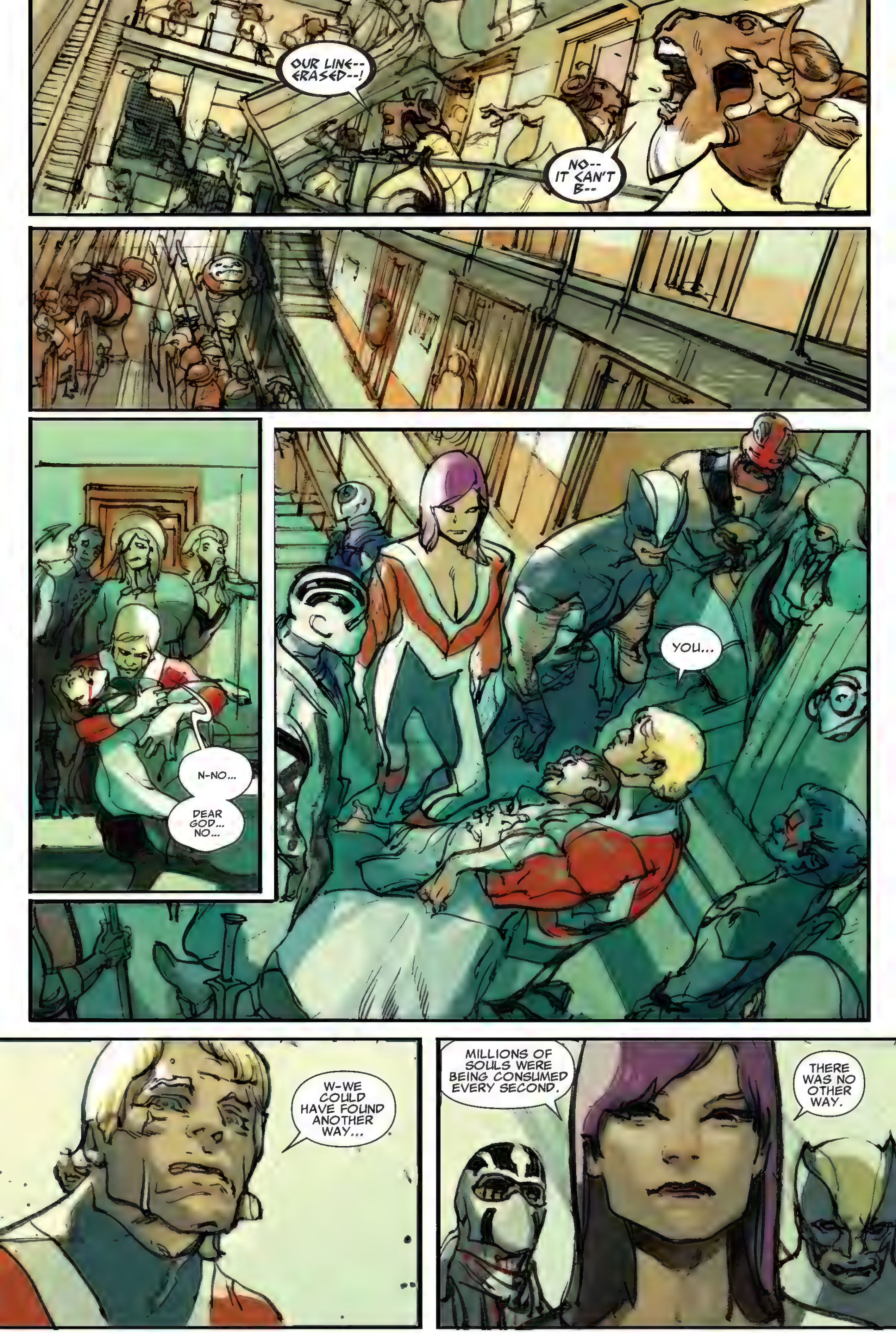

I AM THE OMNIGOD!
SPREAD TO THE EVERYTHING! BE THE ALL!
SPREAD TO THE EVERYTHING! BE THE ALL!
SPREAD TO THE EVERYTHING! BE THE ALL!
SPREAD TO THE EVERYTHING! BE THE ALL!
SPREAD TO THE EVERYTHING! BE THE ALL!
NO...
SPREAD OUR ESSENCE--
--ACROSS THE OMNIVERSE-- US-US-US--
--EVERY DIMENSION-- OURS-OURS-OURS--
BRIAN? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
BETSY?
I'M ON ROUTE BUT I WON'T GET THERE IN TIME.
IF HE SPREADS-- WE'LL NEVER UNDO IT.
HE'S TOO POWERFUL... AND NOW...
HE'S MULTIPLIED-- SPREADING THROUGH THE DOORS!
YOU HAVE TO STOP HIM.
HOW?! WHAT THE HELL ARE WE DEALING WITH HERE, BETSY?!

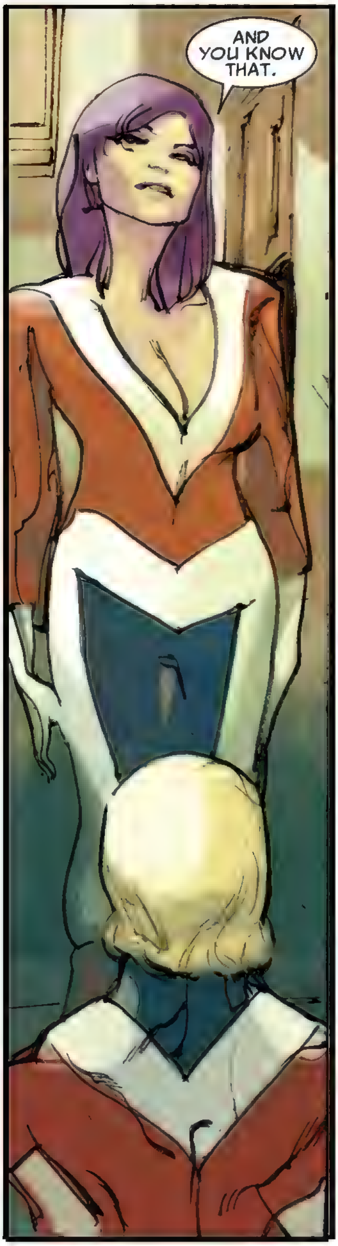

JAMIE.
THE GOAT IS JAMIE.
MADNESS! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
JAMIE IS **HERE**...HE'S WITH ME! **FIGHTING!**
I'M SHOWING YOU WHAT I FOUND IN HIS MIND...
YEARS FROM NOW JAMIE WILL MAKE A DEAL WITH HOROAM'CE THE GOAT DEVIL OF SELF-PROPAGATION.
HE BELIEVES HE'LL ACQUIRE COSMIC OMNIPRESENT ENLIGHTENMENT.
BUT THE DEVIL **TRICKS** HIM...**INHABITS** HIM.
IT EXISTS SOLELY TO SPREAD, TO MULTIPLY AND DOMINATE.
AND THEN, ONCE IN JAMIE'S MIND, THE GOAT SEES **TOWER OMNIVERSE.**
THROUGH WHICH IT COULD SPREAD ITSELF, LIKE MIND-CANCER, TO ALL LIFE, IN ALL PLACES, IN ALL TIMES.
HE STOLE THE ORBS FROM MERLYN AND A TIME TRAVEL PEDESTAL.
HE CHOSE TODAY, A TIME WHEN MERLYN WAS IN HIBERNATION AND WHEN YOU WERE DISTRACTED WITH OTHER THINGS.

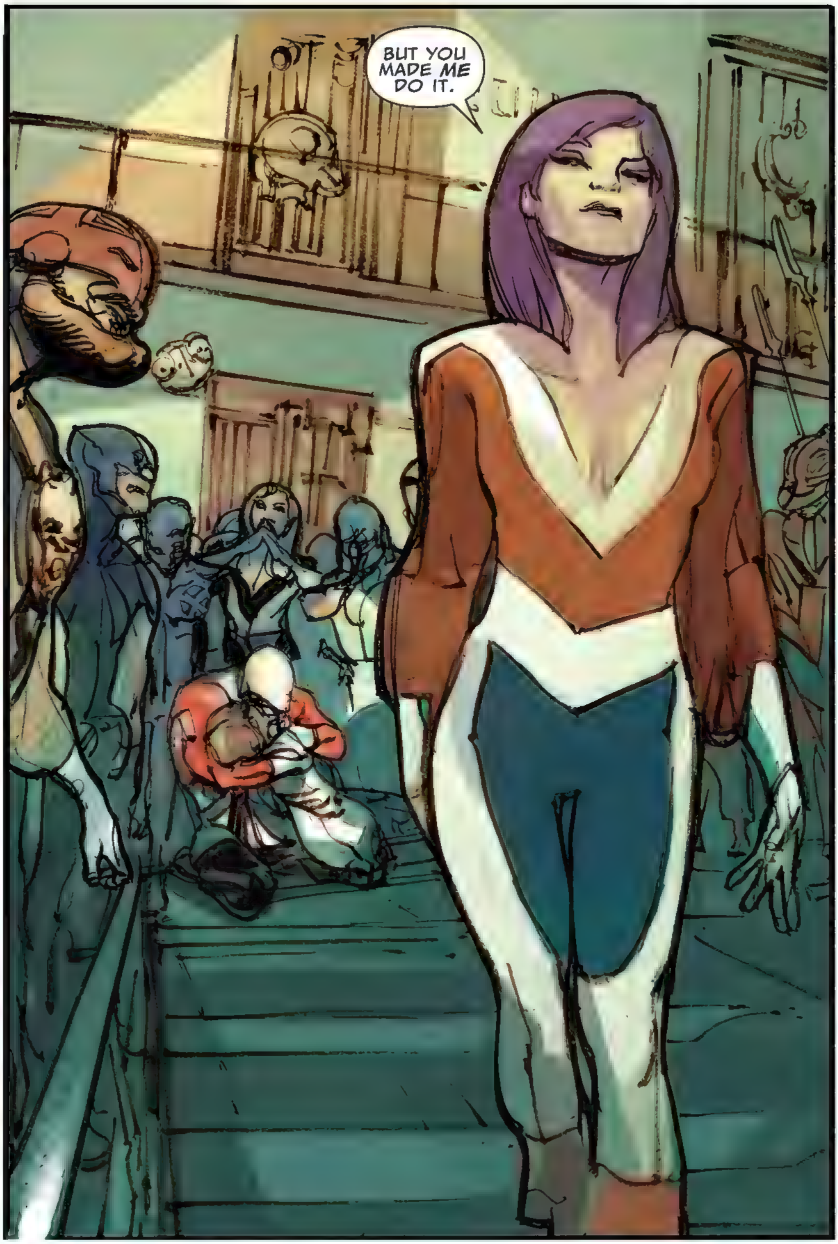

EVEN IF IT'S TRUE-- IT'S TOO LATE!
THE GOATS ARE SPILLING INTO THE DOORS--
TOO MANY TO STOP!
THERE'S ONE WAY TO STOP THEM, TO ERASE THEM...
JAMIE.
YOU HAVE TO KILL JAMIE.
NO TIME TO FREEZE UP, BROTHER!
COME!
TO DO WHAT WE CAN--WHAT WE MUST!
BRIAN... YOU HAVE TO DO THIS...
IT'S THE ONLY WAY.
THE BRADDOCK BROTHERS TOGETHER AT THE END OF REALITY!
SHNKK
GWAWKK--!
AS WE TALK, ENTIRE REALITIES FALL, COUNTLESS PEOPLE DIE.
NOW, BROTHER! LET US SHOW THEM THE POWER THEY'VE AWOKEN!
IS JAMIE'S LIFE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ALL OTHERS?

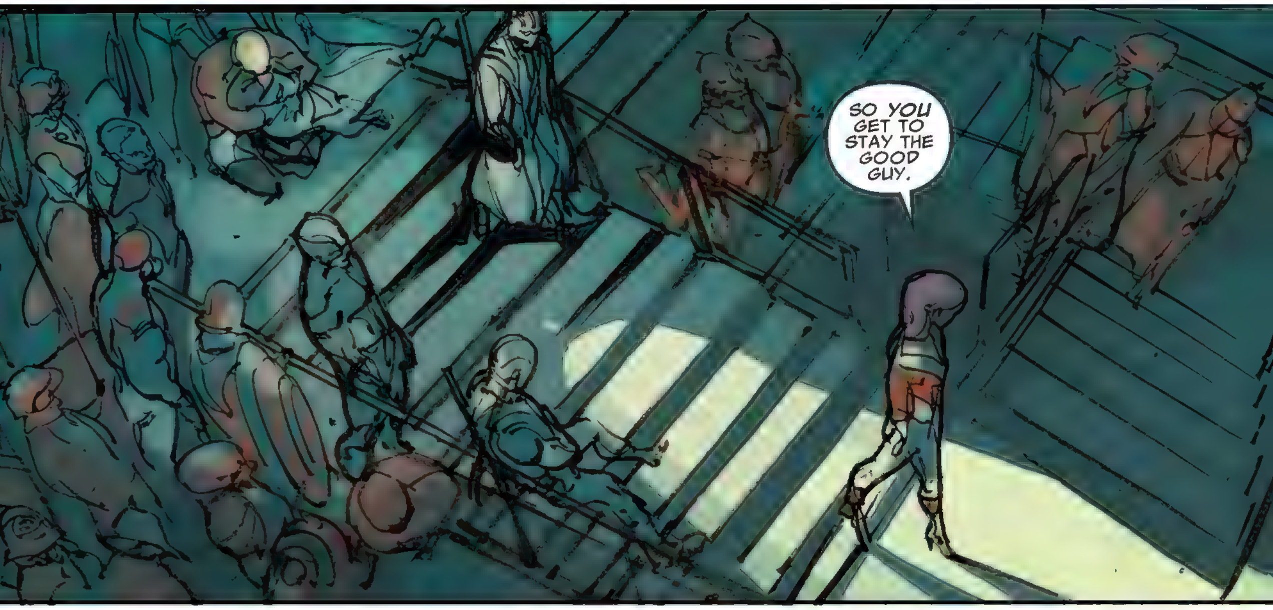

GWAWKK--!
SHNKK
GET UP!
FOR THE LOVE OF GOD-- GET BACK ON YOUR FEET!
CAN'T...
CAN'T DO IT...
FINE.
CLOSE YOUR EYES, BRIAN. PLEASE.
BRIAN--?
WHAT ARE YOU...?
ELIZABETH? IS THAT YOU? WHAT IS...
CHOOKK W-WHAT ARE YOU--
I'M SORRY, JAMIE.
THERE'S NO OTHER WAY...

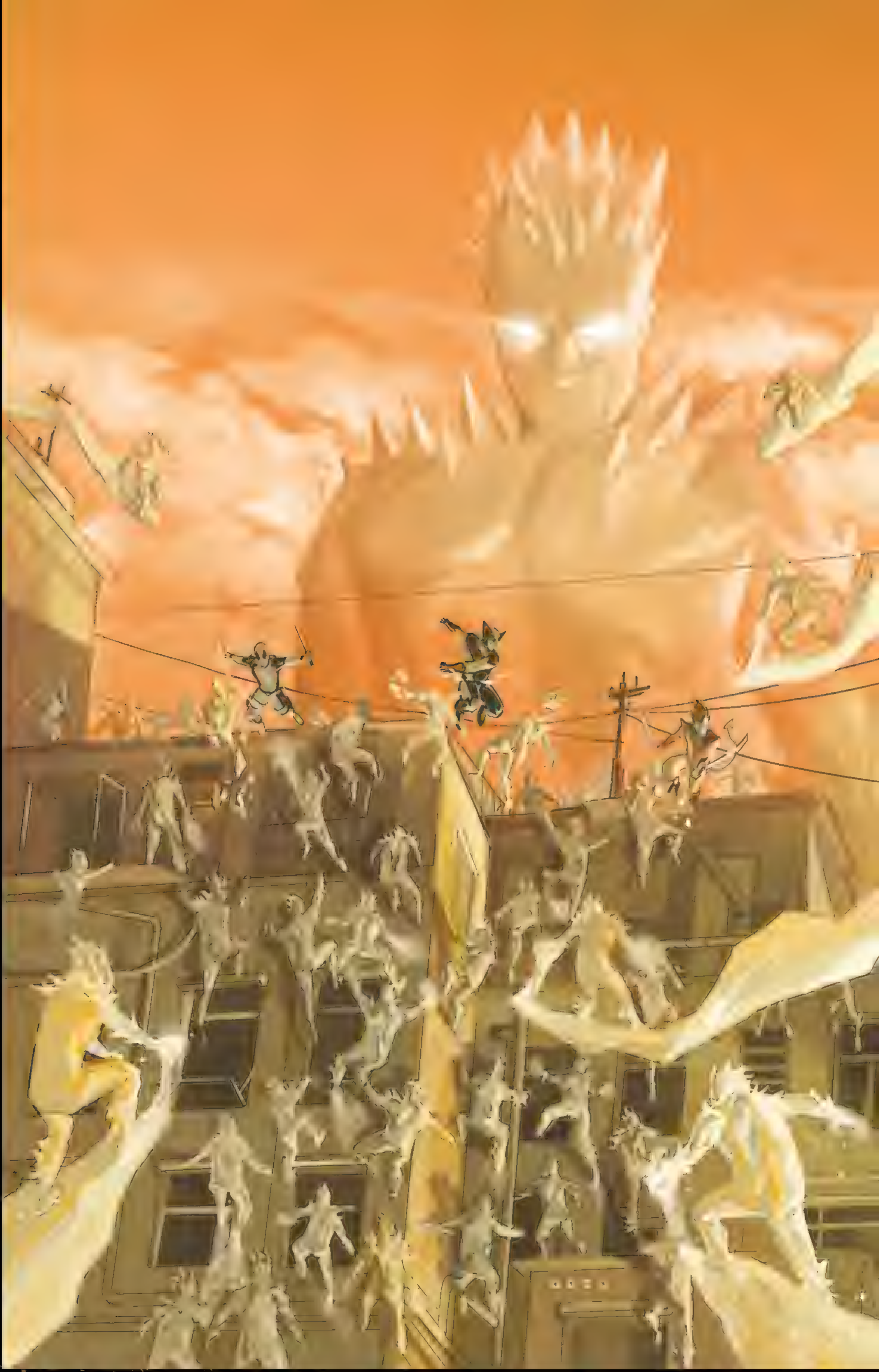

I LOVE YOU.
KRITCHH
NOOOOOO!


OUR LINE-- ERASED--!
NO-- IT CAN'T B--
N-NO...
DEAR GOD... NO...
YOU...
W-WE COULD HAVE FOUND ANOTHER WAY...
MILLIONS OF SOULS WERE BEING CONSUMED EVERY SECOND.
THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY.

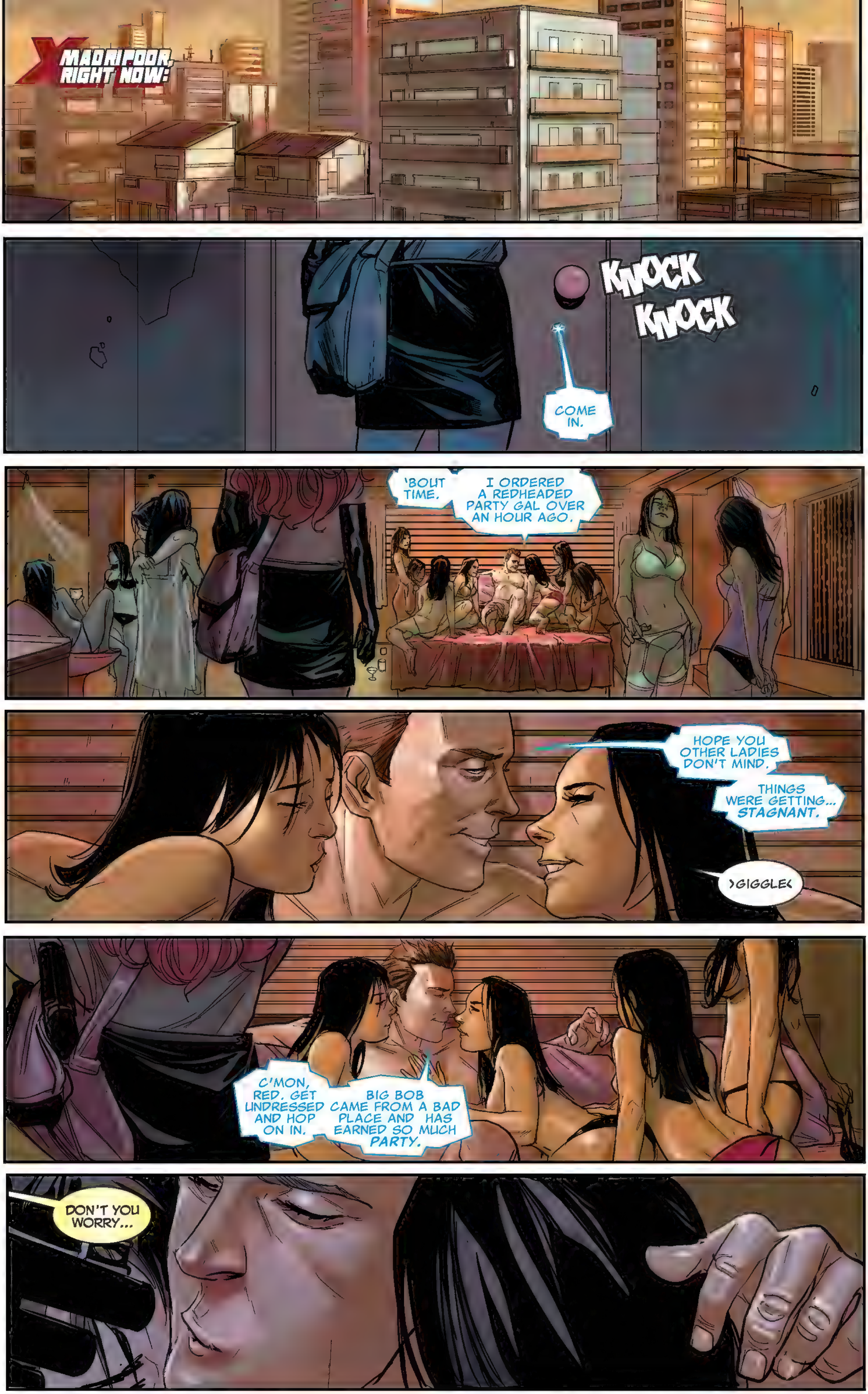

AND YOU KNOW THAT.

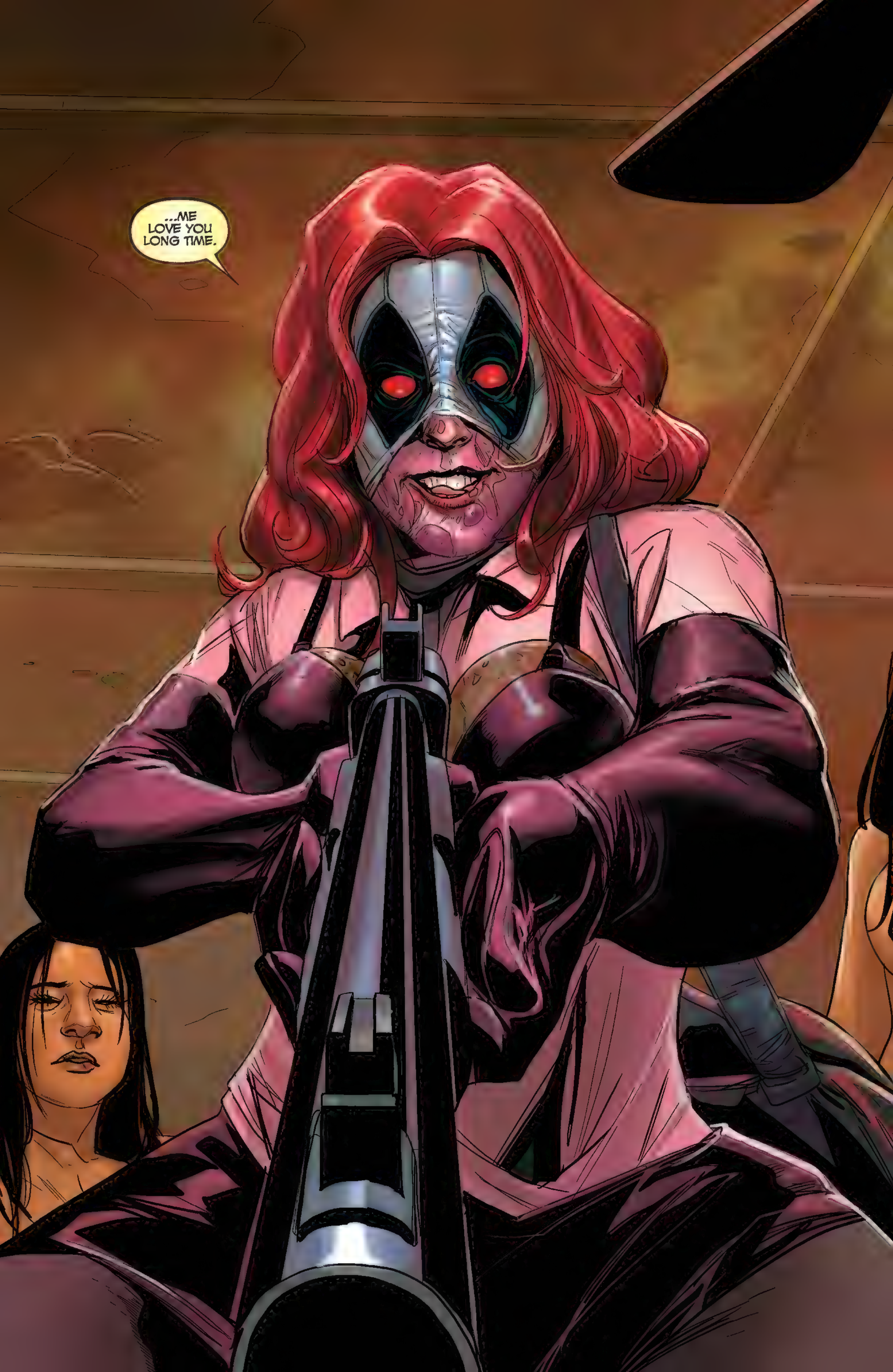

BUT YOU MADE *ME* DO IT.

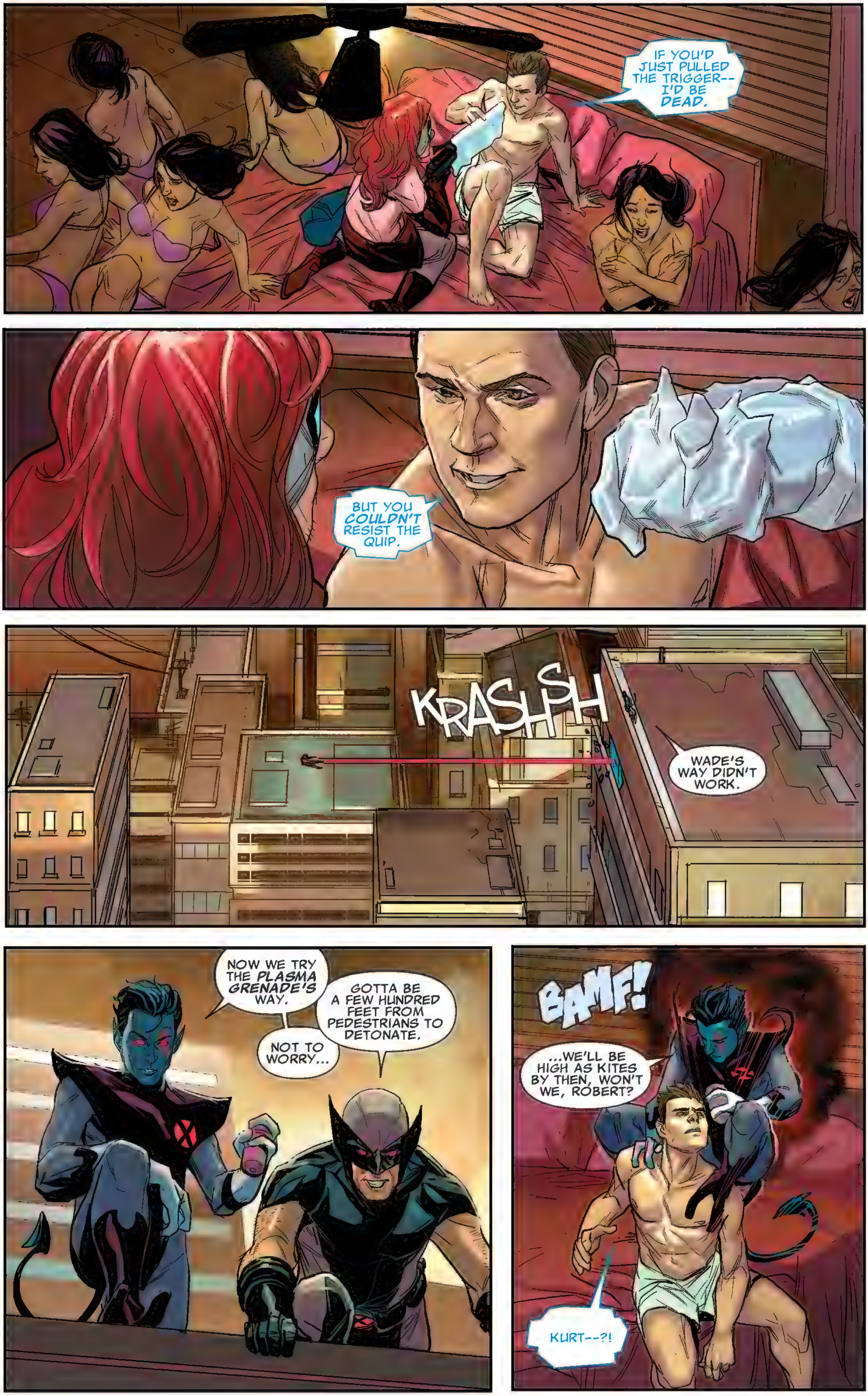

SO *YOU* GET TO STAY THE GOOD GUY.

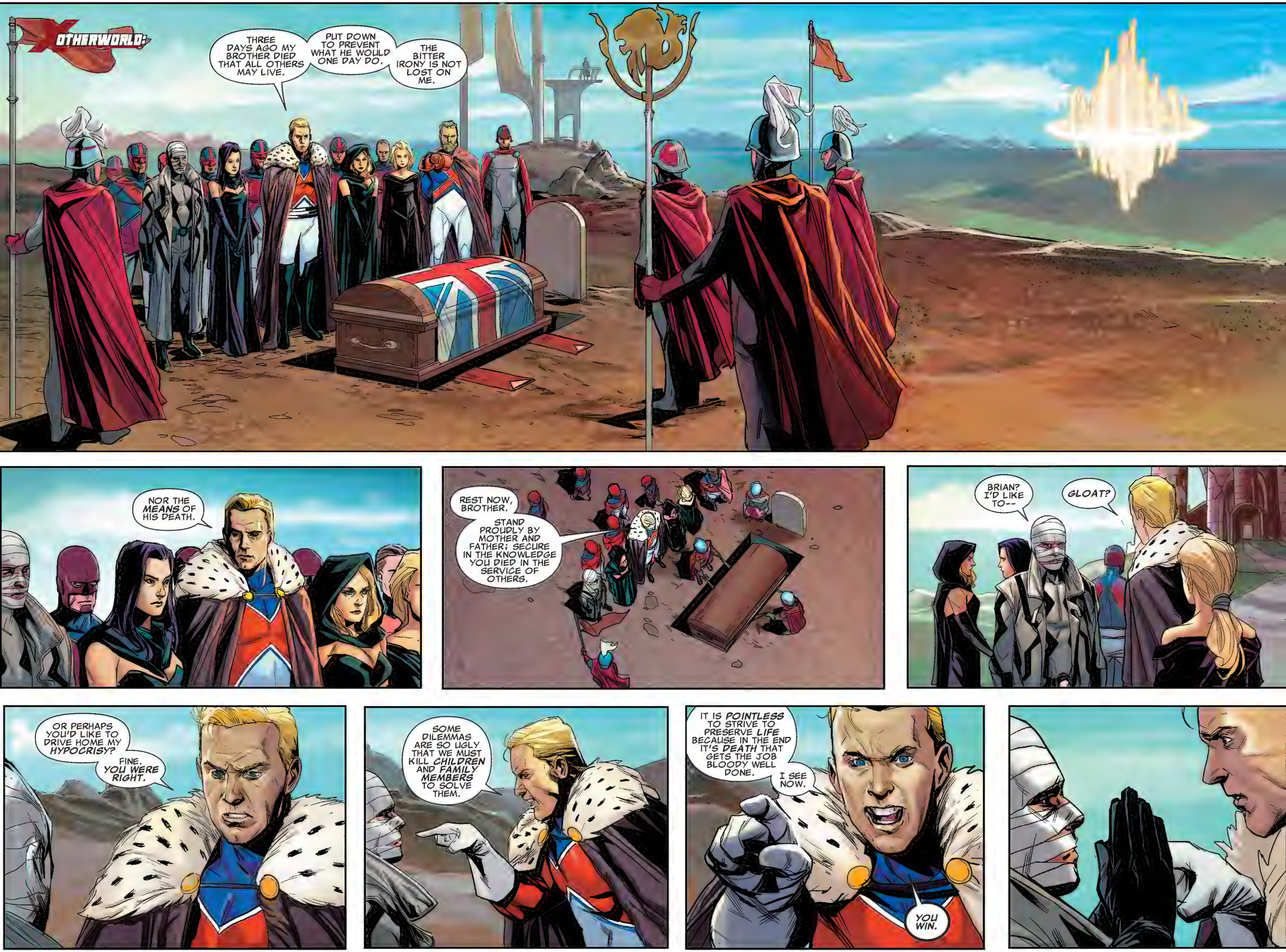


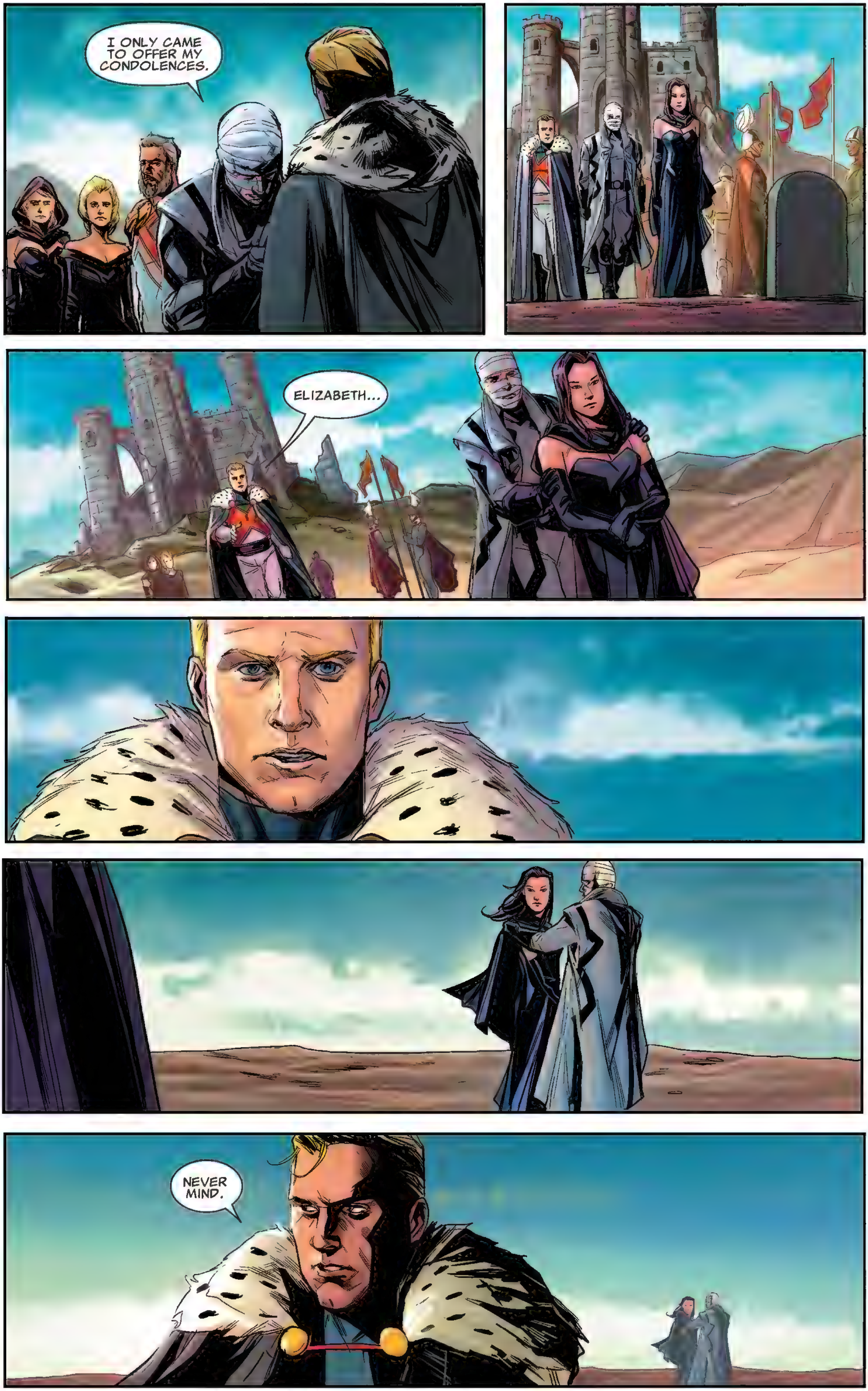
24 FROZEN MOMENT

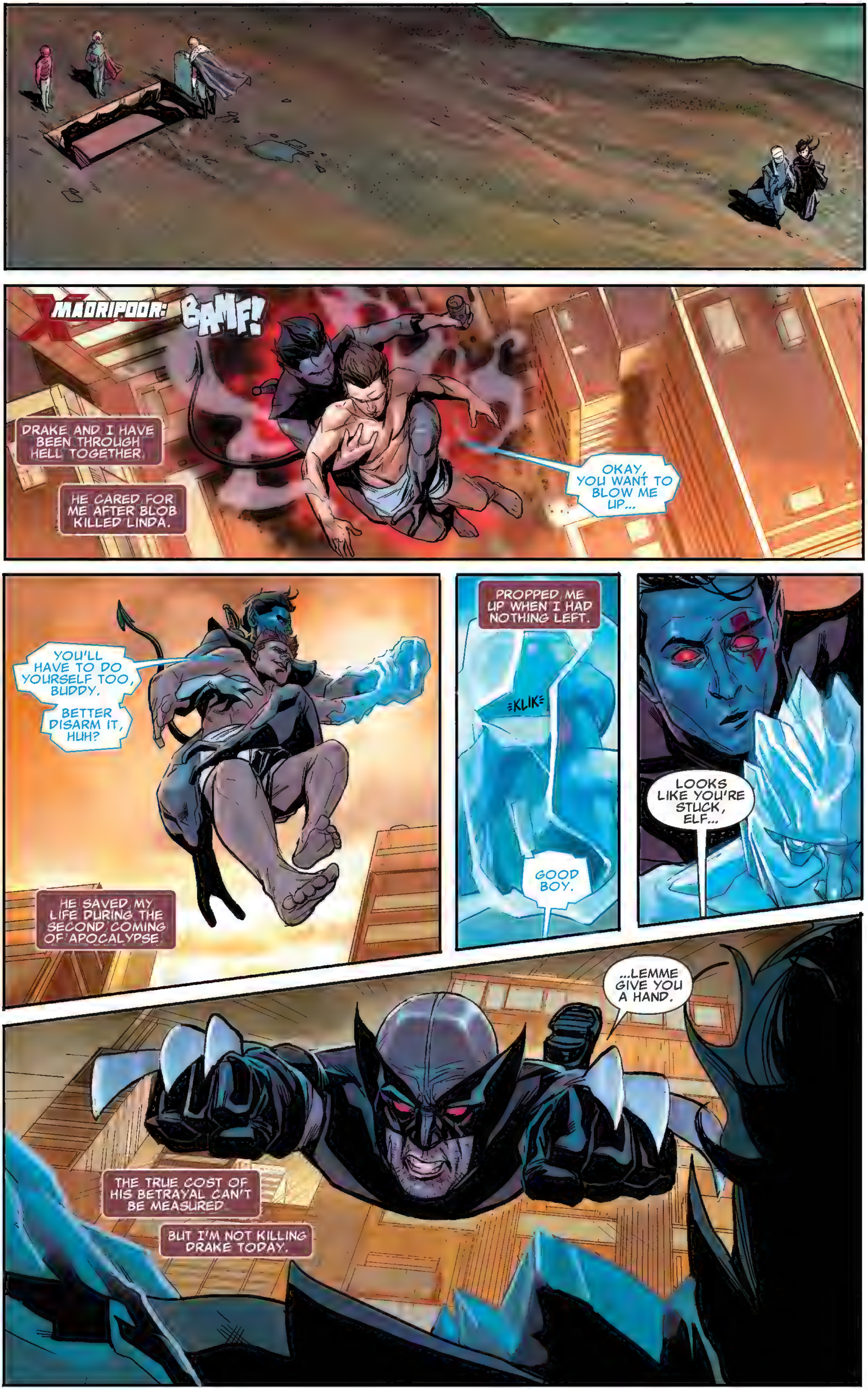

MADRIPOOR, RIGHT NOW:
KNOCK KNOCK
COME IN.
'BOUT TIME.
I ORDERED A REDHEADED PARTY GAL OVER AN HOUR AGO.
HOPE YOU OTHER LADIES DON'T MIND.
THINGS WERE GETTING... STAGNANT.
>GIGGLE<
C'MON, RED. GET UNDRESSED AND HOP ON IN.
BIG BOB CAME FROM A BAD PLACE AND HAS EARNED SO MUCH PARTY.
DON'T YOU WORRY...

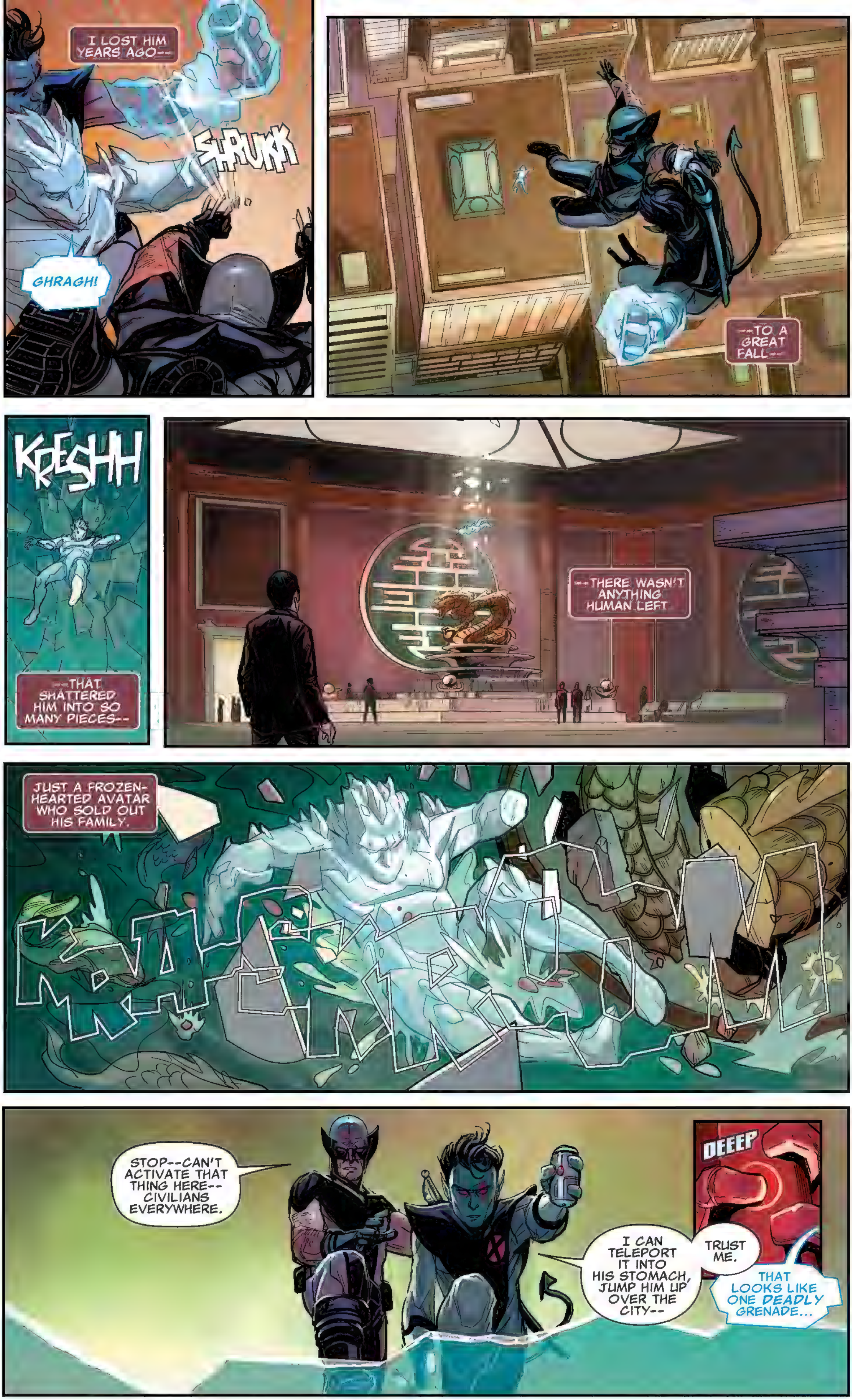

...ME LOVE YOU LONG TIME.

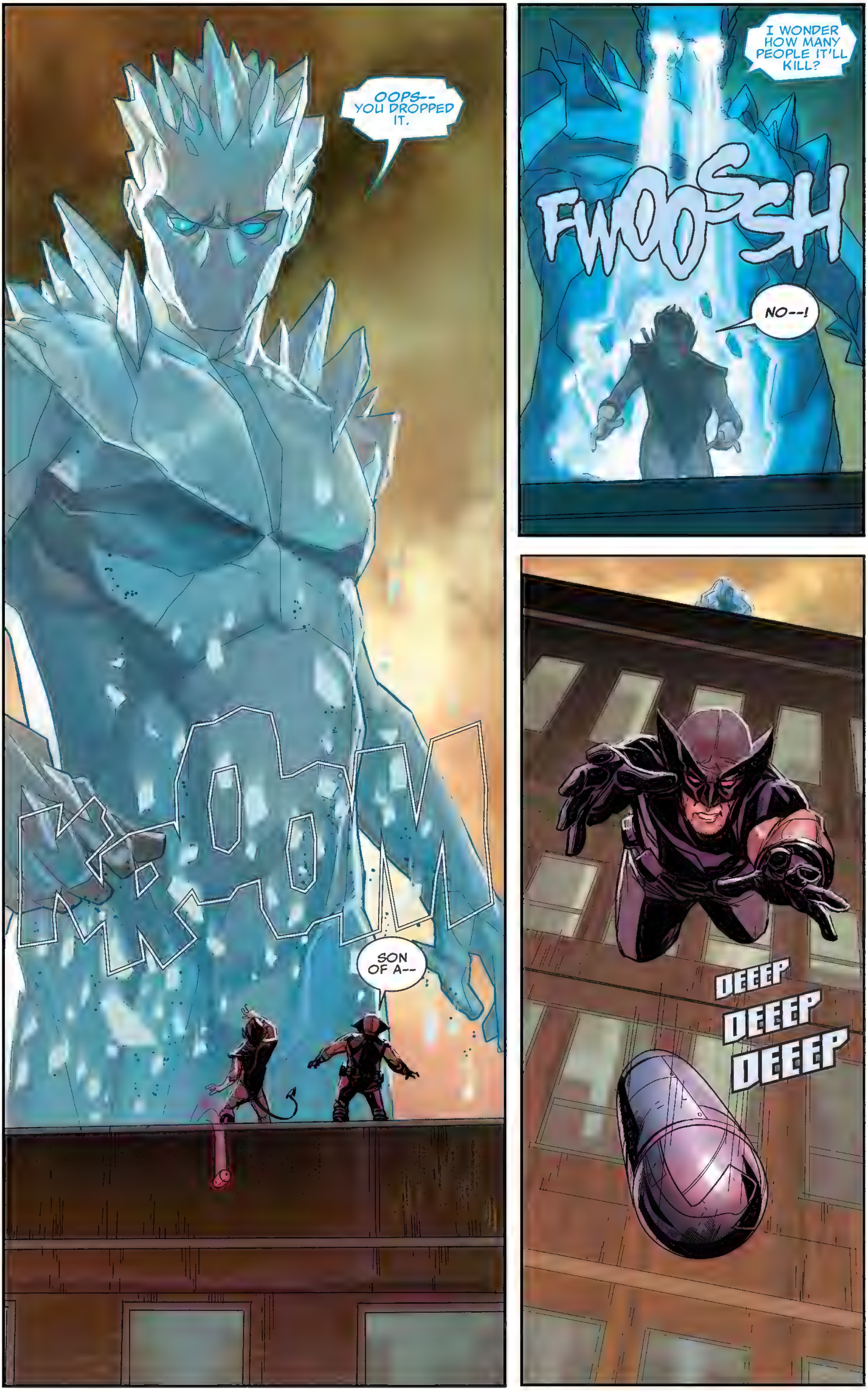

IF YOU'D JUST PULLED THE TRIGGER-- I'D BE *DEAD*.
BUT YOU *COULDN'T* RESIST THE QUIP.
KRASHSH
WADE'S WAY DIDN'T WORK.
NOW WE TRY THE *PLASMA GRENADE'S* WAY.
NOT TO WORRY...
GOTTA BE A FEW HUNDRED FEET FROM PEDESTRIANS TO DETONATE.
BAMF!
...WE'LL BE HIGH AS KITES BY THEN, WON'T WE, ROBERT?
KURT--?!

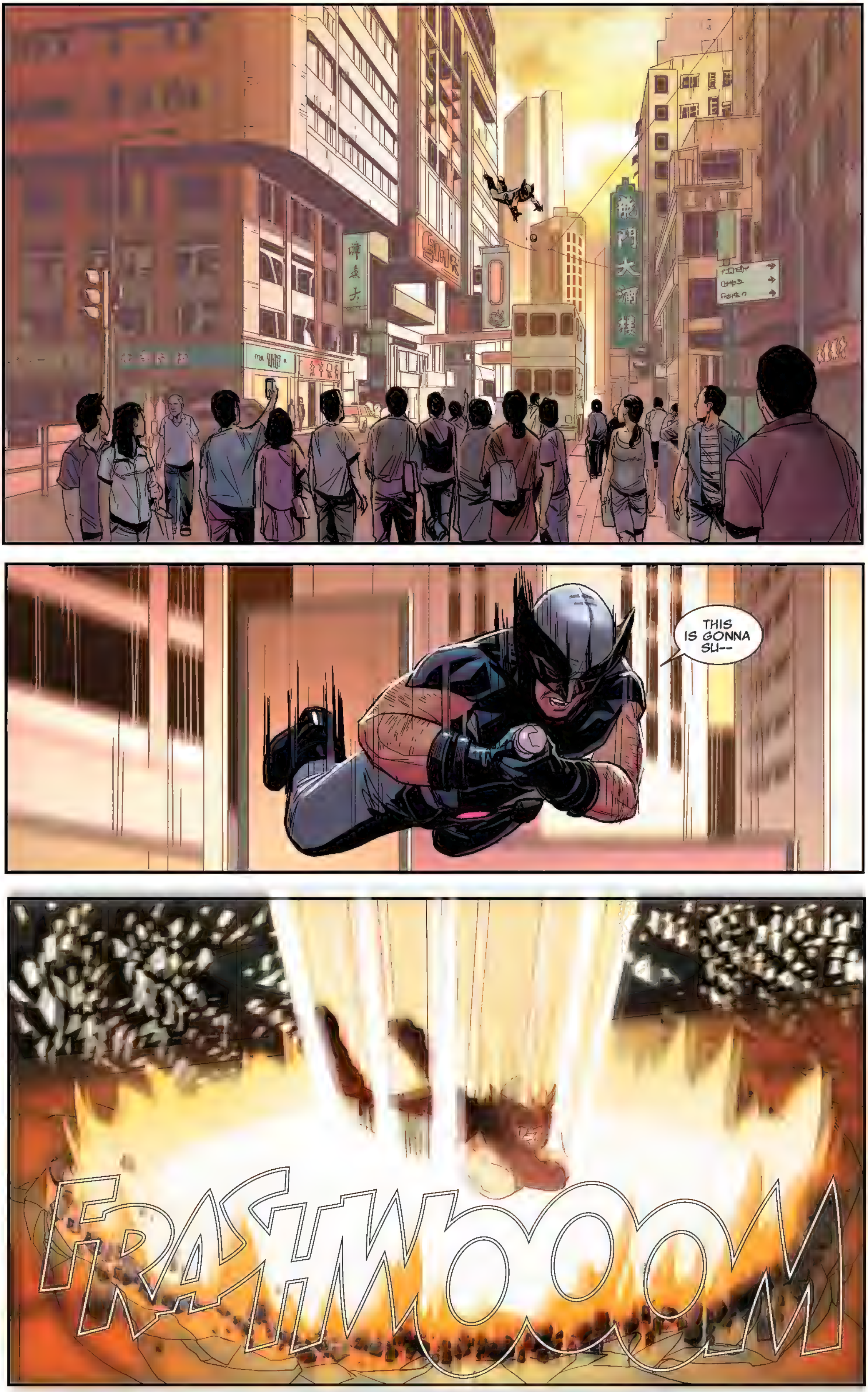

OTHERWORLD:
THREE DAYS AGO MY BROTHER DIED THAT ALL OTHERS MAY LIVE.
PUT DOWN TO PREVENT WHAT HE WOULD ONE DAY DO.
THE BITTER IRONY IS NOT LOST ON ME.
NOR THE MEANS OF HIS DEATH.
REST NOW, BROTHER.
STAND PROUDLY BY MOTHER AND FATHER; SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE YOU DIED IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS.
BRIAN? I'D LIKE TO--
GLOAT?
OR PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO DRIVE HOME MY HYPOCRISY?
FINE. YOU WERE RIGHT.
SOME DILEMMAS ARE SO UGLY THAT WE MUST KILL CHILDREN AND FAMILY MEMBERS TO SOLVE THEM.
IT IS POINTLESS TO STRIVE TO PRESERVE LIFE BECAUSE IN THE END IT'S DEATH THAT GETS THE JOB BLOODY WELL DONE.
I SEE NOW.
YOU WIN.

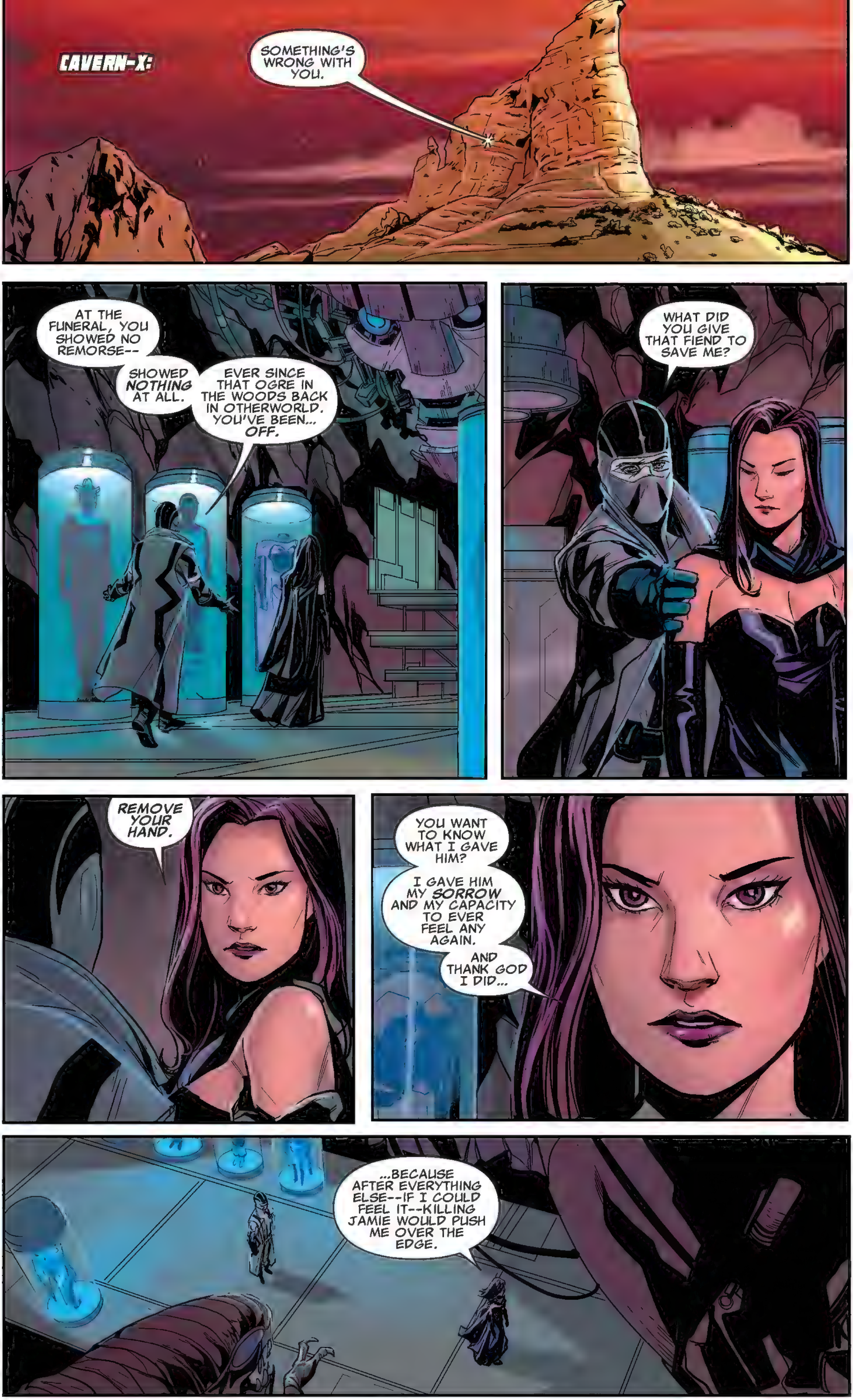

I ONLY CAME TO OFFER MY CONDOLENCES.
ELIZABETH...
NEVER MIND.

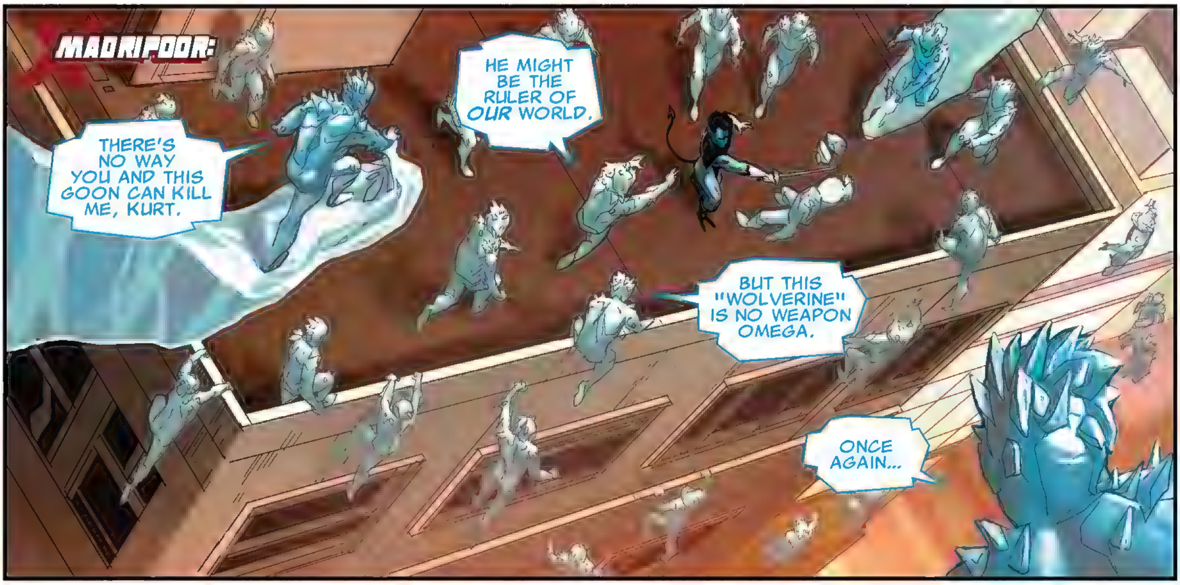

MADRIPOOR:
BAMF!
DRAKE AND I HAVE BEEN THROUGH HELL TOGETHER.
HE CARED FOR ME AFTER BLOB KILLED LINDA.
OKAY, YOU WANT TO BLOW ME UP...
YOU'LL HAVE TO DO YOURSELF TOO, BUDDY.
BETTER DISARM IT, HUH?
HE SAVED MY LIFE DURING THE SECOND COMING OF APOCALYPSE.
PROPPED ME UP WHEN I HAD NOTHING LEFT.
KLIK
GOOD BOY.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE STUCK, ELF...
...LEMME GIVE YOU A HAND.
THE TRUE COST OF HIS BETRAYAL CAN'T BE MEASURED.
BUT I'M NOT KILLING DRAKE TODAY.

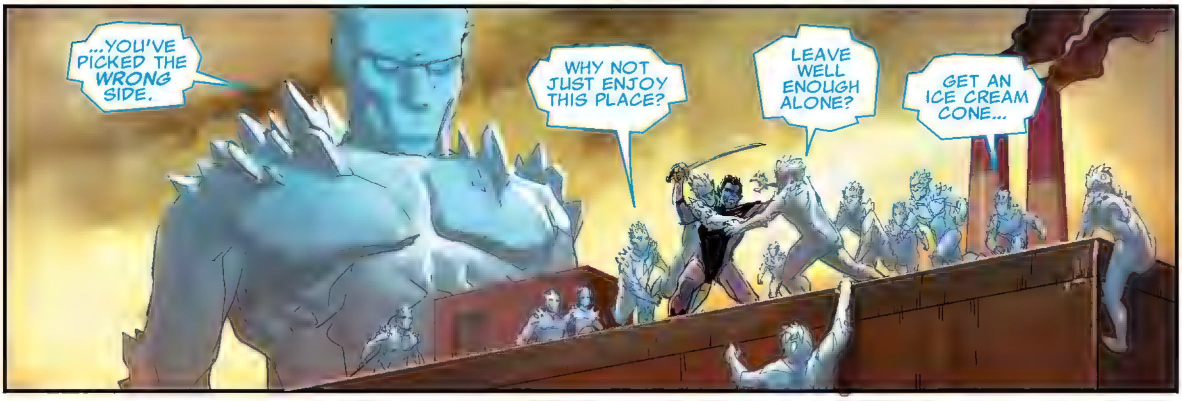

I LOST HIM YEARS AGO--
SHRUKK
GHRAGH!
--TO A GREAT FALL--
KRESHH
--THAT SHATTERED HIM INTO SO MANY PIECES--
--THERE WASN'T ANYTHING HUMAN LEFT
JUST A FROZEN-HEARTED AVATAR WHO SOLD OUT HIS FAMILY.
KRAKATHOOM
STOP--CAN'T ACTIVATE THAT THING HERE--CIVILIANS EVERYWHERE.
I CAN TELEPORT IT INTO HIS STOMACH, JUMP HIM UP OVER THE CITY--
TRUST ME.
DEEEP
THAT LOOKS LIKE ONE DEADLY GRENADE...

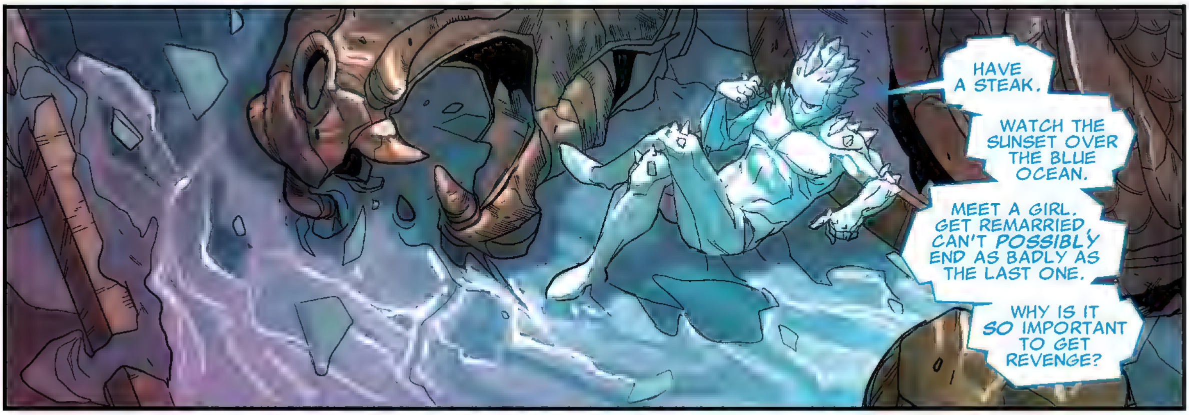

OOPS-- YOU DROPPED IT.
KROOM
SON OF A--
I WONDER HOW MANY PEOPLE IT'LL KILL?
FWOOSSH
NO--!
DEEEP
DEEEP
DEEEP

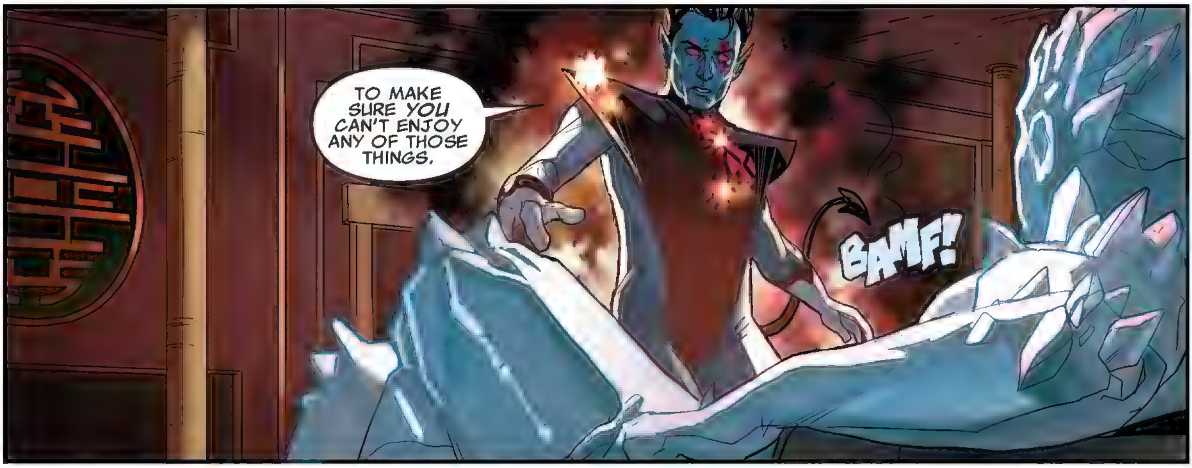

THIS IS GONNA SU--
FRASHWOOOM

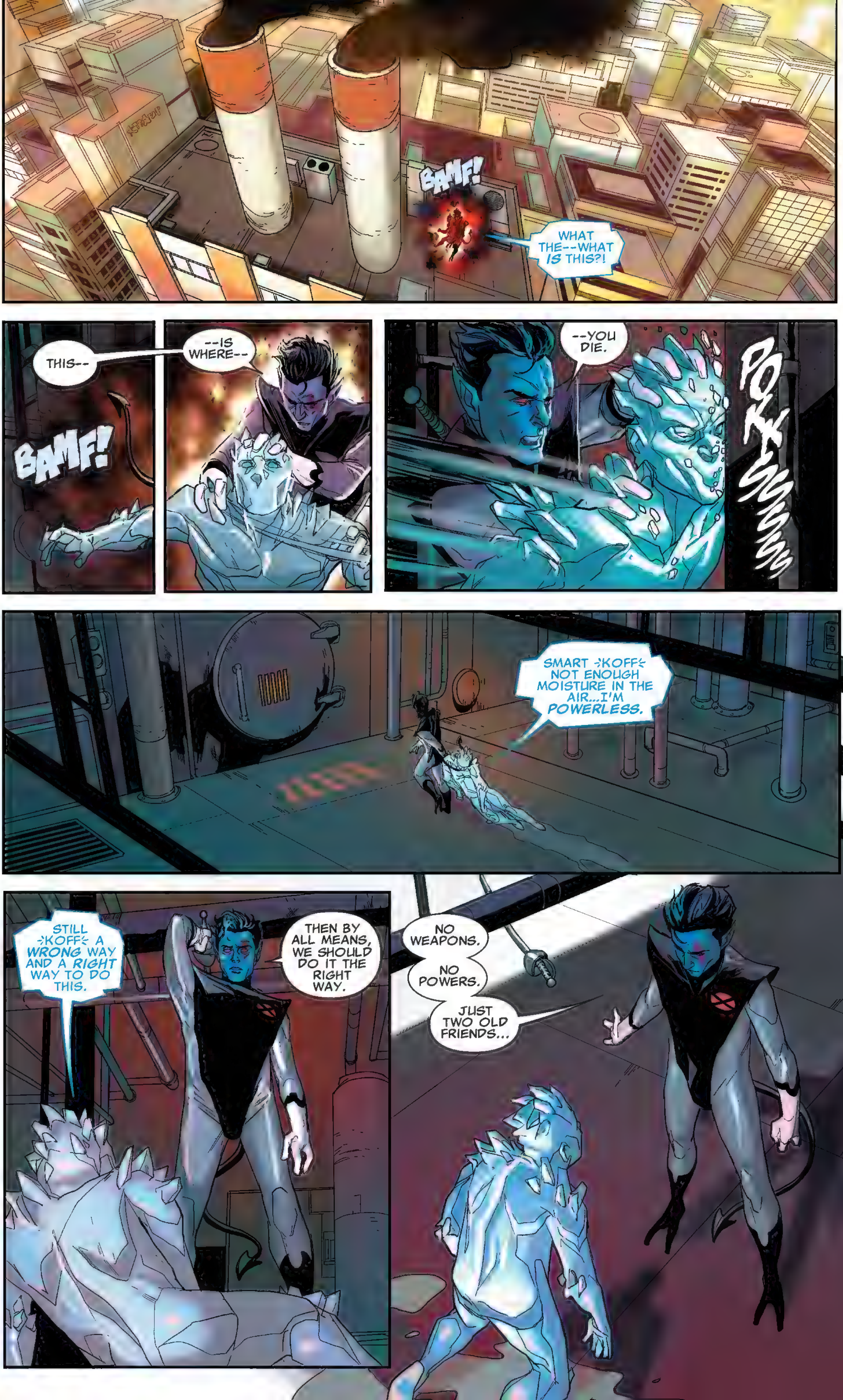

CAVERN-X:
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH YOU.
AT THE FUNERAL, YOU SHOWED NO REMORSE--
SHOWED *NOTHING* AT ALL.
EVER SINCE THAT OGRE IN THE WOODS BACK IN OTHERWORLD, YOU'VE BEEN... *OFF.*
WHAT DID YOU GIVE THAT FIEND TO SAVE ME?
REMOVE YOUR HAND.
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT I GAVE HIM?
I GAVE HIM MY *SORROW* AND MY CAPACITY TO EVER FEEL ANY AGAIN.
AND THANK GOD I DID...
...BECAUSE AFTER EVERYTHING ELSE--IF I COULD FEEL IT--KILLING JAMIE WOULD PUSH ME OVER THE EDGE.

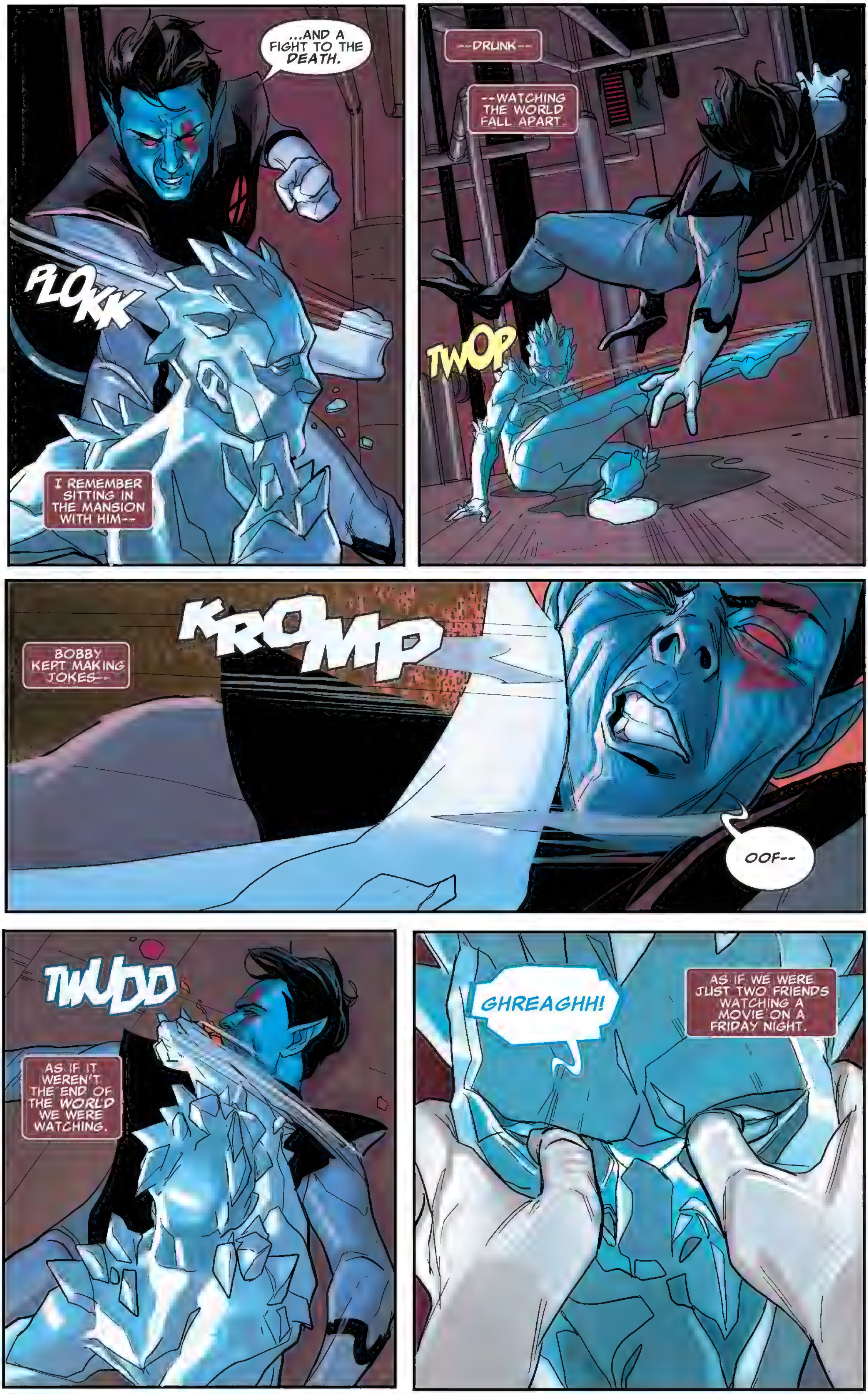

MADRIPOOR:
THERE'S NO WAY YOU AND THIS GOON CAN KILL ME, KURT.
HE MIGHT BE THE RULER OF *OUR* WORLD,
BUT THIS "WOLVERINE" IS NO WEAPON OMEGA.
ONCE AGAIN...

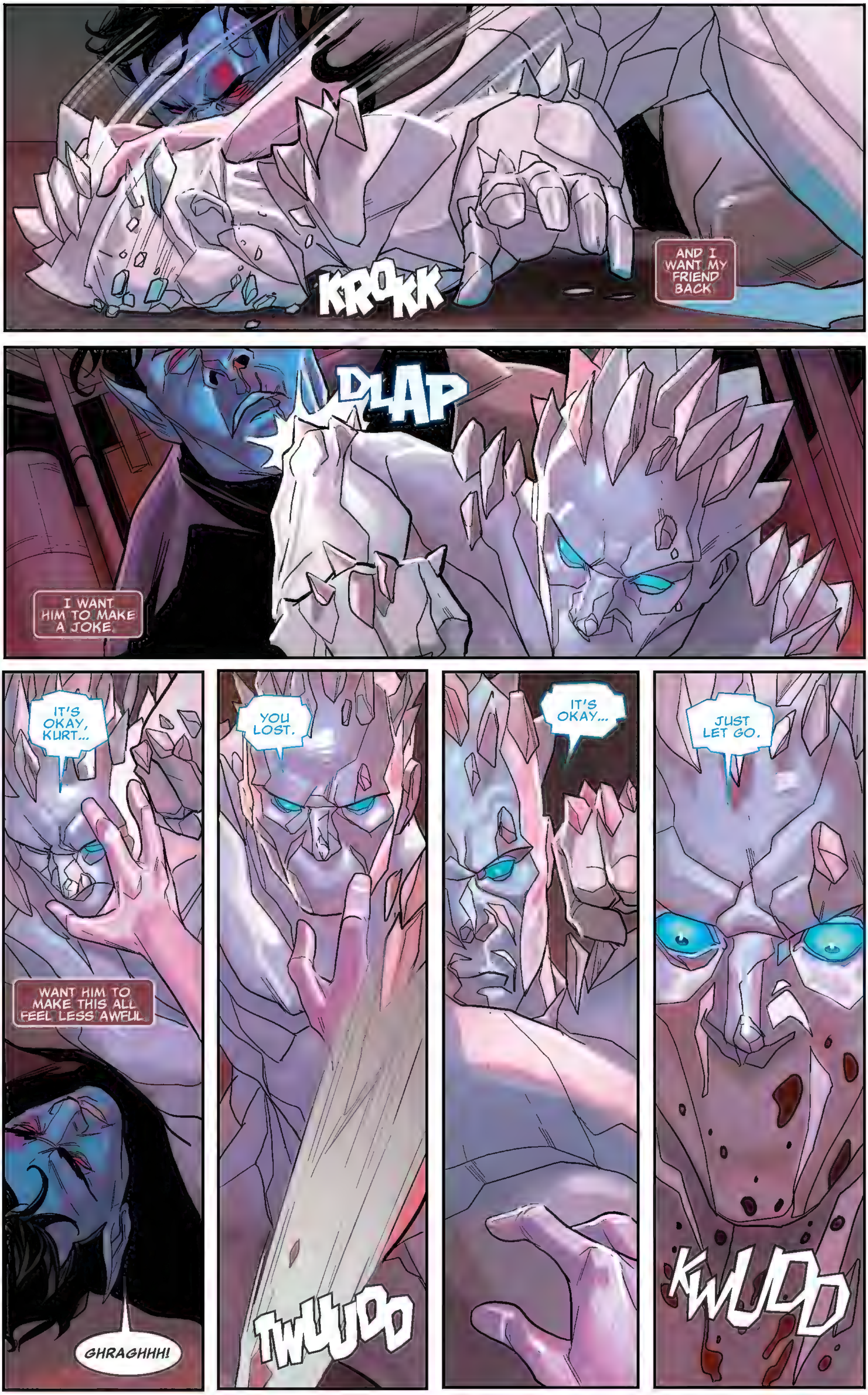

...YOU'VE PICKED THE *WRONG* SIDE.
WHY NOT JUST ENJOY THIS PLACE?
LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE?
GET AN ICE CREAM CONE...

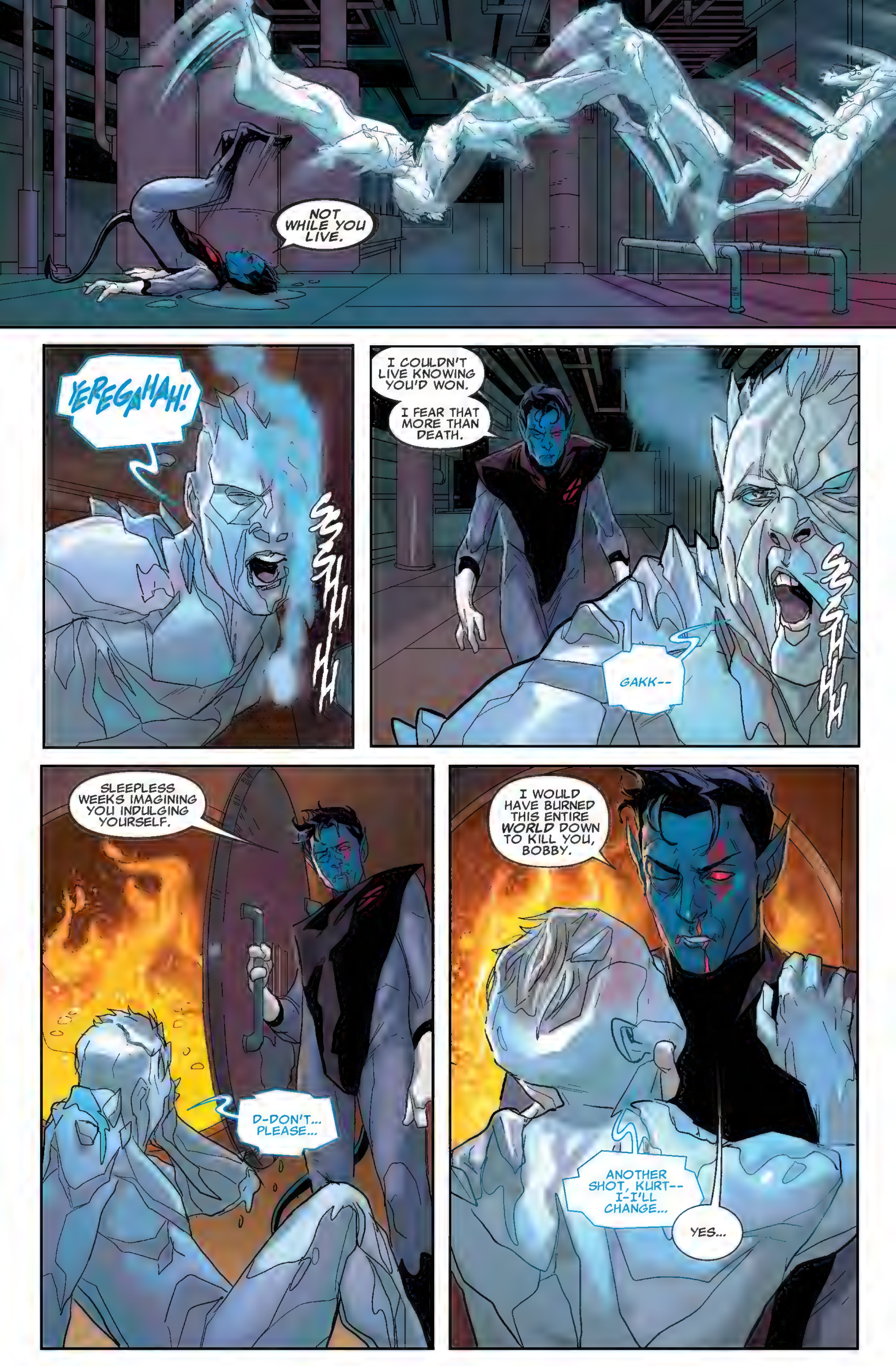

HAVE A STEAK.
WATCH THE SUNSET OVER THE BLUE OCEAN.
MEET A GIRL. GET REMARRIED, CAN'T *POSSIBLY* END AS BADLY AS THE LAST ONE.
WHY IS IT *SO* IMPORTANT TO GET REVENGE?

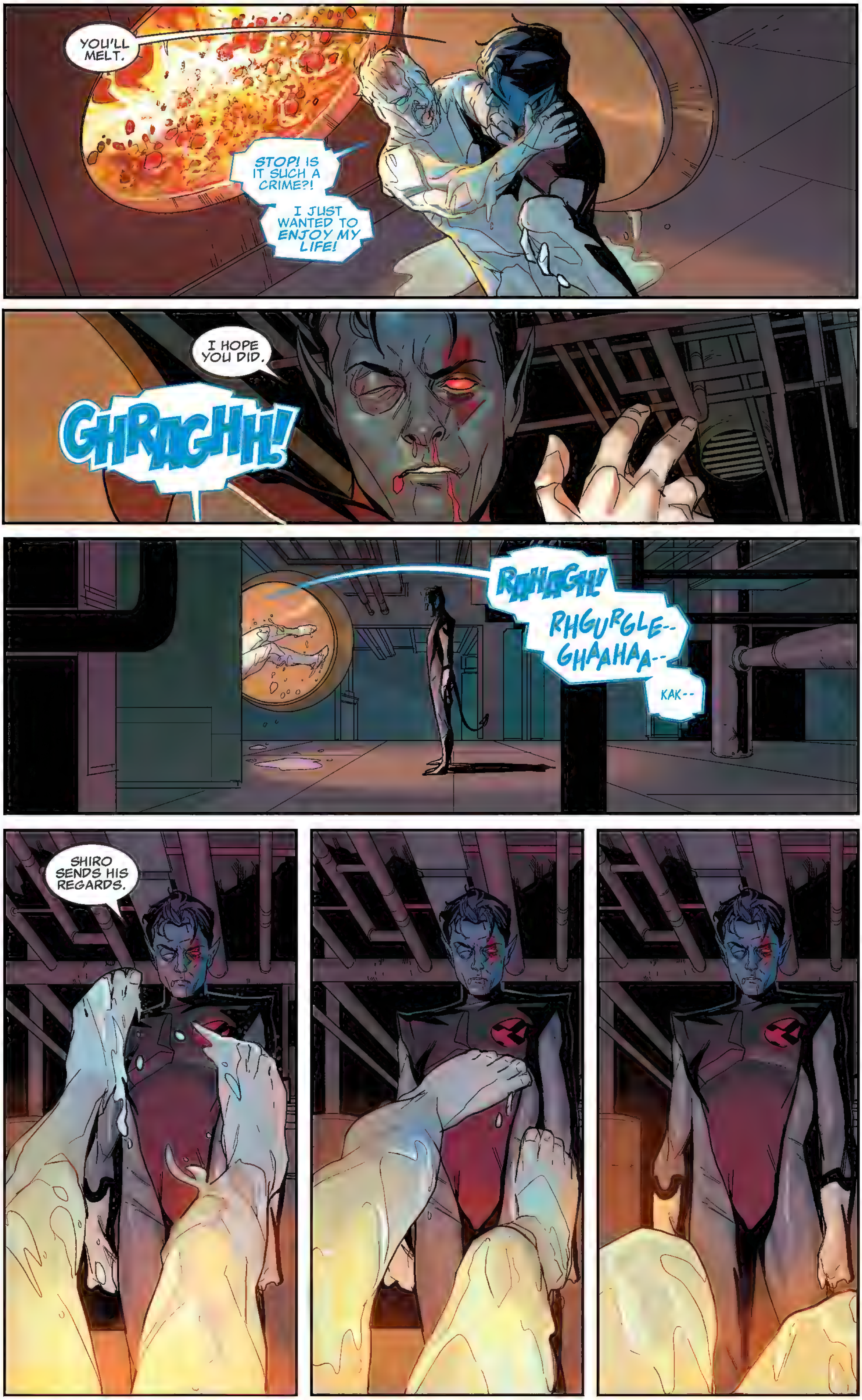

TO MAKE SURE *YOU* CAN'T ENJOY ANY OF THOSE THINGS.
BAMF!

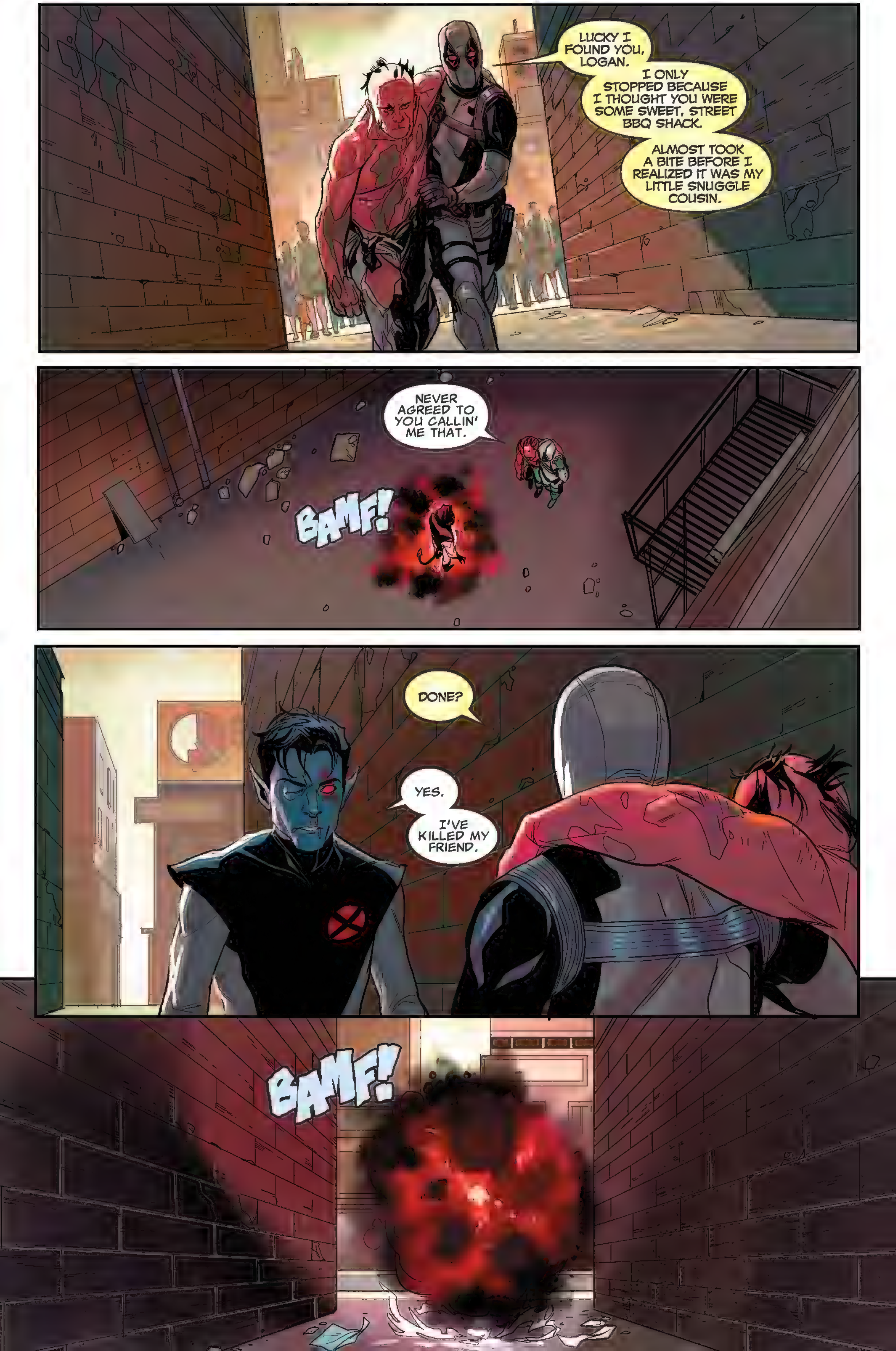

BAMF!
WHAT THE--WHAT *IS* THIS?!
BAMF!
THIS--
--IS WHERE--
--YOU DIE.
POKSSSSSS
SMART ⊰KOFF⊱ NOT ENOUGH MOISTURE IN THE AIR...I'M *POWERLESS.*
STILL ⊰KOFF⊱ A *WRONG* WAY AND A *RIGHT* WAY TO DO THIS.
THEN BY ALL MEANS, WE SHOULD DO IT THE RIGHT WAY.
NO WEAPONS.
NO POWERS.
JUST TWO OLD FRIENDS...

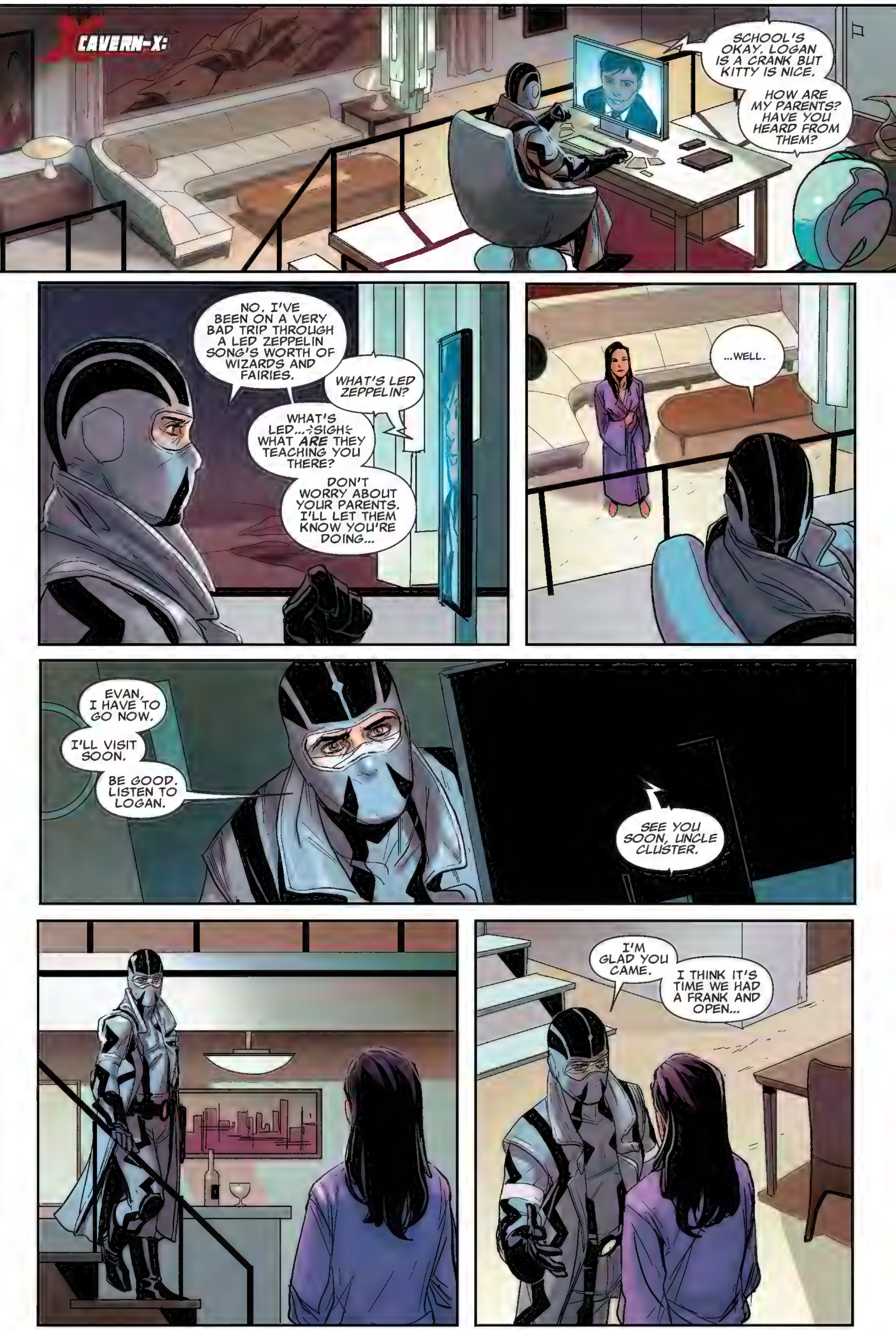

...AND A FIGHT TO THE *DEATH.*
PLOKK
I REMEMBER SITTING IN THE MANSION WITH HIM--
--DRUNK--
--WATCHING THE WORLD FALL APART.
TWOP
BOBBY KEPT MAKING JOKES--
KROMP
OOF--
TWUDD
AS IF IT WEREN'T THE END OF THE WORLD WE WERE WATCHING.
GHREAGHH!
AS IF WE WERE JUST TWO FRIENDS WATCHING A MOVIE ON A FRIDAY NIGHT.

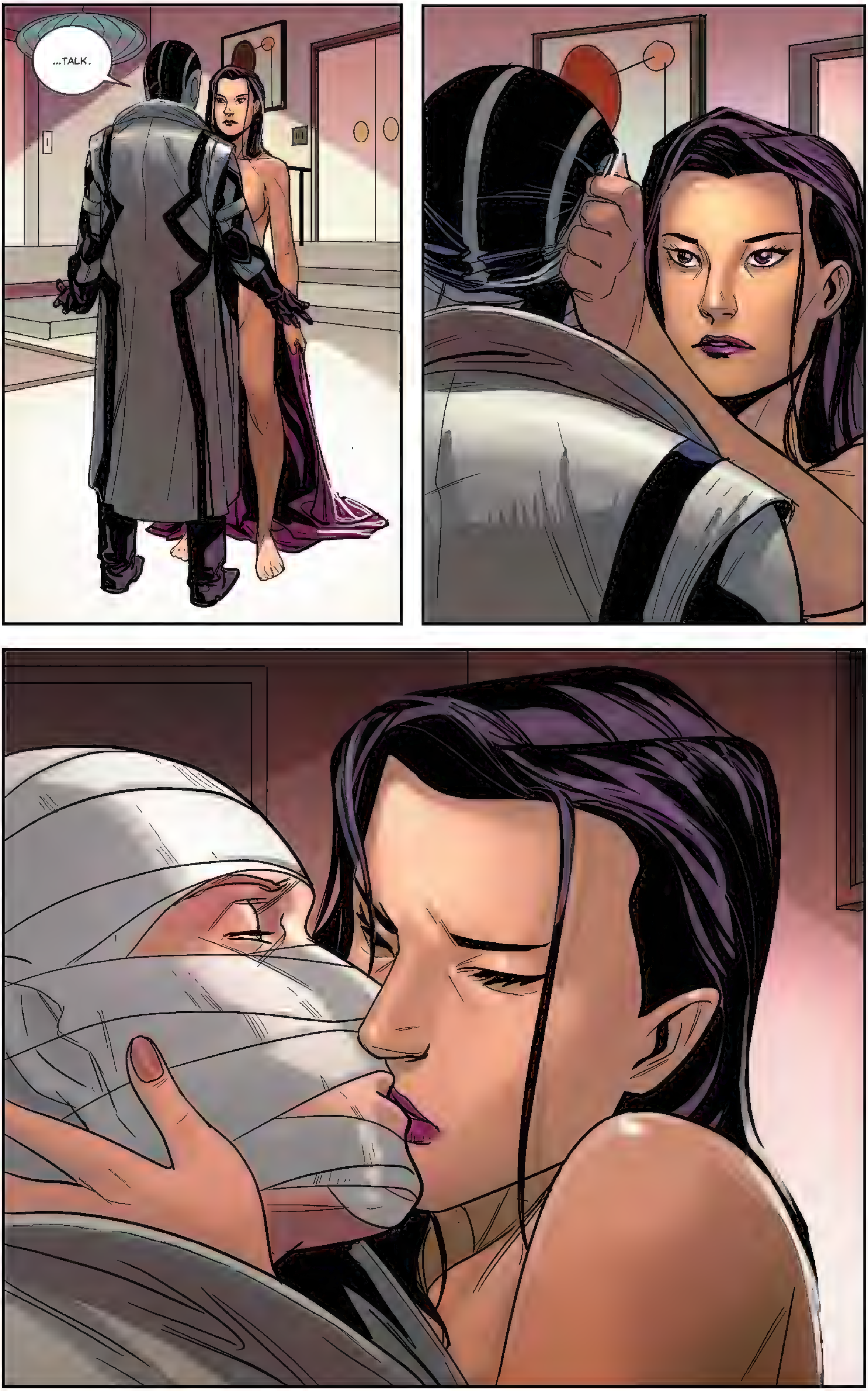

KROKK
AND I WANT MY FRIEND BACK.
DLAP
I WANT HIM TO MAKE A JOKE.
IT'S OKAY, KURT...
WANT HIM TO MAKE THIS ALL FEEL LESS AWFUL.
GHRAGHHH!
YOU LOST.
TWUUDD
IT'S OKAY...
JUST LET GO.
KWUDD

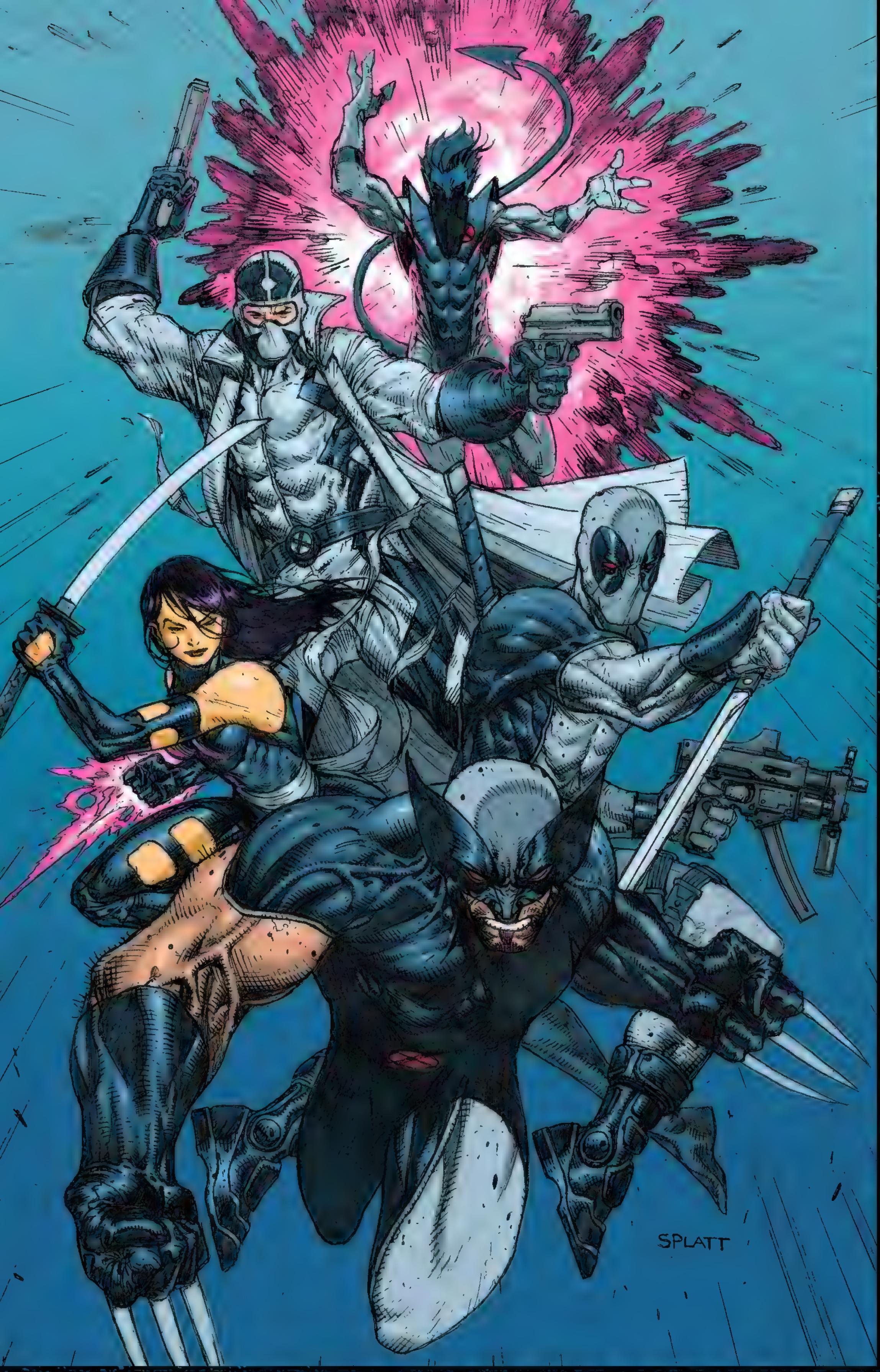

NOT WHILE YOU LIVE.
YEREGAHAH!
SSHHHHH
I COULDN'T LIVE KNOWING YOU'D WON.
I FEAR THAT MORE THAN DEATH.
GAKK--
SSHHHHH
SLEEPLESS WEEKS IMAGINING YOU INDULGING YOURSELF.
D-DON'T... PLEASE...
I WOULD HAVE BURNED THIS ENTIRE WORLD DOWN TO KILL YOU, BOBBY.
ANOTHER SHOT, KURT-- I-I'LL CHANGE...
YES...


YOU'LL MELT.
STOP! IS IT SUCH A CRIME?!
I JUST WANTED TO ENJOY MY LIFE!
I HOPE YOU DID.
GHRAGHH!
RAHAGH!
RHGURGLE--
GHAAHAA--
KAK--
SHIRO SENDS HIS REGARDS.


LUCKY I FOUND YOU, LOGAN.
I ONLY STOPPED BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOU WERE SOME SWEET, STREET BBQ SHACK.
ALMOST TOOK A BITE BEFORE I REALIZED IT WAS MY LITTLE SNUGGLE COUSIN.
NEVER AGREED TO YOU CALLIN' ME THAT.
BAMF!
DONE?
YES.
I'VE KILLED MY FRIEND.
BAMF!


CAVERN-X:
SCHOOL'S OKAY. LOGAN IS A CRANK BUT KITTY IS NICE.
HOW ARE MY PARENTS? HAVE YOU HEARD FROM THEM?
NO. I'VE BEEN ON A VERY BAD TRIP THROUGH A LED ZEPPELIN SONG'S WORTH OF WIZARDS AND FAIRIES.
WHAT'S LED ZEPPELIN?
WHAT'S LED... ›SIGH‹ WHAT *ARE* THEY TEACHING YOU THERE?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR PARENTS. I'LL LET THEM KNOW YOU'RE DOING...
...WELL.
EVAN, I HAVE TO GO NOW.
I'LL VISIT SOON.
BE GOOD. LISTEN TO LOGAN.
SEE YOU SOON, UNCLE CLUSTER.
I'M GLAD YOU CAME.
I THINK IT'S TIME WE HAD A FRANK AND OPEN...

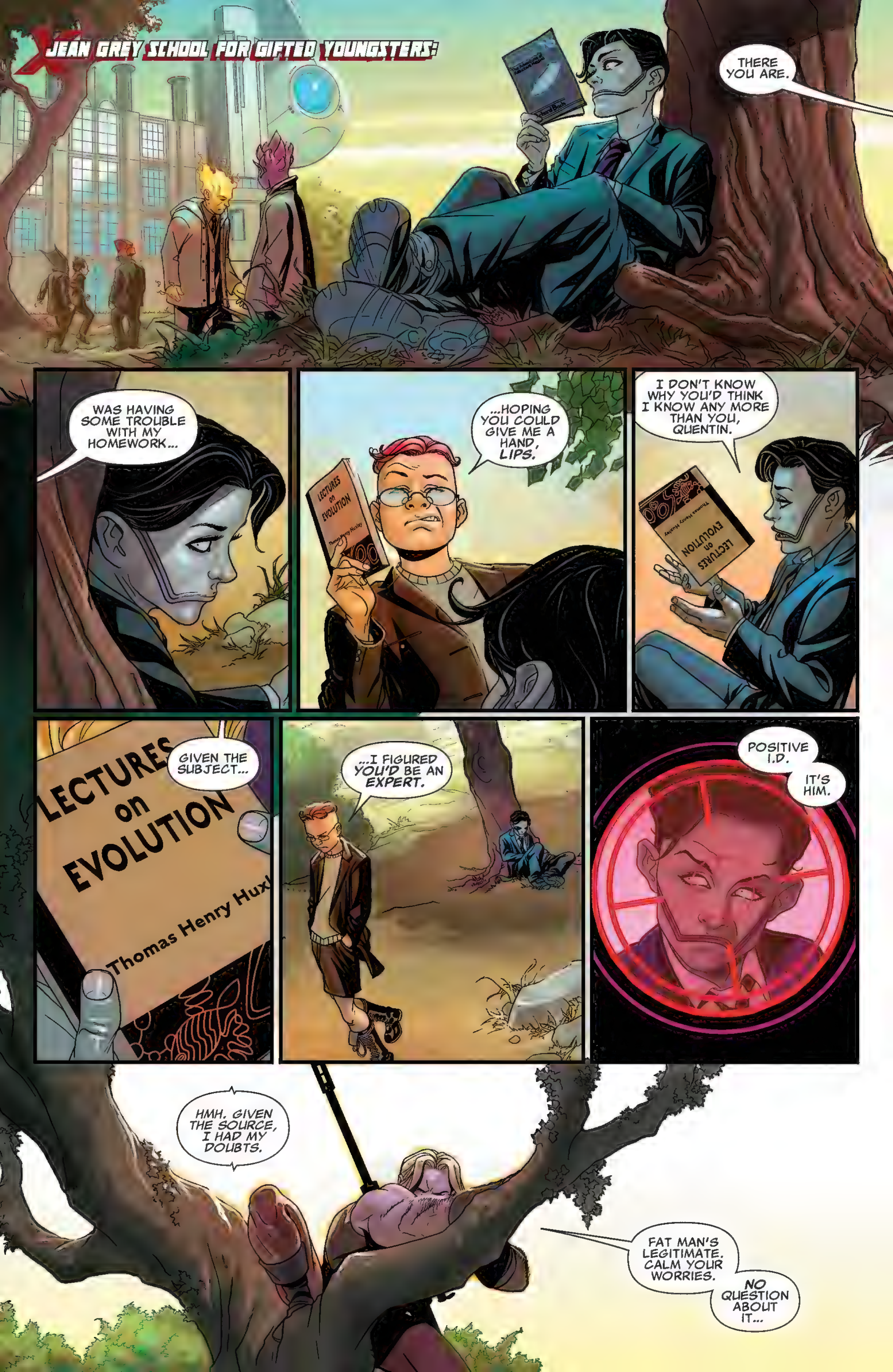

...TALK.

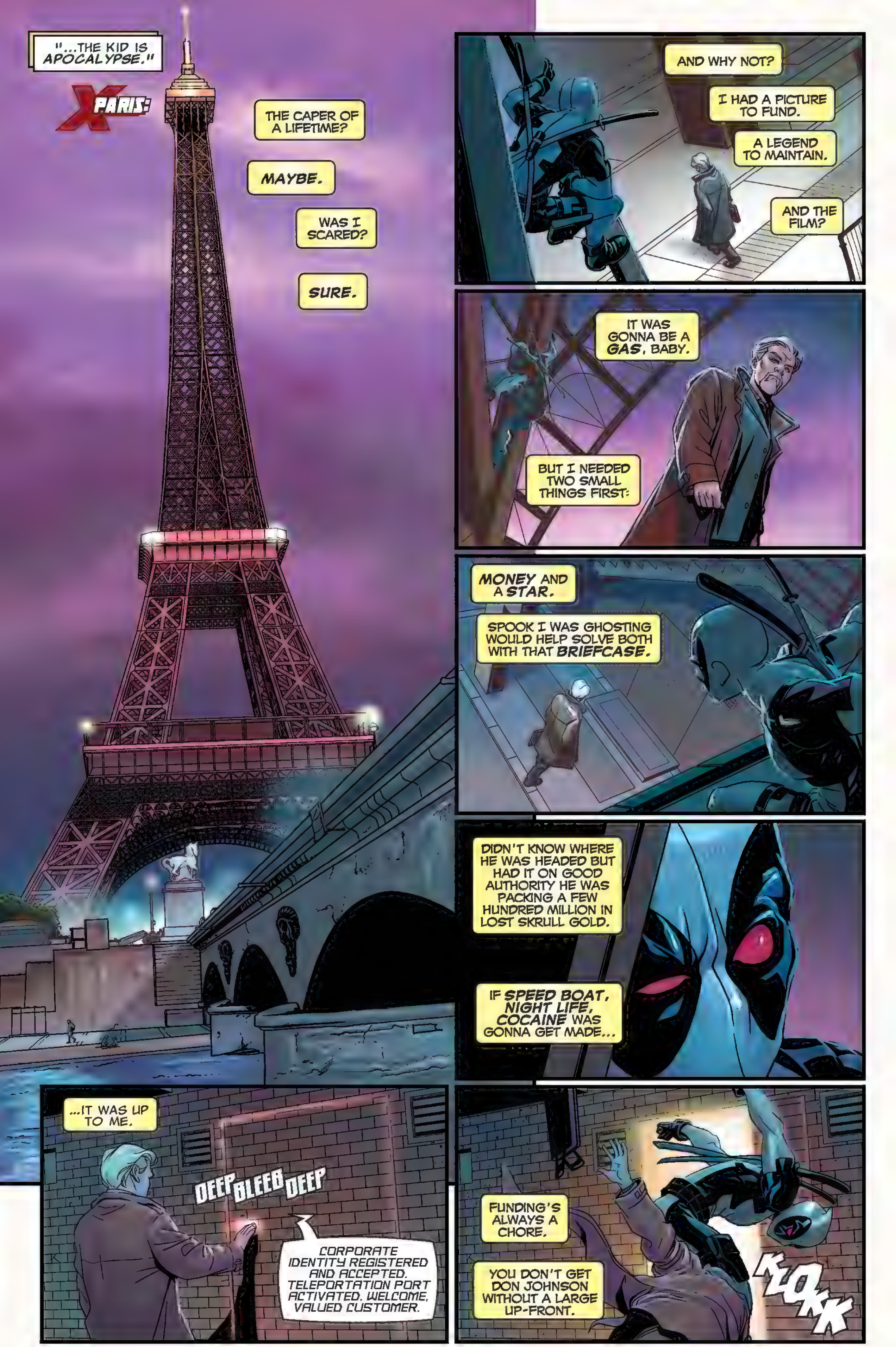


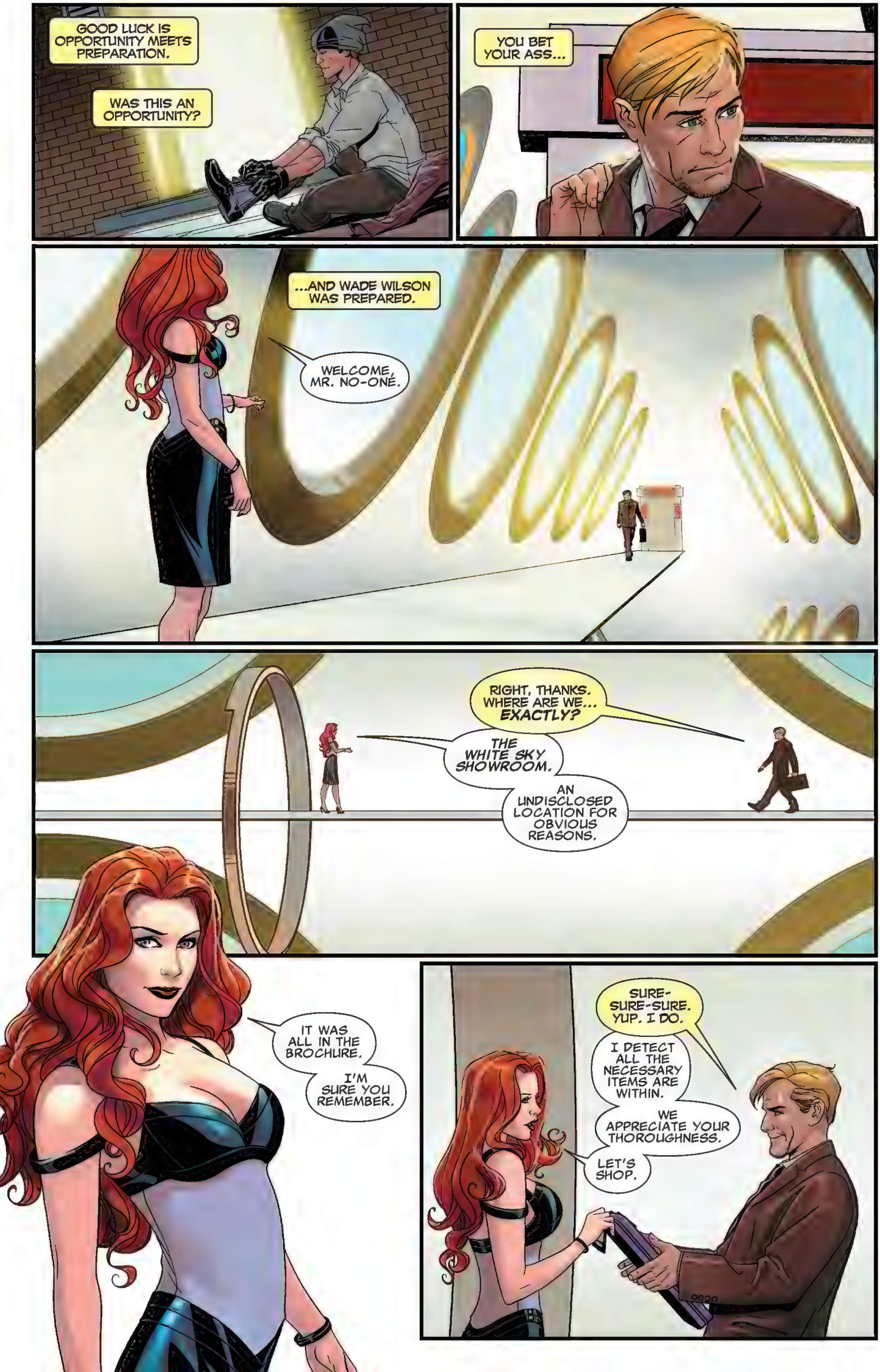
UNCANNY X-FORCE 25 VARIANT
ART BY STEPHEN PLATT

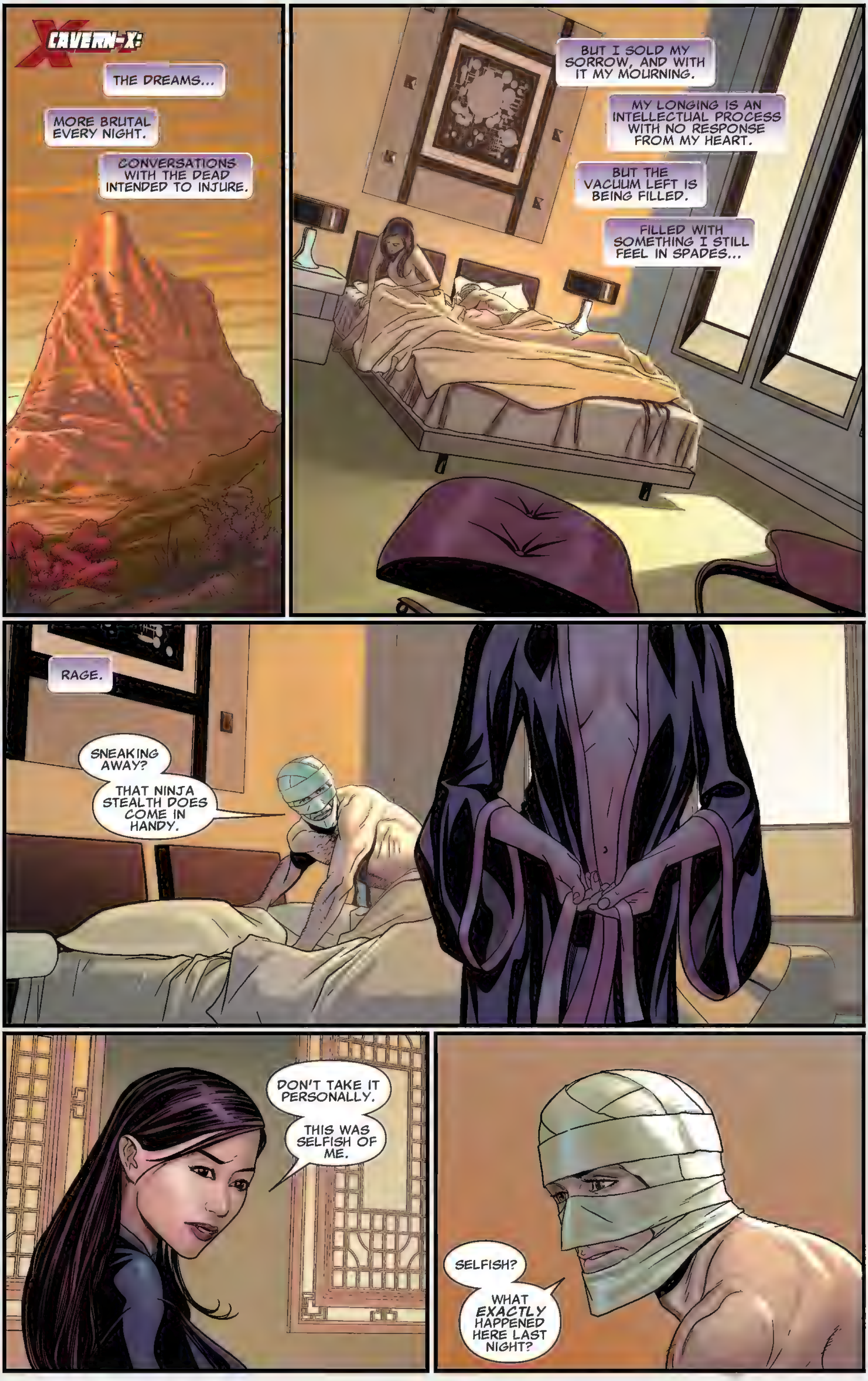
25 FINAL EXECUTION

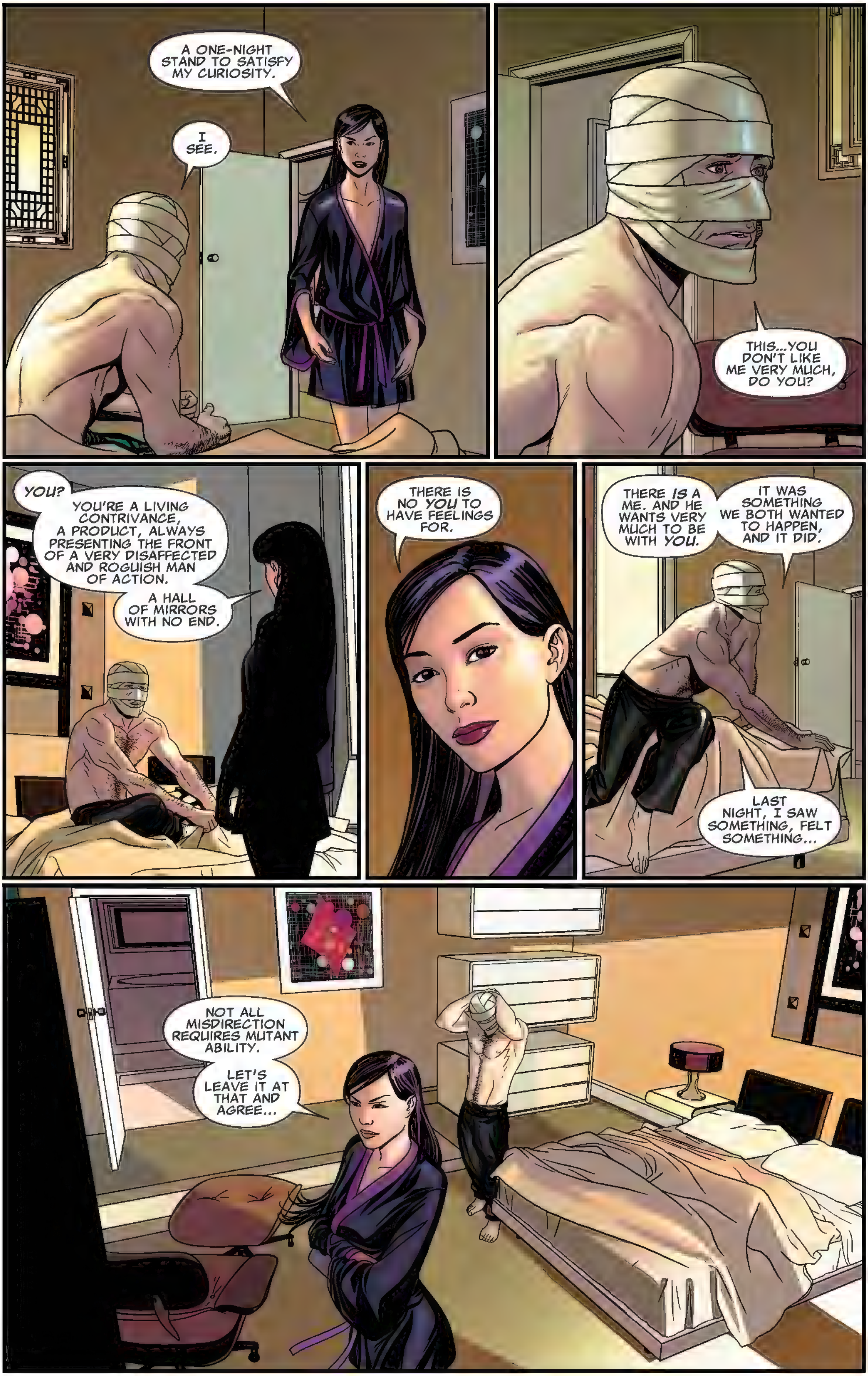
CHAPTER 1: BLACK CLOUD

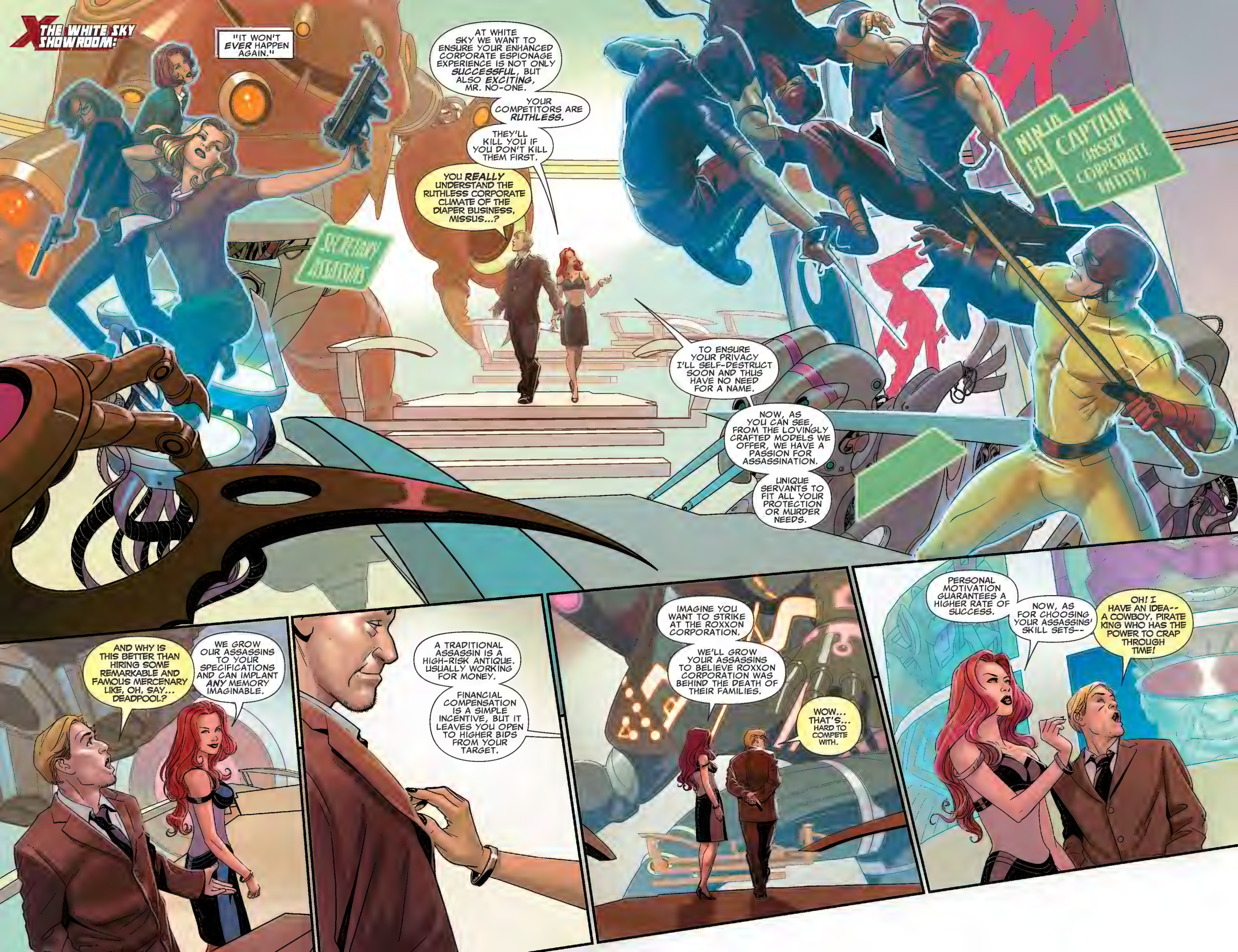

JEAN GREY SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS:
THERE YOU ARE.
WAS HAVING SOME TROUBLE WITH MY HOMEWORK...
...HOPING YOU COULD GIVE ME A HAND, LIPS.
LECTURES on EVOLUTION Thomas Henry Huxley
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'D THINK I KNOW ANY MORE THAN YOU, QUENTIN.
LECTURES on EVOLUTION Thomas Henry Huxley
LECTURES on EVOLUTION Thomas Henry Hux
GIVEN THE SUBJECT...
...I FIGURED YOU'D BE AN EXPERT.
POSITIVE I.D.
IT'S HIM.
HMH. GIVEN THE SOURCE, I HAD MY DOUBTS.
FAT MAN'S LEGITIMATE. CALM YOUR WORRIES.
NO QUESTION ABOUT IT...

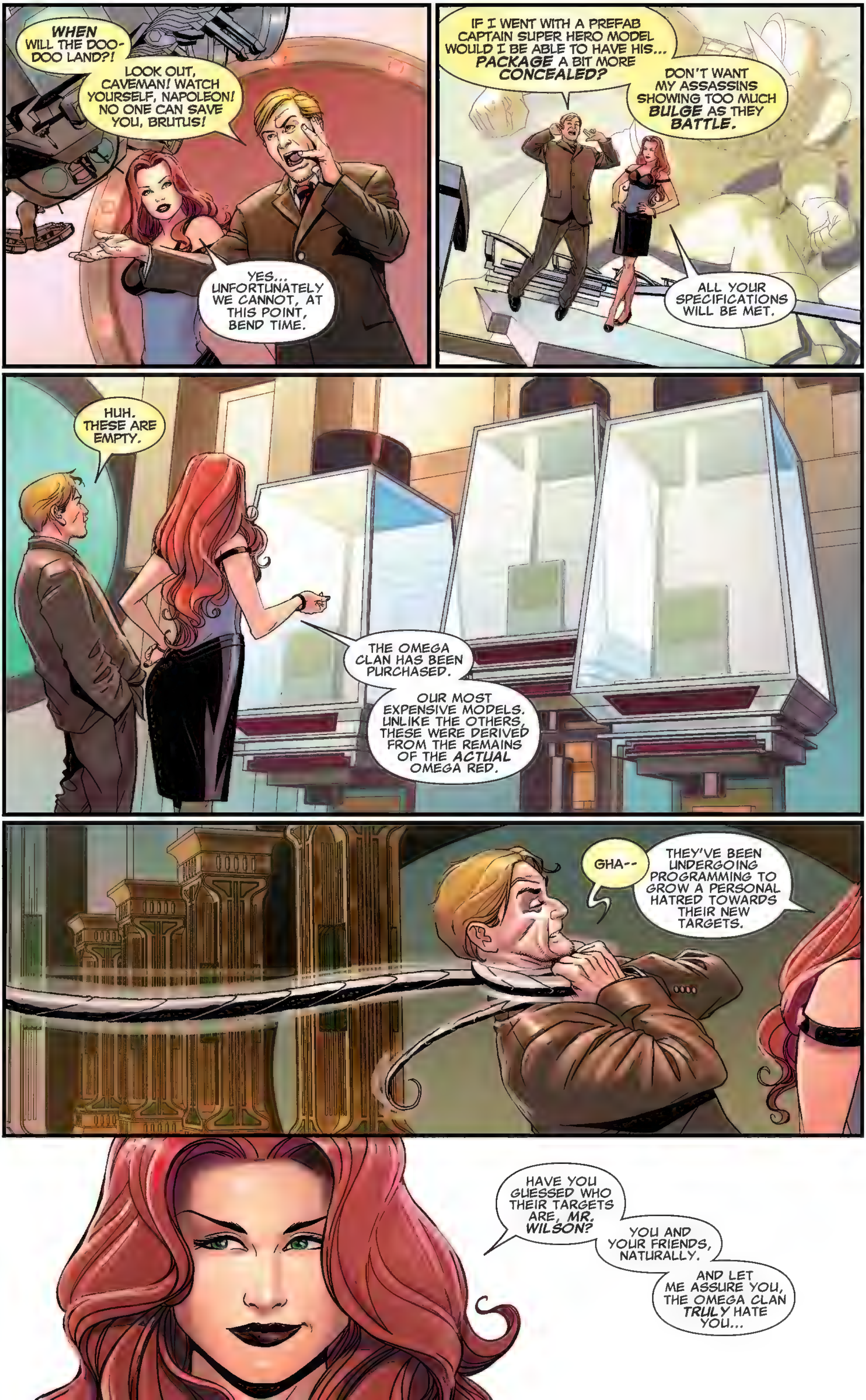

"...THE KID IS APOCALYPSE."
X-PARIS:
THE CAPER OF A LIFETIME?
MAYBE.
WAS I SCARED?
SURE.
AND WHY NOT?
I HAD A PICTURE TO FUND.
A LEGEND TO MAINTAIN.
AND THE FILM?
IT WAS GONNA BE A GAS, BABY.
BUT I NEEDED TWO SMALL THINGS FIRST:
MONEY AND A STAR.
SPOOK I WAS GHOSTING WOULD HELP SOLVE BOTH WITH THAT BRIEFCASE.
DIDN'T KNOW WHERE HE WAS HEADED BUT HAD IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY HE WAS PACKING A FEW HUNDRED MILLION IN LOST SKRULL GOLD.
IF SPEED BOAT, NIGHT LIFE, COCAINE WAS GONNA GET MADE...
...IT WAS UP TO ME.
DEEP BLEEB DEEP
CORPORATE IDENTITY REGISTERED AND ACCEPTED. TELEPORTATION PORT ACTIVATED. WELCOME, VALUED CUSTOMER.
FUNDING'S ALWAYS A CHORE.
YOU DON'T GET DON JOHNSON WITHOUT A LARGE UP-FRONT.
KLOKK

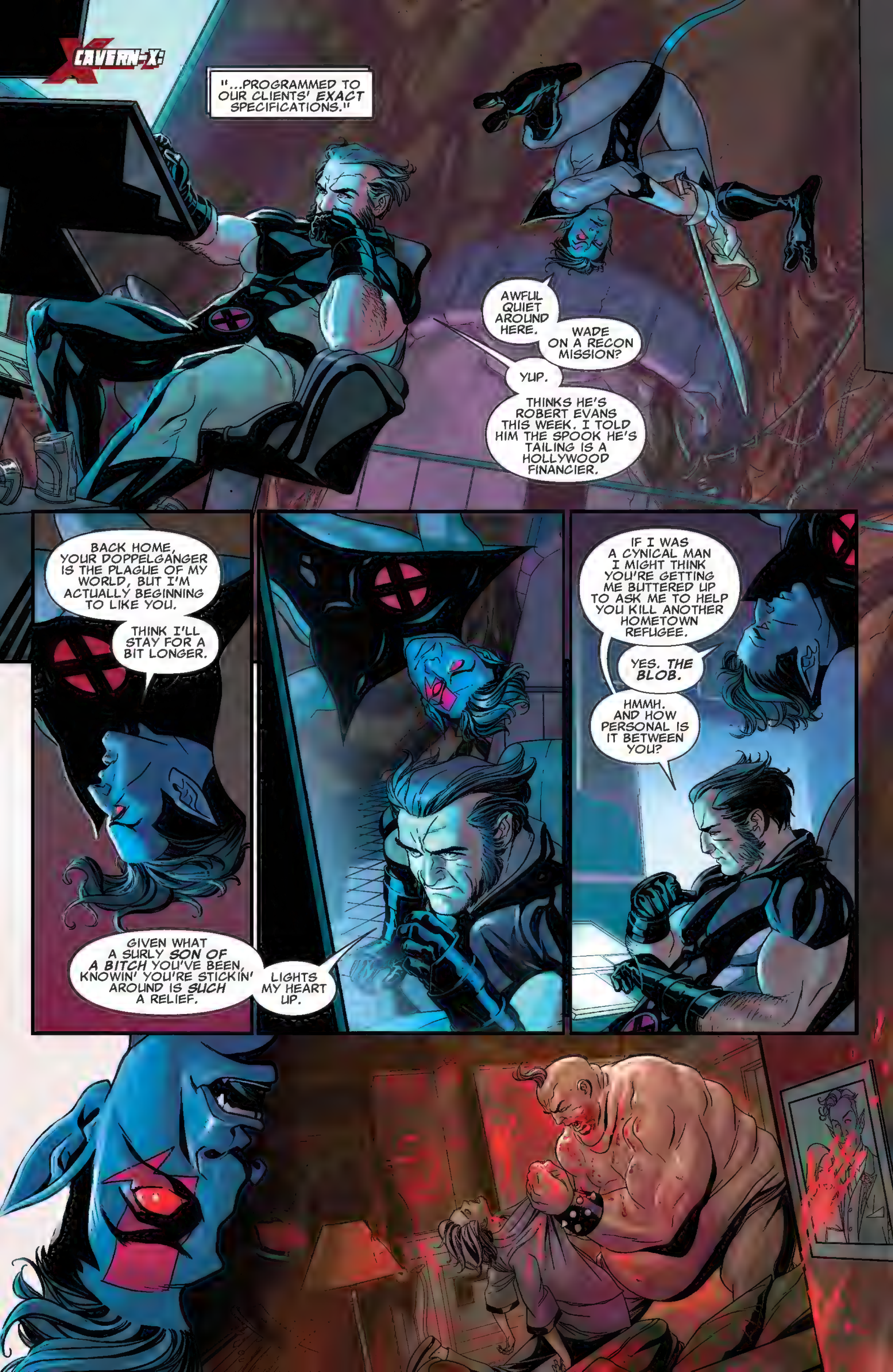

GOOD LUCK IS OPPORTUNITY MEETS PREPARATION.
WAS THIS AN OPPORTUNITY?
YOU BET YOUR ASS...
...AND WADE WILSON WAS PREPARED.
WELCOME, MR. NO-ONE.
RIGHT, THANKS. WHERE ARE WE... *EXACTLY?*
THE *WHITE SKY SHOWROOM.*
AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.
IT WAS ALL IN THE BROCHURE.
I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER.
SURE-SURE-SURE. YUP. *I DO.*
I DETECT ALL THE NECESSARY ITEMS ARE WITHIN.
WE APPRECIATE YOUR THOROUGHNESS.
LET'S SHOP.

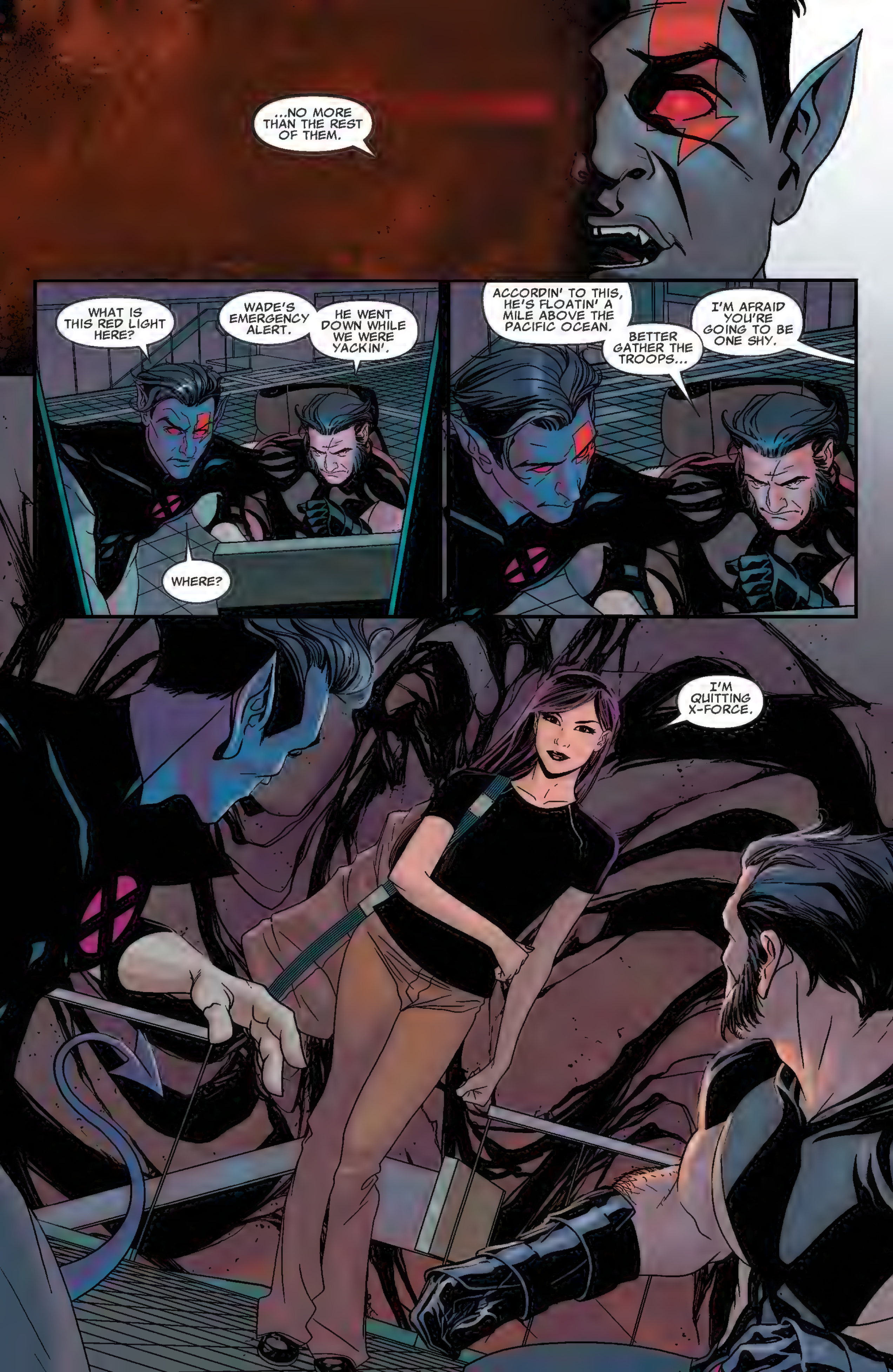

CAVERN-X:
THE DREAMS...
MORE BRUTAL EVERY NIGHT.
CONVERSATIONS WITH THE DEAD INTENDED TO INJURE.
BUT I SOLD MY SORROW, AND WITH IT MY MOURNING.
MY LONGING IS AN INTELLECTUAL PROCESS WITH NO RESPONSE FROM MY HEART.
BUT THE VACUUM LEFT IS BEING FILLED.
FILLED WITH SOMETHING I STILL FEEL IN SPADES...
RAGE.
SNEAKING AWAY?
THAT NINJA STEALTH DOES COME IN HANDY.
DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY.
THIS WAS SELFISH OF ME.
SELFISH?
WHAT *EXACTLY* HAPPENED HERE LAST NIGHT?

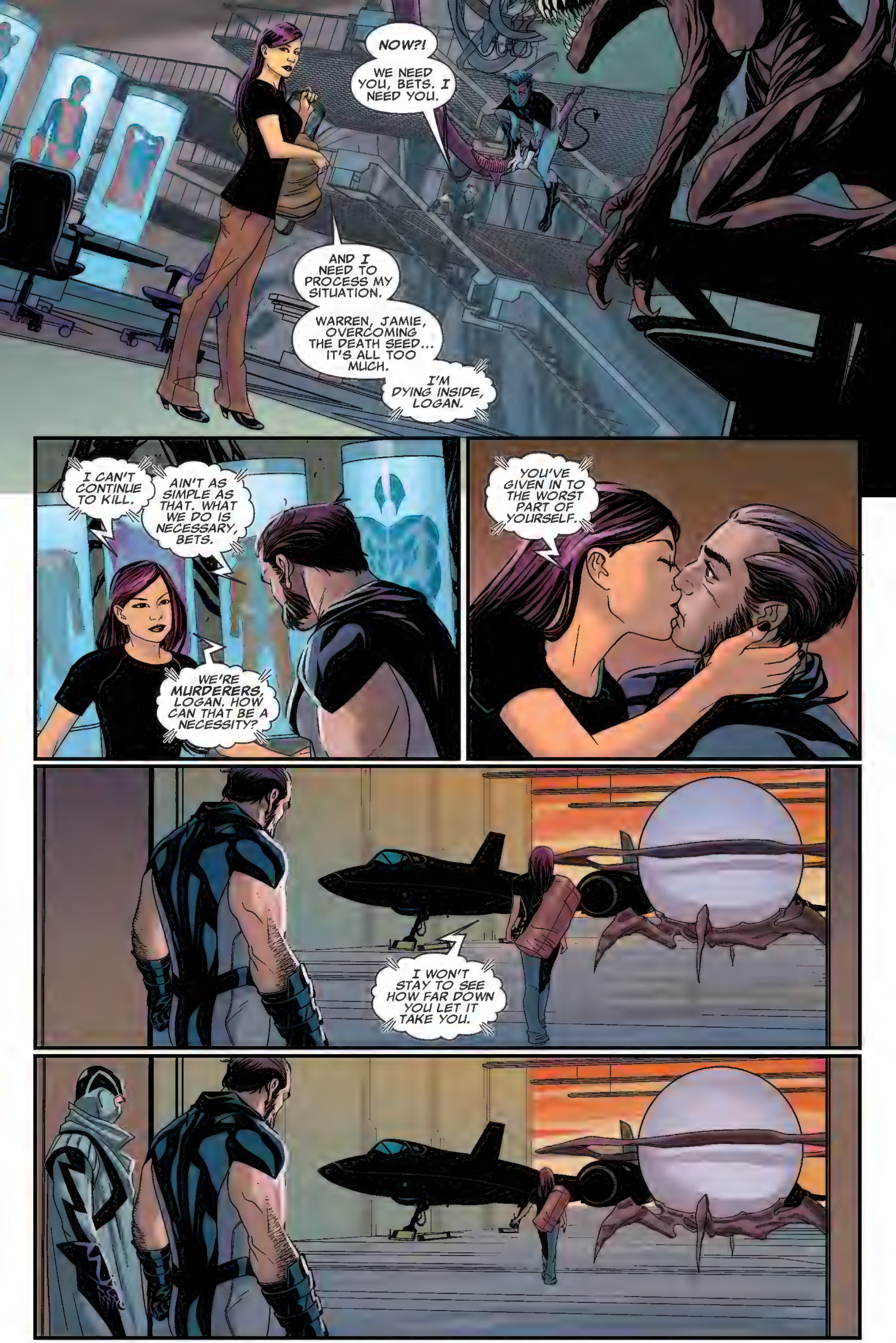

A ONE-NIGHT STAND TO SATISFY MY CURIOSITY.
I SEE.
THIS...YOU DON'T LIKE ME VERY MUCH, DO YOU?
YOU?
YOU'RE A LIVING CONTRIVANCE, A PRODUCT, ALWAYS PRESENTING THE FRONT OF A VERY DISAFFECTED AND ROGUISH MAN OF ACTION.
A HALL OF MIRRORS WITH NO END.
THERE IS NO *YOU* TO HAVE FEELINGS FOR.
THERE *IS* A ME. AND HE WANTS VERY MUCH TO BE WITH *YOU*.
IT WAS SOMETHING WE BOTH WANTED TO HAPPEN, AND IT DID.
LAST NIGHT, I SAW SOMETHING, FELT SOMETHING...
NOT ALL MISDIRECTION REQUIRES MUTANT ABILITY.
LET'S LEAVE IT AT THAT AND AGREE...

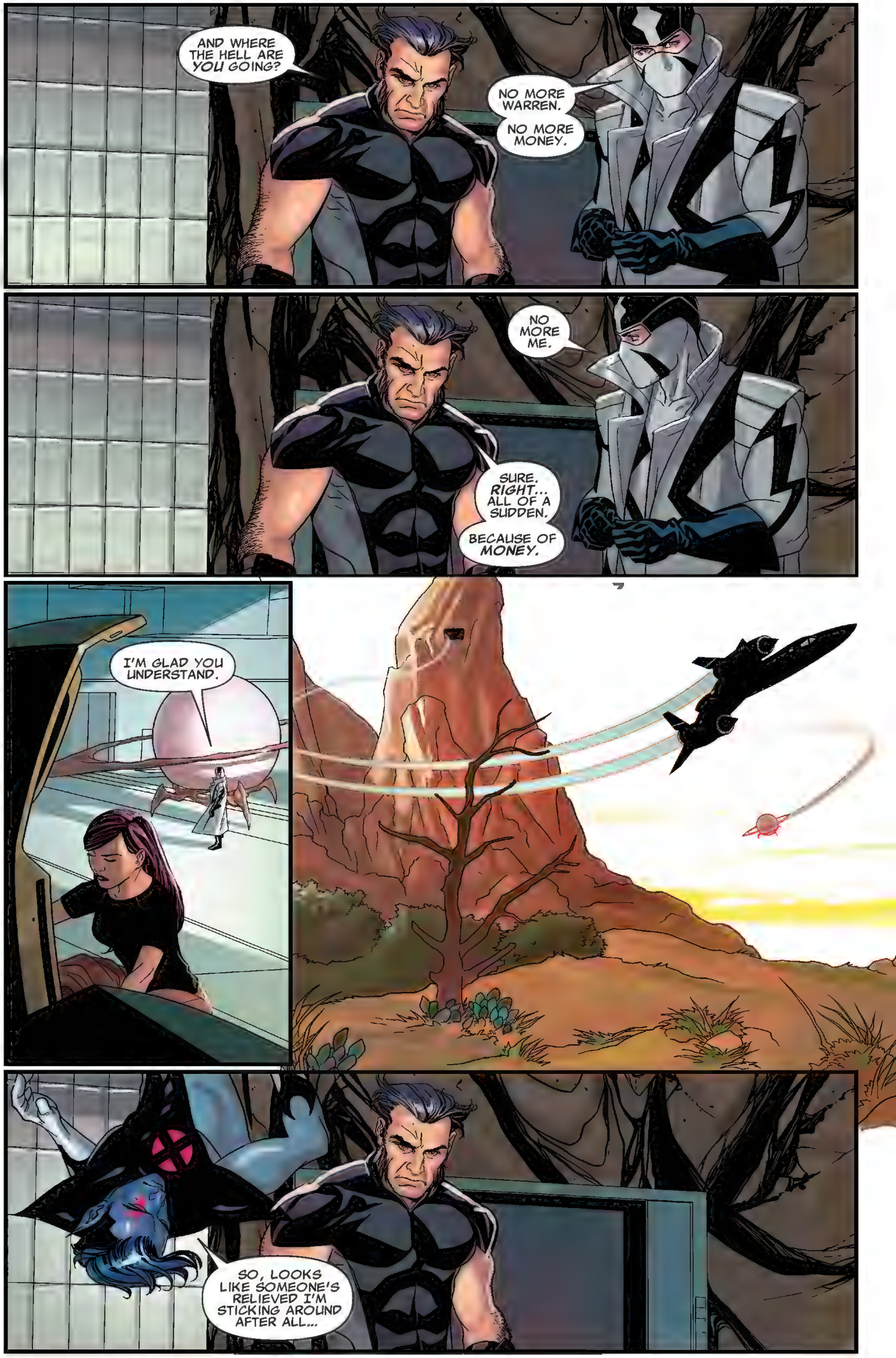

THE WHITE SKY SHOWROOM:
"IT WON'T *EVER* HAPPEN AGAIN."
AT WHITE SKY WE WANT TO ENSURE YOUR ENHANCED CORPORATE ESPIONAGE EXPERIENCE IS NOT ONLY *SUCCESSFUL*, BUT ALSO *EXCITING*, MR. NO-ONE.
YOUR COMPETITORS ARE *RUTHLESS.*
THEY'LL KILL YOU IF YOU DON'T KILL THEM FIRST.
YOU *REALLY* UNDERSTAND THE RUTHLESS CORPORATE CLIMATE OF THE DIAPER BUSINESS, MISSUS...?
SECRETARY ASSASSINS
NINJA FA
CAPTAIN (INSERT CORPORATE ENTITY)
TO ENSURE YOUR PRIVACY I'LL SELF-DESTRUCT SOON AND THUS HAVE NO NEED FOR A NAME.
NOW, AS YOU CAN SEE, FROM THE LOVINGLY CRAFTED MODELS WE OFFER, WE HAVE A PASSION FOR ASSASSINATION.
UNIQUE SERVANTS TO FIT ALL YOUR PROTECTION OR MURDER NEEDS.
AND WHY IS THIS BETTER THAN HIRING SOME REMARKABLE AND FAMOUS MERCENARY LIKE, OH, SAY... DEADPOOL?
WE GROW OUR ASSASSINS TO YOUR SPECIFICATIONS AND CAN IMPLANT *ANY* MEMORY IMAGINABLE.
A TRADITIONAL ASSASSIN IS A HIGH-RISK ANTIQUE. USUALLY WORKING FOR MONEY.
FINANCIAL COMPENSATION IS A SIMPLE INCENTIVE, BUT IT LEAVES YOU OPEN TO HIGHER BIDS FROM YOUR TARGET.
IMAGINE YOU WANT TO STRIKE AT THE ROXXON CORPORATION.
WE'LL GROW YOUR ASSASSINS TO BELIEVE ROXXON CORPORATION WAS BEHIND THE DEATH OF THEIR FAMILIES.
WOW... THAT'S... HARD TO COMPETE WITH.
PERSONAL MOTIVATION GUARANTEES A HIGHER RATE OF SUCCESS.
NOW, AS FOR CHOOSING YOUR ASSASSINS' SKILL SETS--
OH! I HAVE AN IDEA-- A COWBOY, PIRATE KING WHO HAS THE POWER TO CRAP THROUGH TIME!

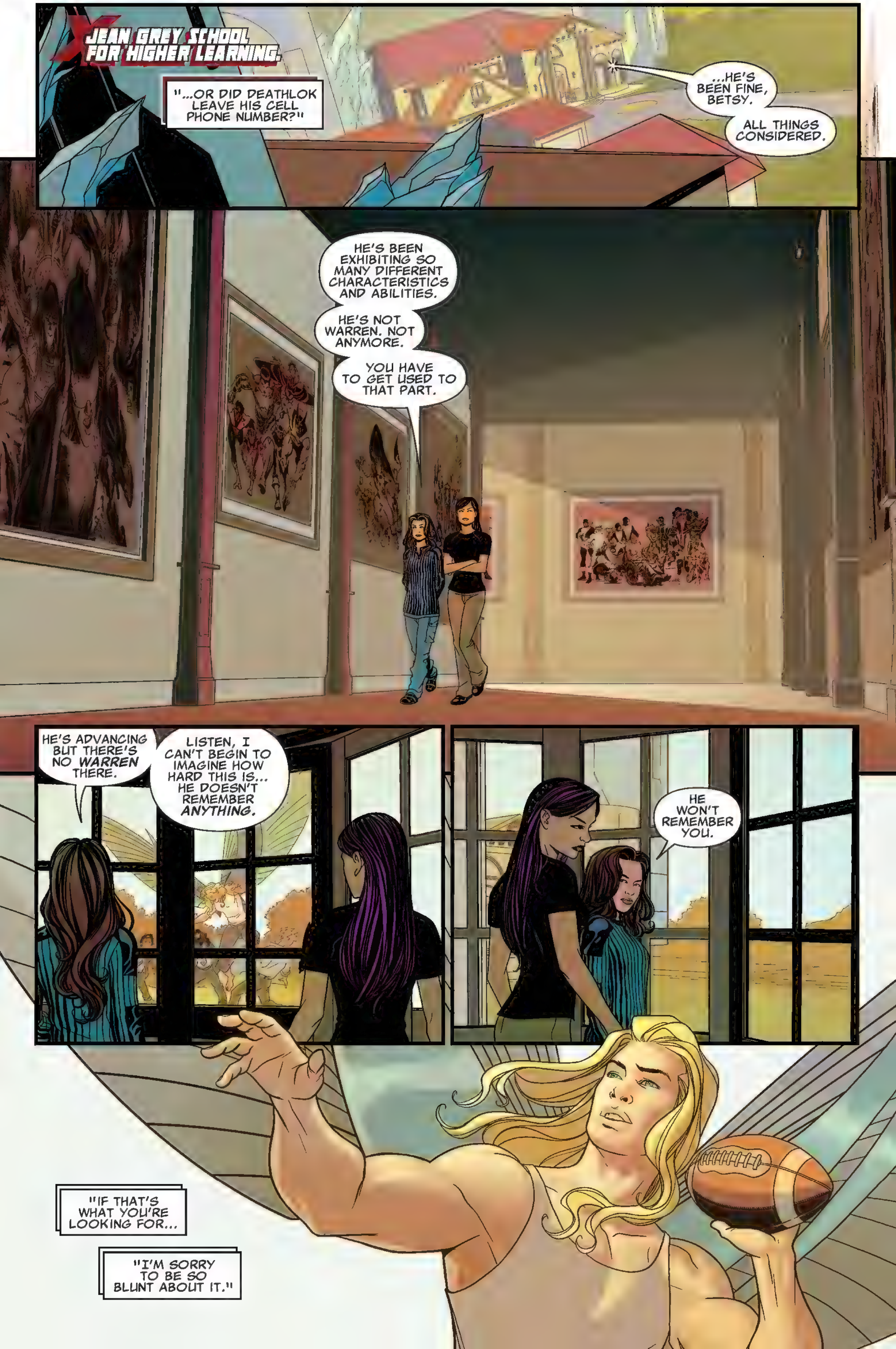

WHEN WILL THE DOO-DOO LAND?!
LOOK OUT, CAVEMAN! WATCH YOURSELF, NAPOLEON! NO ONE CAN SAVE YOU, BRUTUS!
YES... UNFORTUNATELY WE CANNOT, AT THIS POINT, BEND TIME.
IF I WENT WITH A PREFAB CAPTAIN SUPER HERO MODEL WOULD I BE ABLE TO HAVE HIS... PACKAGE A BIT MORE CONCEALED?
DON'T WANT MY ASSASSINS SHOWING TOO MUCH BULGE AS THEY BATTLE.
ALL YOUR SPECIFICATIONS WILL BE MET.
HUH. THESE ARE EMPTY.
THE OMEGA CLAN HAS BEEN PURCHASED.
OUR MOST EXPENSIVE MODELS. UNLIKE THE OTHERS, THESE WERE DERIVED FROM THE REMAINS OF THE ACTUAL OMEGA RED.
GHA--
THEY'VE BEEN UNDERGOING PROGRAMMING TO GROW A PERSONAL HATRED TOWARDS THEIR NEW TARGETS.
HAVE YOU GUESSED WHO THEIR TARGETS ARE, MR. WILSON?
YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS, NATURALLY.
AND LET ME ASSURE YOU, THE OMEGA CLAN TRULY HATE YOU...

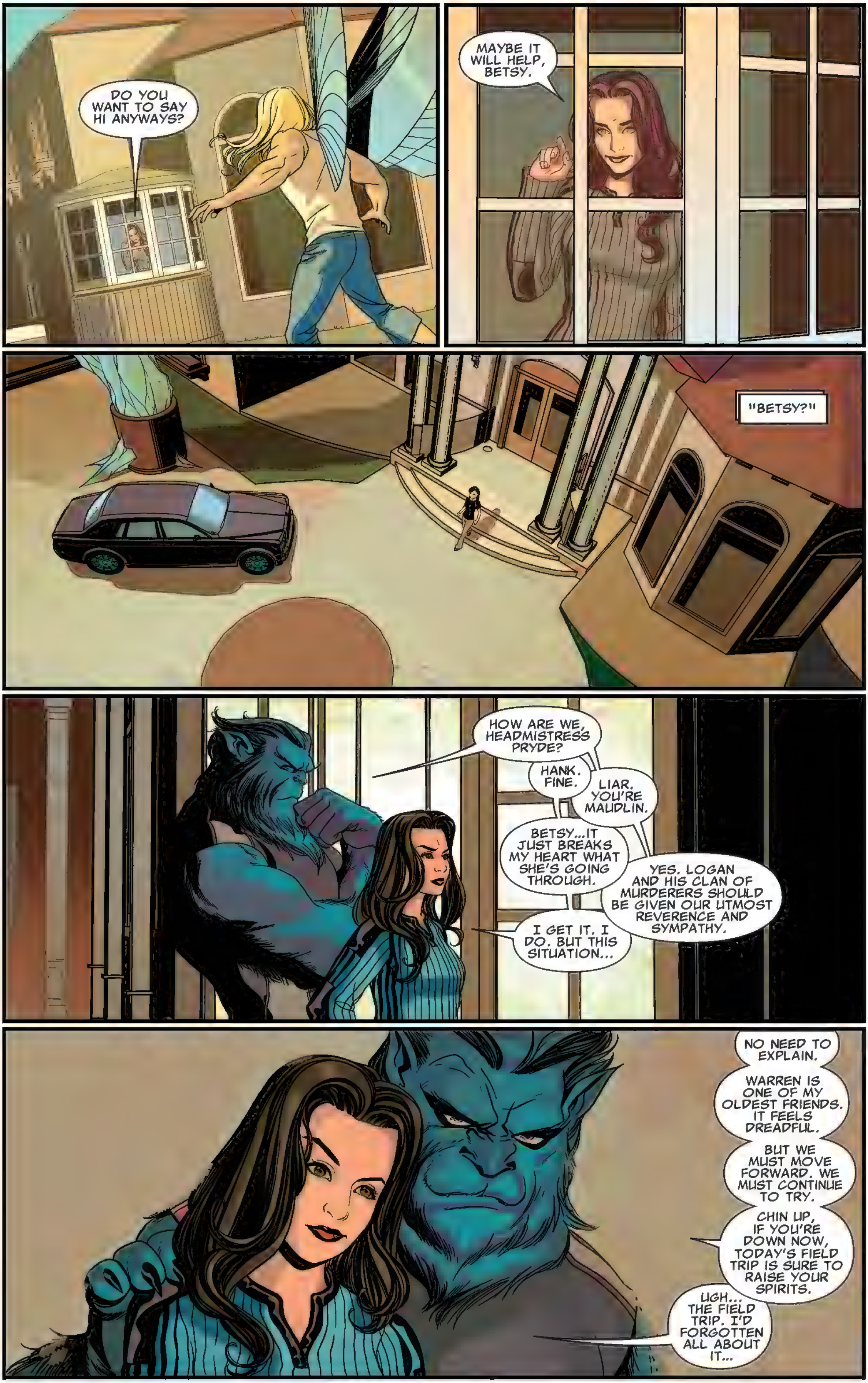

CAVERN-X:
"...PROGRAMMED TO OUR CLIENTS' *EXACT* SPECIFICATIONS."
AWFUL QUIET AROUND HERE.
WADE ON A RECON MISSION?
YUP.
THINKS HE'S ROBERT EVANS THIS WEEK. I TOLD HIM THE SPOOK HE'S TAILING IS A HOLLYWOOD FINANCIER.
BACK HOME, YOUR DOPPELGANGER IS THE PLAGUE OF MY WORLD, BUT I'M ACTUALLY BEGINNING TO LIKE YOU.
THINK I'LL STAY FOR A BIT LONGER.
GIVEN WHAT A SURLY *SON OF A BITCH* YOU'VE BEEN, KNOWIN' YOU'RE STICKIN' AROUND IS *SUCH* A RELIEF.
LIGHTS MY HEART UP.
IF I WAS A CYNICAL MAN I MIGHT THINK YOU'RE GETTING ME BUTTERED UP TO ASK ME TO HELP YOU KILL ANOTHER HOMETOWN REFUGEE.
YES. *THE BLOB.*
HMMH. AND HOW PERSONAL IS IT BETWEEN YOU?

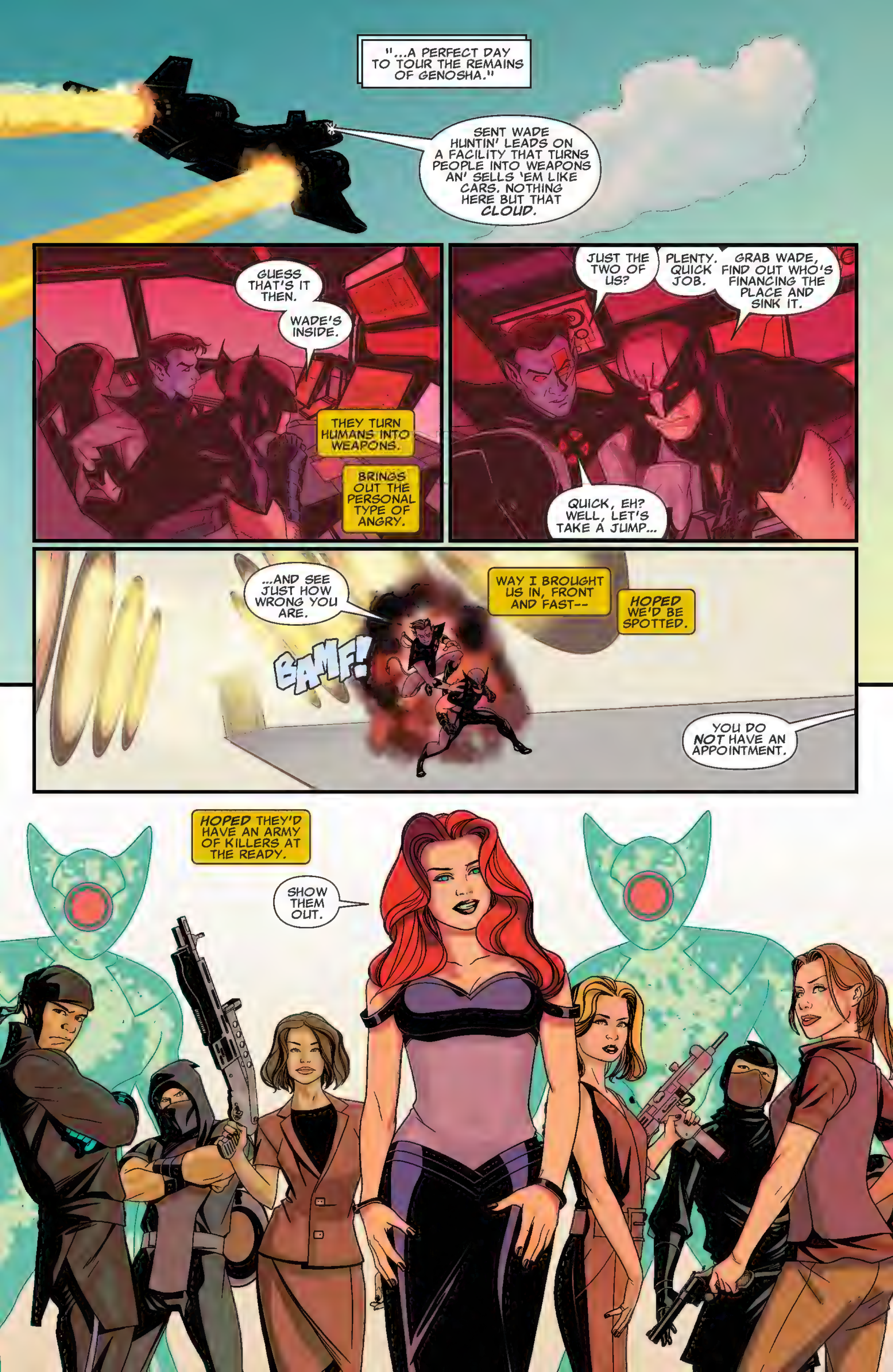

...NO MORE THAN THE REST OF THEM.
WHAT IS THIS RED LIGHT HERE?
WADE'S EMERGENCY ALERT.
HE WENT DOWN WHILE WE WERE YACKIN'.
WHERE?
ACCORDIN' TO THIS, HE'S FLOATIN' A MILE ABOVE THE PACIFIC OCEAN.
BETTER GATHER THE TROOPS...
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE GOING TO BE ONE SHY.
I'M QUITTING X-FORCE.

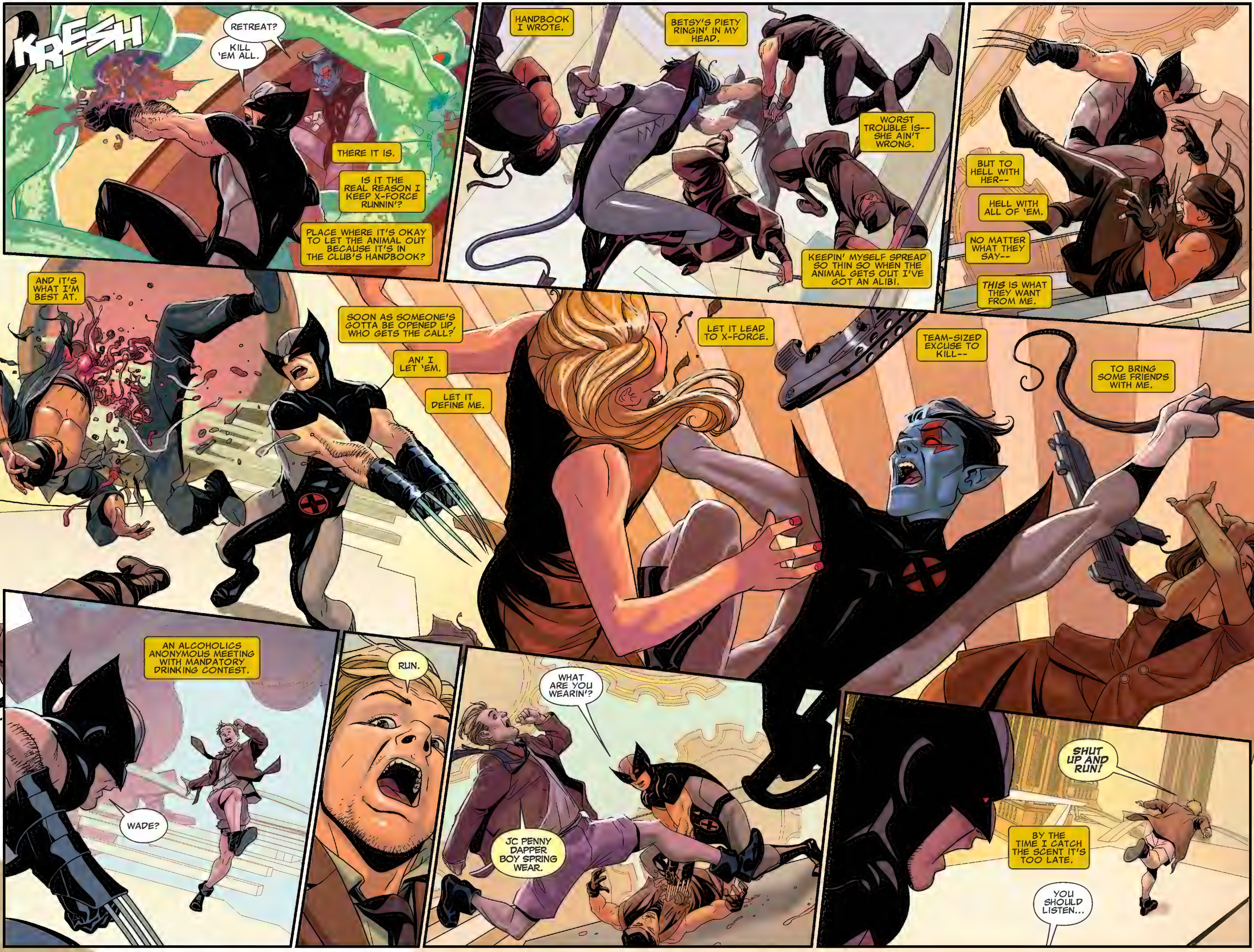

NOW?!
WE NEED YOU, BETS. I NEED YOU.
AND I NEED TO PROCESS MY SITUATION.
WARREN, JAMIE, OVERCOMING THE DEATH SEED... IT'S ALL TOO MUCH.
I'M DYING INSIDE, LOGAN.
I CAN'T CONTINUE TO KILL.
AIN'T AS SIMPLE AS THAT. WHAT WE DO IS NECESSARY, BETS.
WE'RE MURDERERS, LOGAN. HOW CAN THAT BE A NECESSITY?
YOU'VE GIVEN IN TO THE WORST PART OF YOURSELF.
I WON'T STAY TO SEE HOW FAR DOWN YOU LET IT TAKE YOU.

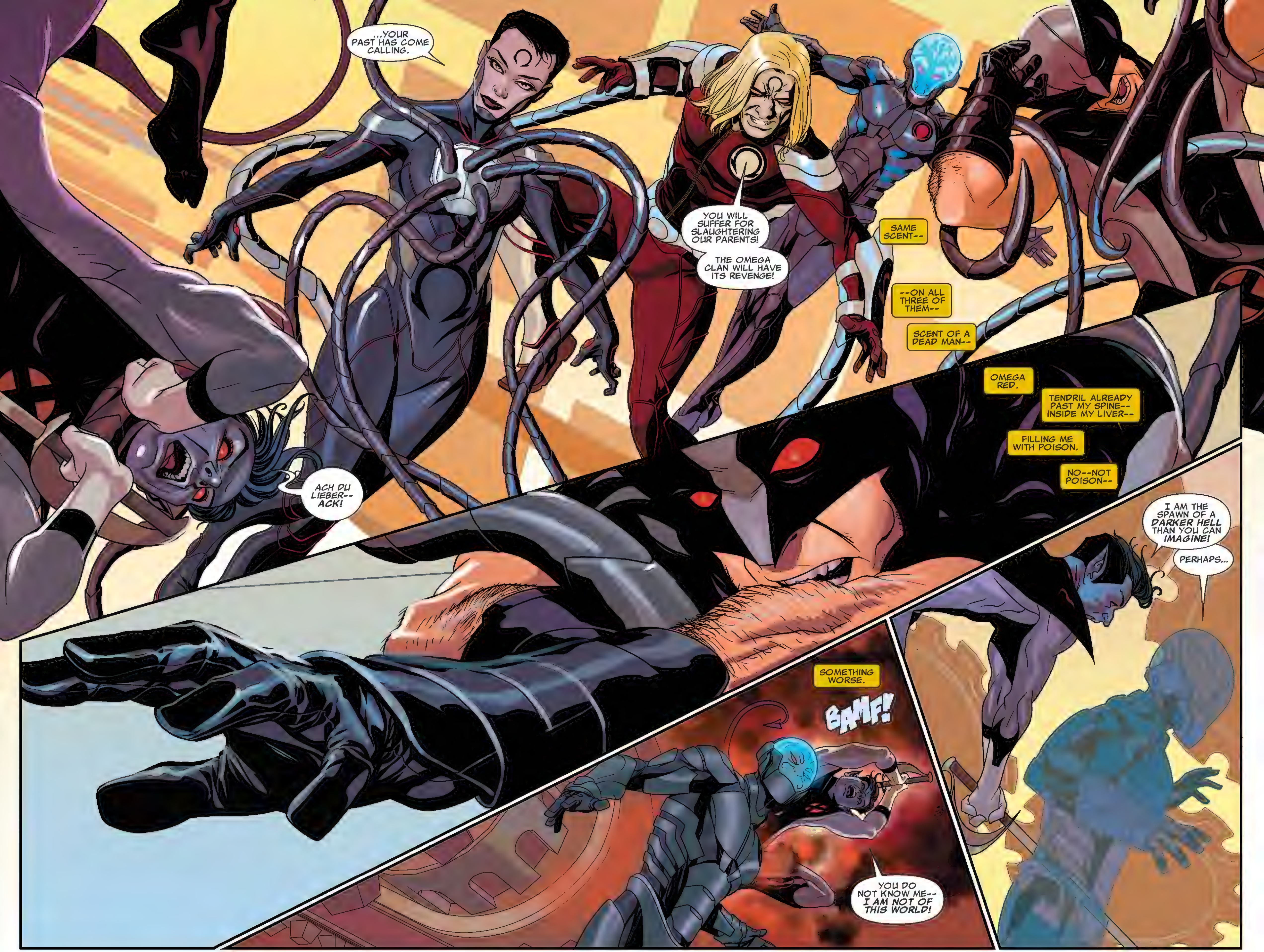

AND WHERE THE HELL ARE *YOU* GOING?
NO MORE WARREN.
NO MORE MONEY.
NO MORE ME.
SURE. *RIGHT*... ALL OF A SUDDEN.
BECAUSE OF *MONEY*.
I'M GLAD YOU UNDERSTAND.
SO, LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE'S RELIEVED I'M STICKING AROUND AFTER ALL...

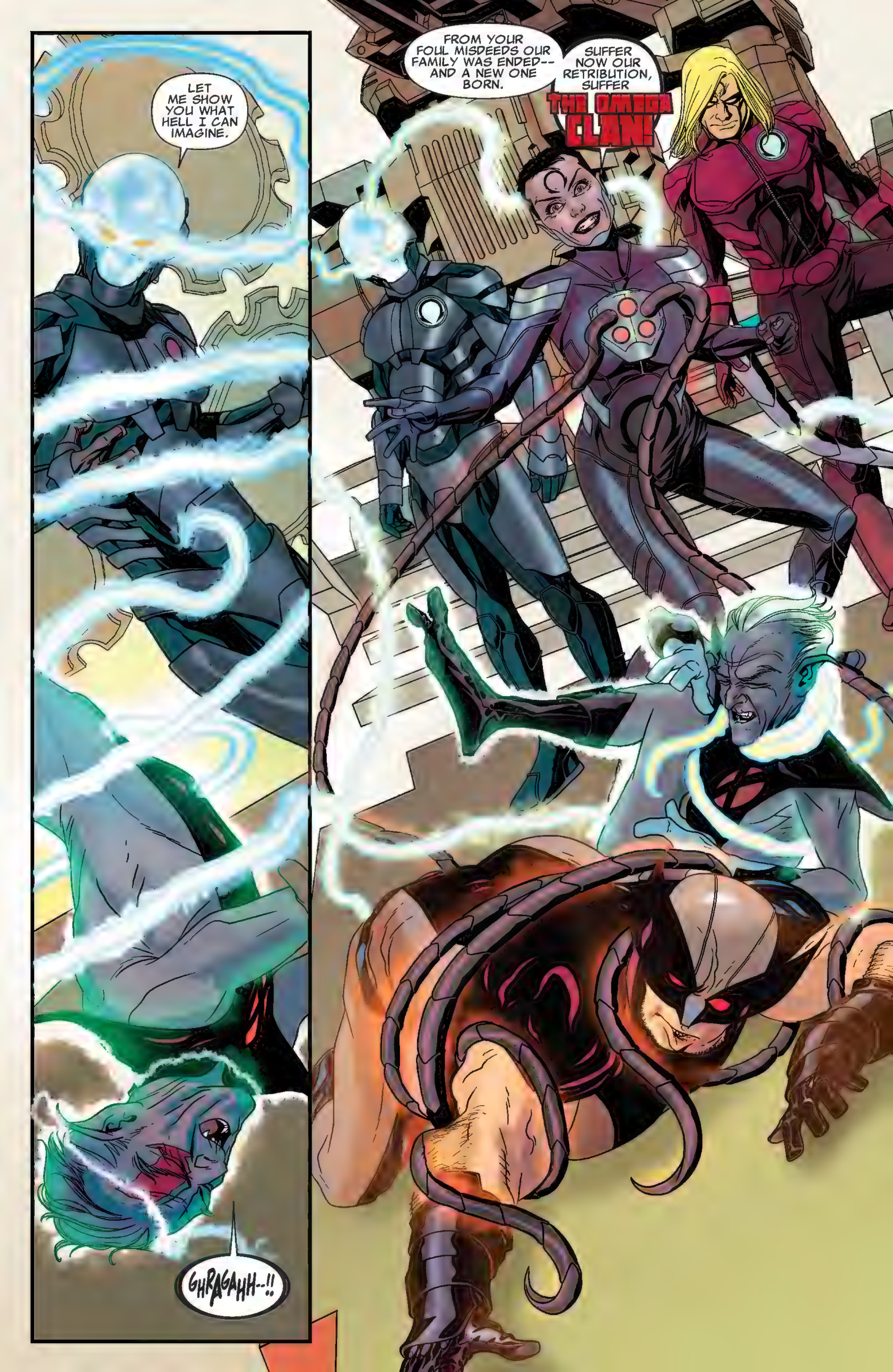

JEAN GREY SCHOOL FOR HIGHER LEARNING.
"...OR DID DEATHLOK LEAVE HIS CELL PHONE NUMBER?"
...HE'S BEEN FINE, BETSY.
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
HE'S BEEN EXHIBITING SO MANY DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS AND ABILITIES.
HE'S NOT WARREN. NOT ANYMORE.
YOU HAVE TO GET USED TO THAT PART.
HE'S ADVANCING BUT THERE'S NO *WARREN* THERE.
LISTEN, I CAN'T BEGIN TO IMAGINE HOW HARD THIS IS... HE DOESN'T REMEMBER *ANYTHING.*
HE WON'T REMEMBER YOU.
"IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...
"I'M SORRY TO BE SO BLUNT ABOUT IT."

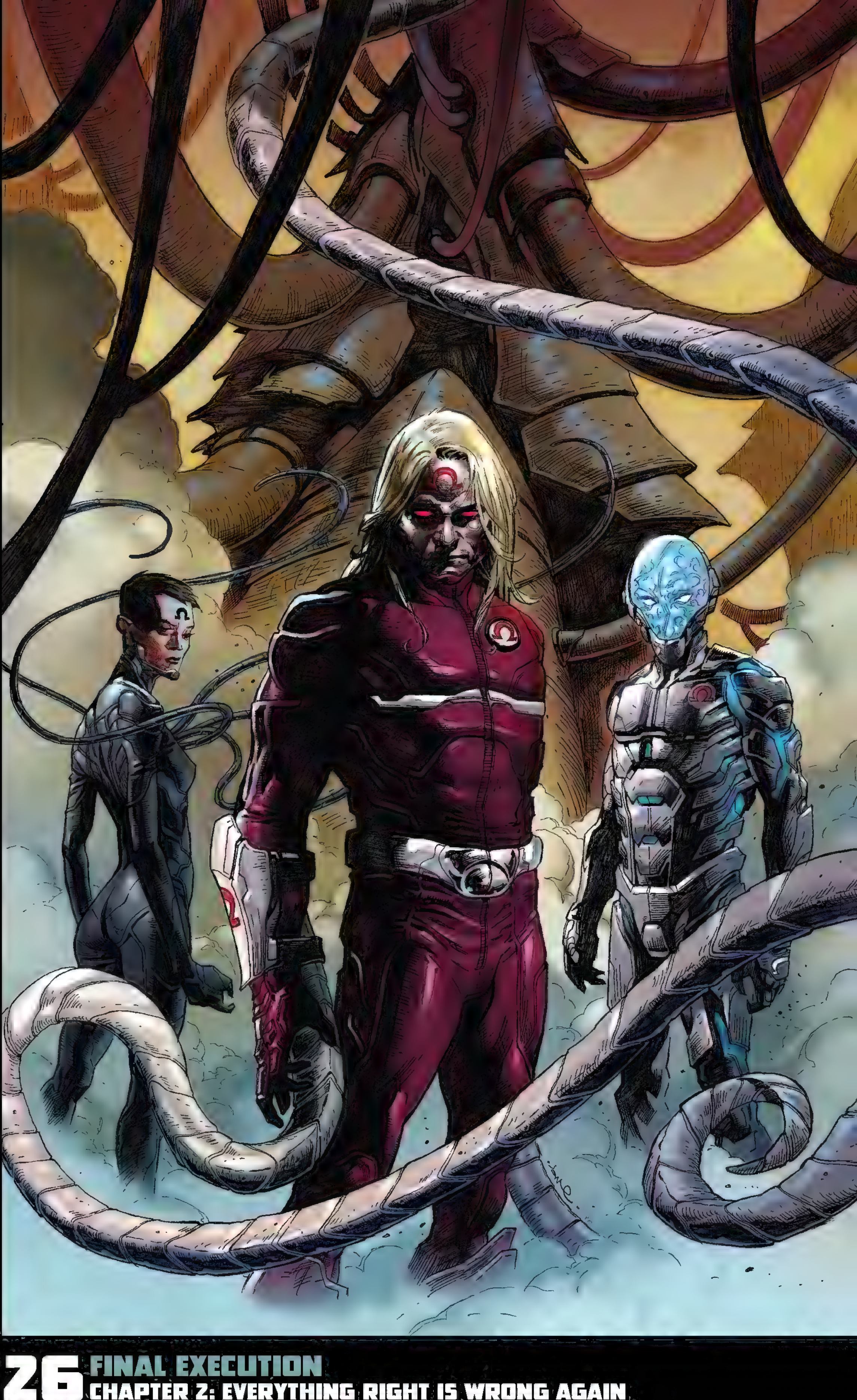

DO YOU WANT TO SAY HI ANYWAYS?
MAYBE IT WILL HELP, BETSY.
"BETSY?"
HOW ARE WE, HEADMISTRESS PRYDE?
HANK. FINE.
LIAR. YOU'RE MAUDLIN.
BETSY...IT JUST BREAKS MY HEART WHAT SHE'S GOING THROUGH.
YES. LOGAN AND HIS CLAN OF MURDERERS SHOULD BE GIVEN OUR UTMOST REVERENCE AND SYMPATHY.
I GET IT. I DO. BUT THIS SITUATION...
NO NEED TO EXPLAIN.
WARREN IS ONE OF MY OLDEST FRIENDS. IT FEELS DREADFUL.
BUT WE MUST MOVE FORWARD. WE MUST CONTINUE TO TRY.
CHIN UP, IF YOU'RE DOWN NOW, TODAY'S FIELD TRIP IS SURE TO RAISE YOUR SPIRITS.
UGH... THE FIELD TRIP. I'D FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT IT...


"...A PERFECT DAY TO TOUR THE REMAINS OF GENOSHA."
SENT WADE HUNTIN' LEADS ON A FACILITY THAT TURNS PEOPLE INTO WEAPONS AN' SELLS 'EM LIKE CARS. NOTHING HERE BUT THAT *CLOUD*.
GUESS THAT'S IT THEN.
WADE'S INSIDE.
THEY TURN HUMANS INTO WEAPONS.
BRINGS OUT THE PERSONAL TYPE OF ANGRY.
JUST THE TWO OF US?
PLENTY. QUICK JOB.
GRAB WADE, FIND OUT WHO'S FINANCING THE PLACE AND SINK IT.
QUICK, EH? WELL, LET'S TAKE A JUMP...
...AND SEE JUST HOW WRONG YOU ARE.
BAMF!
WAY I BROUGHT US IN, FRONT AND FAST--
HOPED WE'D BE SPOTTED.
YOU DO *NOT* HAVE AN APPOINTMENT.
HOPED THEY'D HAVE AN ARMY OF KILLERS AT THE READY.
SHOW THEM OUT.


KRESH
RETREAT?
KILL 'EM ALL.
THERE IT IS.
IS IT THE REAL REASON I KEEP X-FORCE RUNNIN'?
PLACE WHERE IT'S OKAY TO LET THE ANIMAL OUT BECAUSE IT'S IN THE CLUB'S HANDBOOK?
HANDBOOK I WROTE.
BETSY'S PIETY RINGIN' IN MY HEAD.
WORST TROUBLE IS-- SHE AIN'T WRONG.
KEEPIN' MYSELF SPREAD SO THIN SO WHEN THE ANIMAL GETS OUT I'VE GOT AN ALIBI.
BUT TO HELL WITH HER--
HELL WITH ALL OF 'EM.
NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY--
THIS IS WHAT THEY WANT FROM ME.
AND IT'S WHAT I'M BEST AT.
SOON AS SOMEONE'S GOTTA BE OPENED UP, WHO GETS THE CALL?
AN' I LET 'EM.
LET IT DEFINE ME.
LET IT LEAD TO X-FORCE.
TEAM-SIZED EXCUSE TO KILL--
TO BRING SOME FRIENDS WITH ME.
AN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETING WITH MANDATORY DRINKING CONTEST.
WADE?
RUN.
WHAT ARE YOU WEARIN'?
JC PENNY DAPPER BOY SPRING WEAR.
SHUT UP AND RUN!
BY THE TIME I CATCH THE SCENT IT'S TOO LATE.
YOU SHOULD LISTEN...

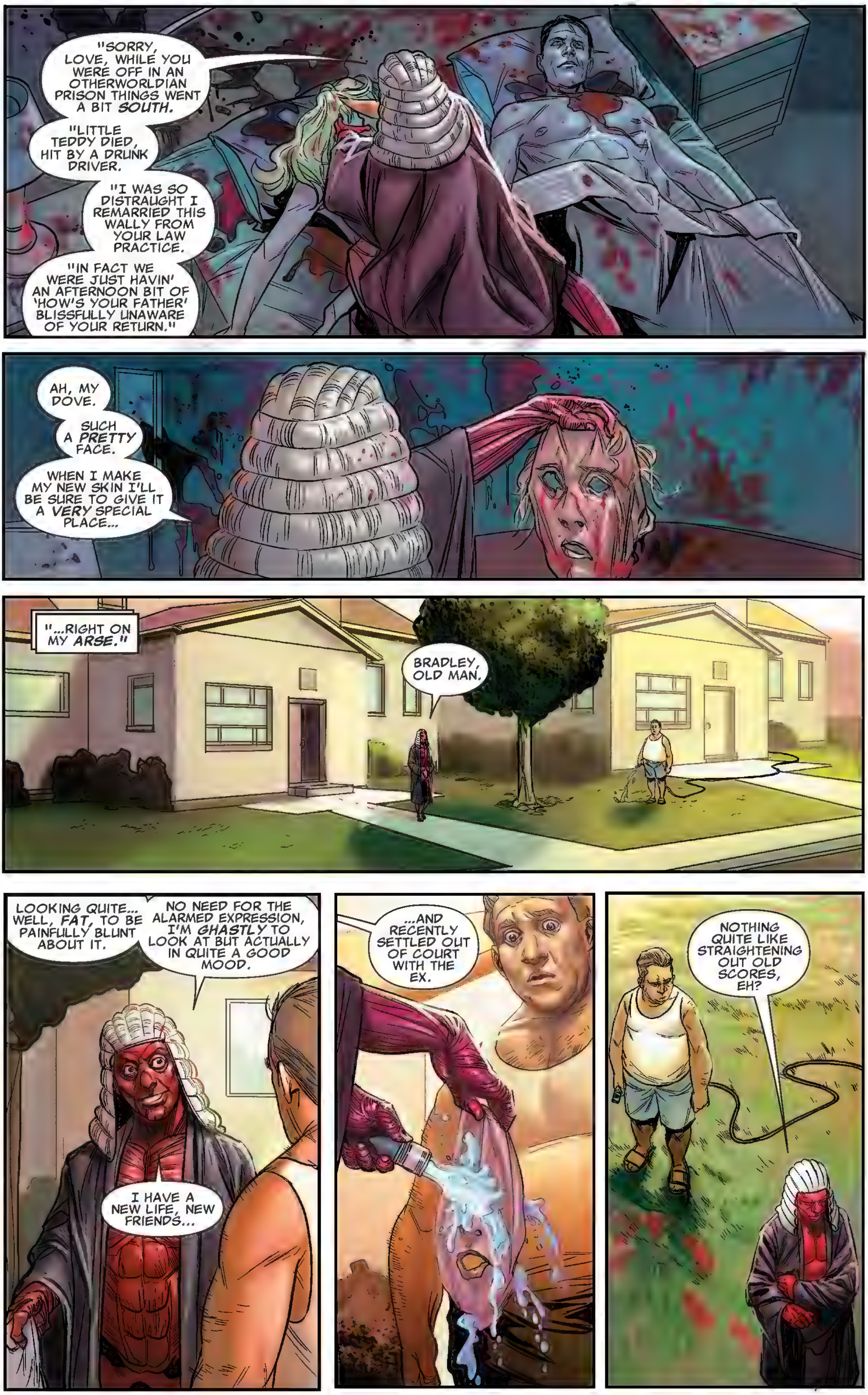

...YOUR PAST HAS COME CALLING.
YOU WILL SUFFER FOR SLAUGHTERING OUR PARENTS!
THE OMEGA CLAN WILL HAVE ITS REVENGE!
ACH DU LIEBER-- *ACK!*
SAME SCENT--
--ON ALL THREE OF THEM--
SCENT OF A DEAD MAN--
OMEGA RED.
TENDRIL ALREADY PAST MY SPINE-- INSIDE MY LIVER--
FILLING ME WITH POISON.
NO--NOT POISON--
SOMETHING WORSE.
BAMF!
YOU DO NOT KNOW ME-- *I AM NOT OF THIS WORLD!*
I AM THE SPAWN OF A ***DARKER HELL*** THAN YOU CAN ***IMAGINE!***
PERHAPS...

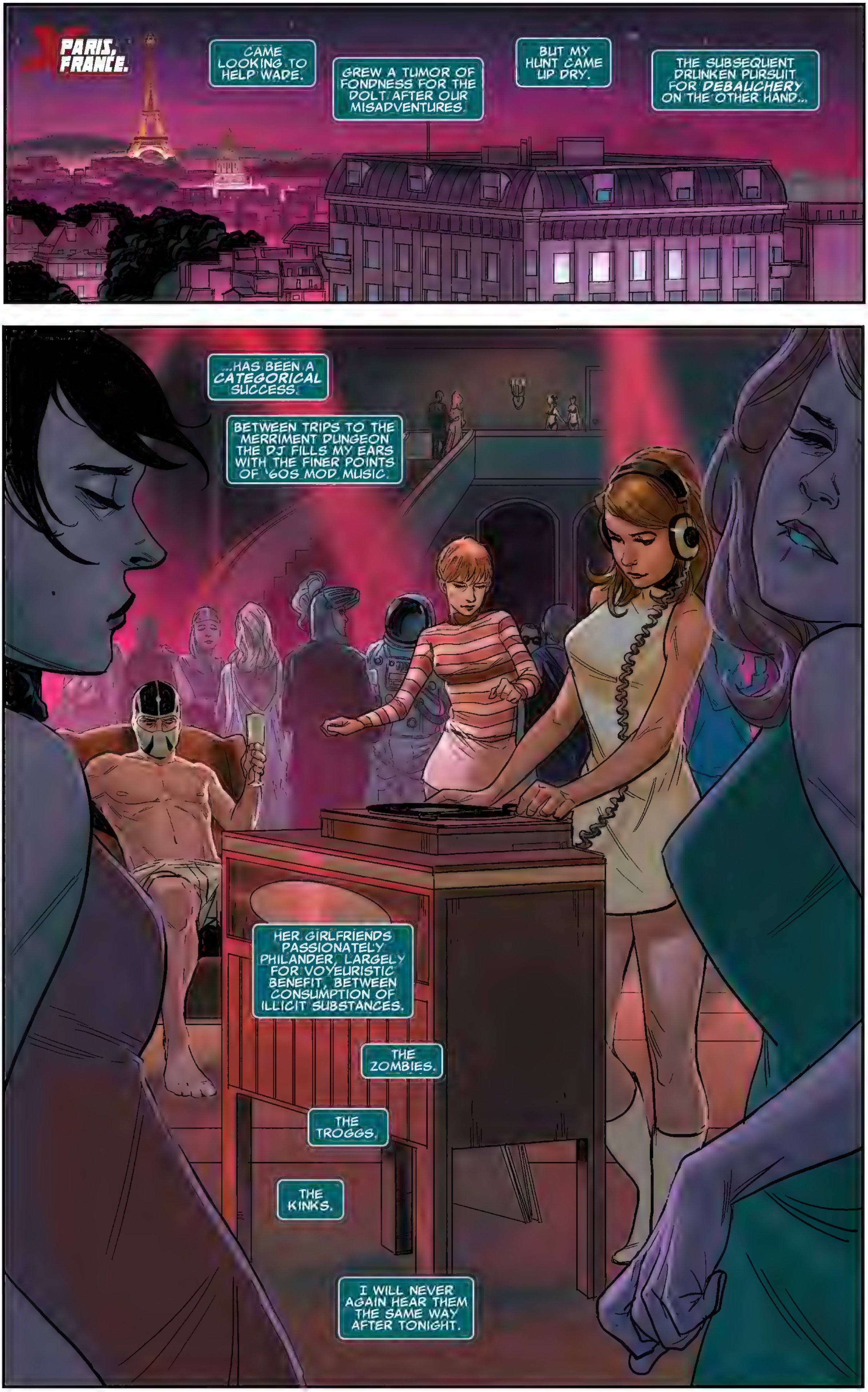

LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT HELL I CAN IMAGINE.
GHRAGAHH--!!
FROM YOUR FOUL MISDEEDS OUR FAMILY WAS ENDED-- AND A NEW ONE BORN.
SUFFER NOW OUR RETRIBUTION, SUFFER THE OMEGA CLAN!

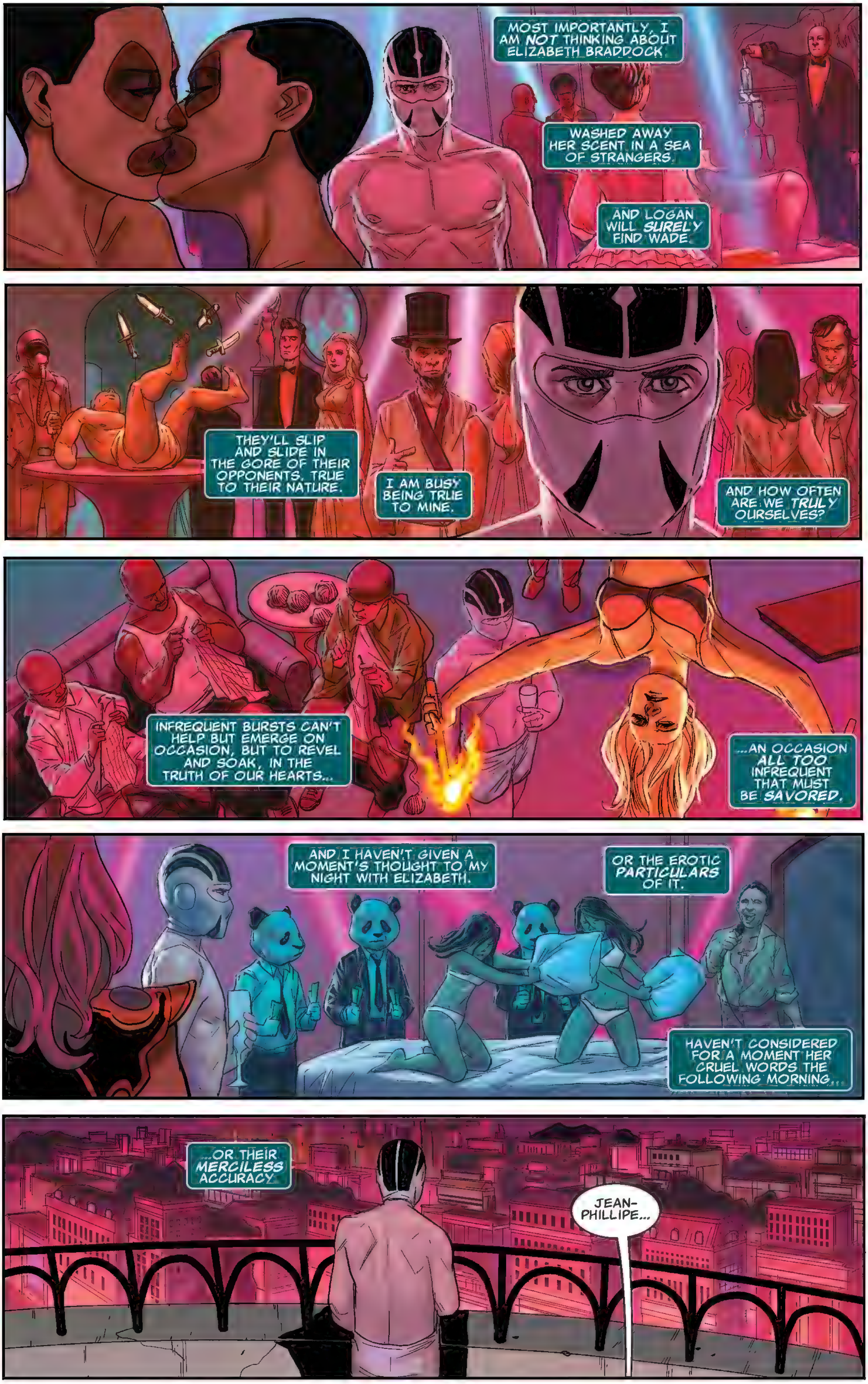


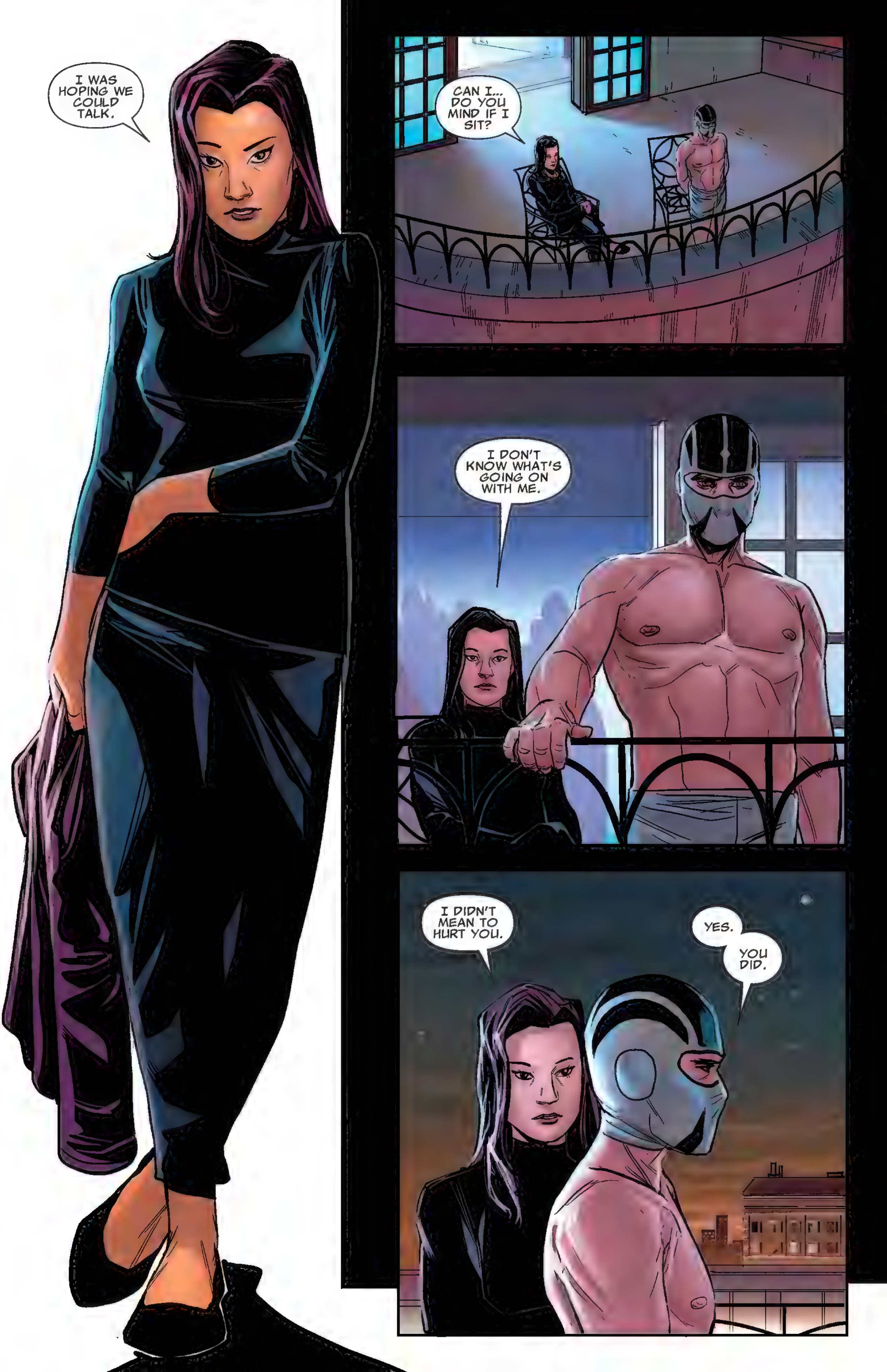
26 FINAL EXECUTION

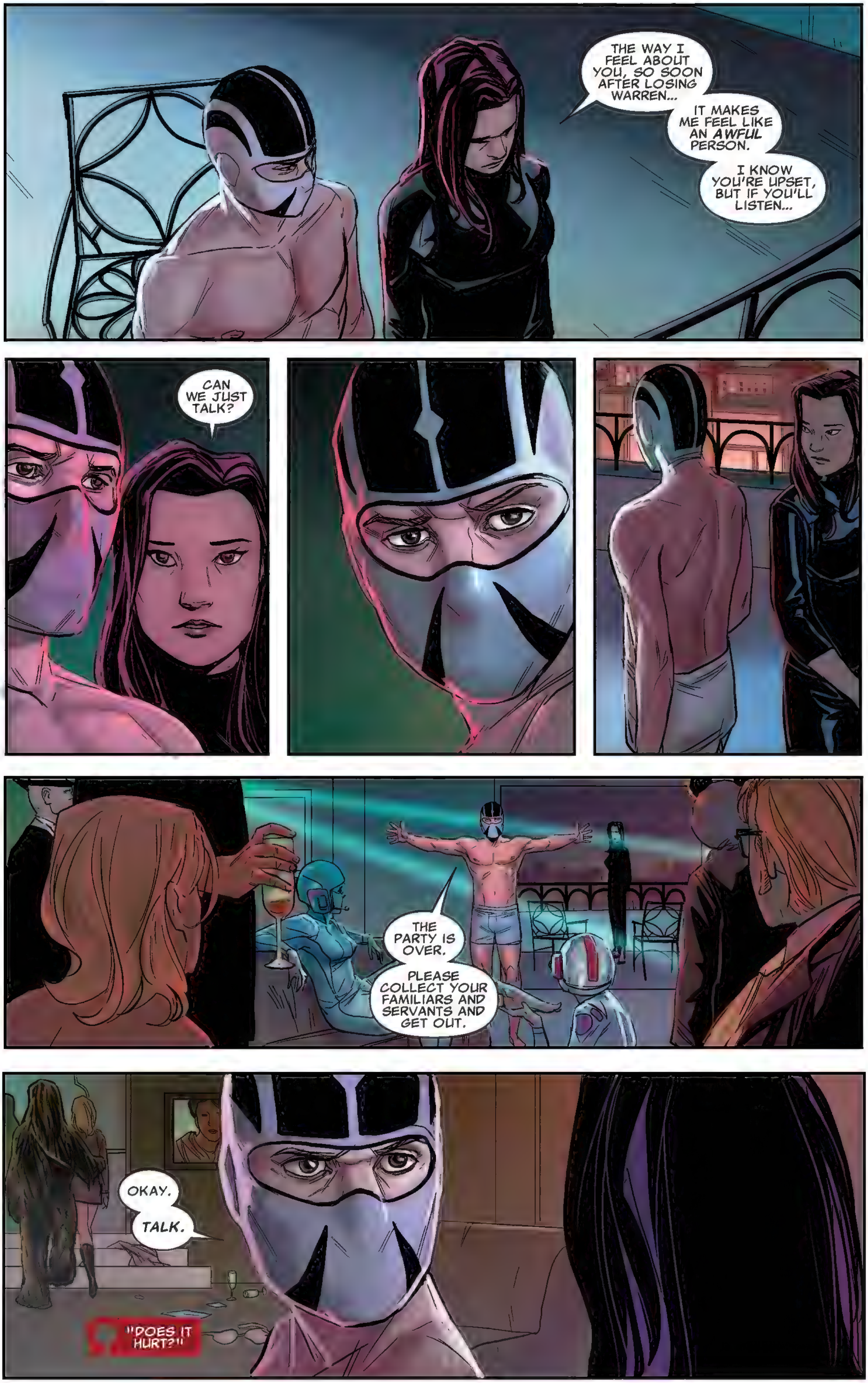
CHAPTER 2: EVERYTHING RIGHT IS WRONG AGAIN

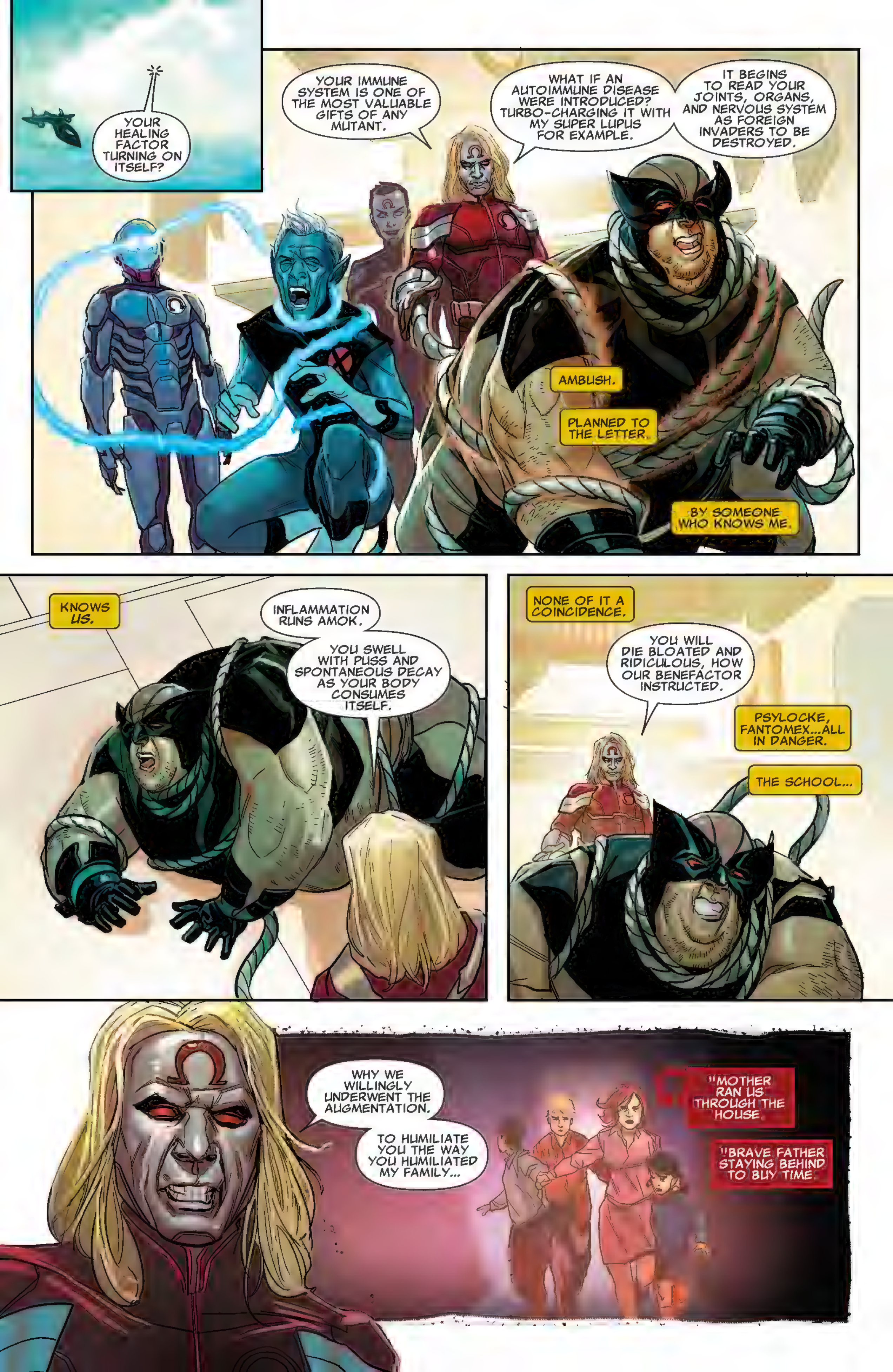

"SORRY, LOVE, WHILE YOU WERE OFF IN AN OTHERWORLDIAN PRISON THINGS WENT A BIT *SOUTH.*
"LITTLE TEDDY DIED, HIT BY A DRUNK DRIVER.
"I WAS SO DISTRAUGHT I REMARRIED THIS WALLY FROM YOUR LAW PRACTICE.
"IN FACT WE WERE JUST HAVIN' AN AFTERNOON BIT OF 'HOW'S YOUR FATHER' BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF YOUR RETURN."
AH, MY DOVE.
SUCH A *PRETTY* FACE.
WHEN I MAKE MY NEW SKIN I'LL BE SURE TO GIVE IT A *VERY* SPECIAL PLACE...
"...RIGHT ON MY *ARSE.*"
BRADLEY, OLD MAN.
LOOKING QUITE... WELL, *FAT,* TO BE PAINFULLY BLUNT ABOUT IT.
NO NEED FOR THE ALARMED EXPRESSION, I'M *GHASTLY* TO LOOK AT BUT ACTUALLY IN QUITE A GOOD MOOD.
I HAVE A NEW LIFE, NEW FRIENDS...
...AND RECENTLY SETTLED OUT OF COURT WITH THE EX.
NOTHING QUITE LIKE STRAIGHTENING OUT OLD SCORES, EH?

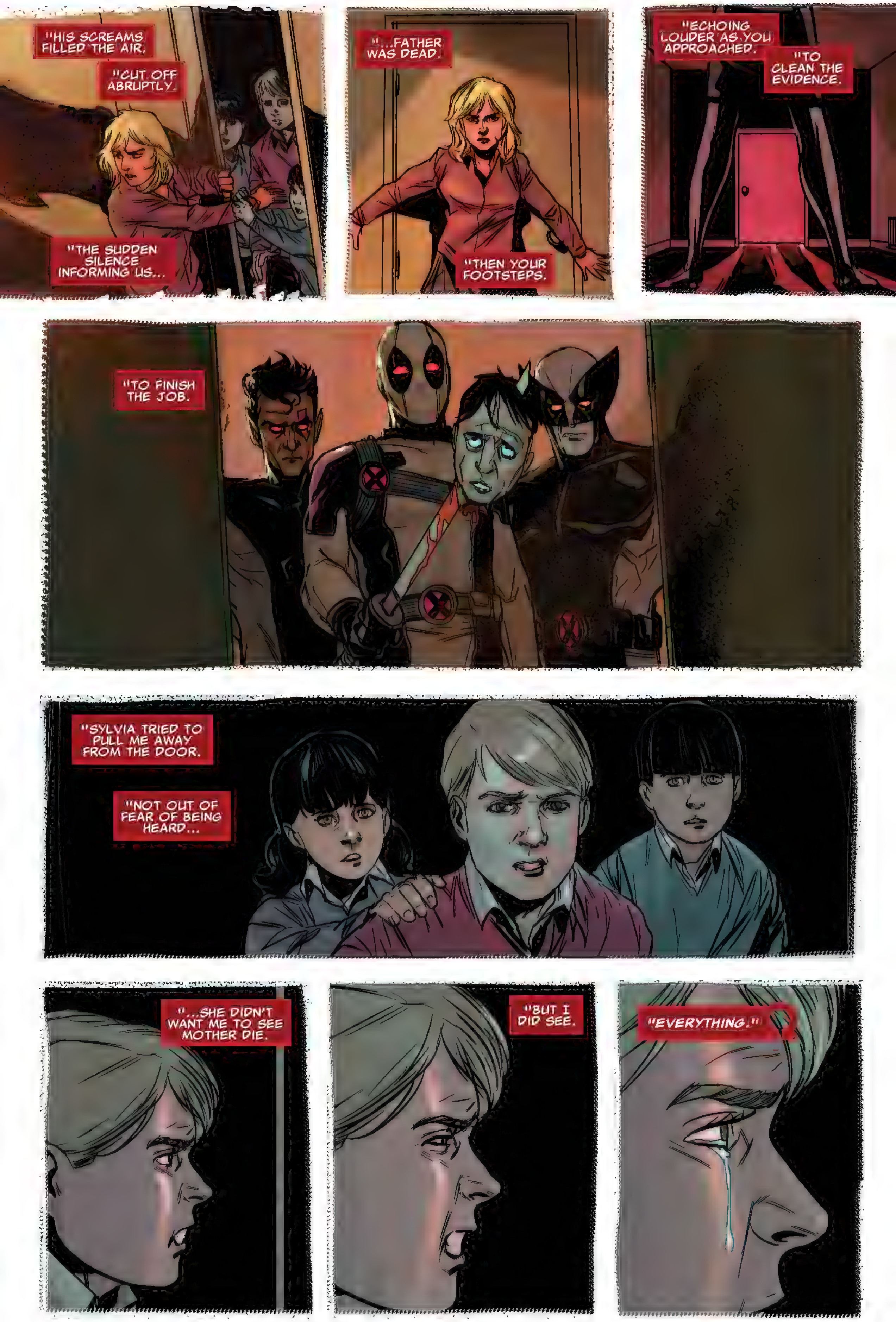

PARIS, FRANCE.
CAME LOOKING TO HELP WADE.
GREW A TUMOR OF FONDNESS FOR THE DOLT AFTER OUR MISADVENTURES.
BUT MY HUNT CAME UP DRY.
THE SUBSEQUENT DRUNKEN PURSUIT FOR DEBAUCHERY ON THE OTHER HAND...
...HAS BEEN A CATEGORICAL SUCCESS.
BETWEEN TRIPS TO THE MERRIMENT DUNGEON THE DJ FILLS MY EARS WITH THE FINER POINTS OF '60S MOD MUSIC.
HER GIRLFRIENDS PASSIONATELY PHILANDER, LARGELY FOR VOYEURISTIC BENEFIT, BETWEEN CONSUMPTION OF ILLICIT SUBSTANCES.
THE ZOMBIES.
THE TROGGS.
THE KINKS.
I WILL NEVER AGAIN HEAR THEM THE SAME WAY AFTER TONIGHT.

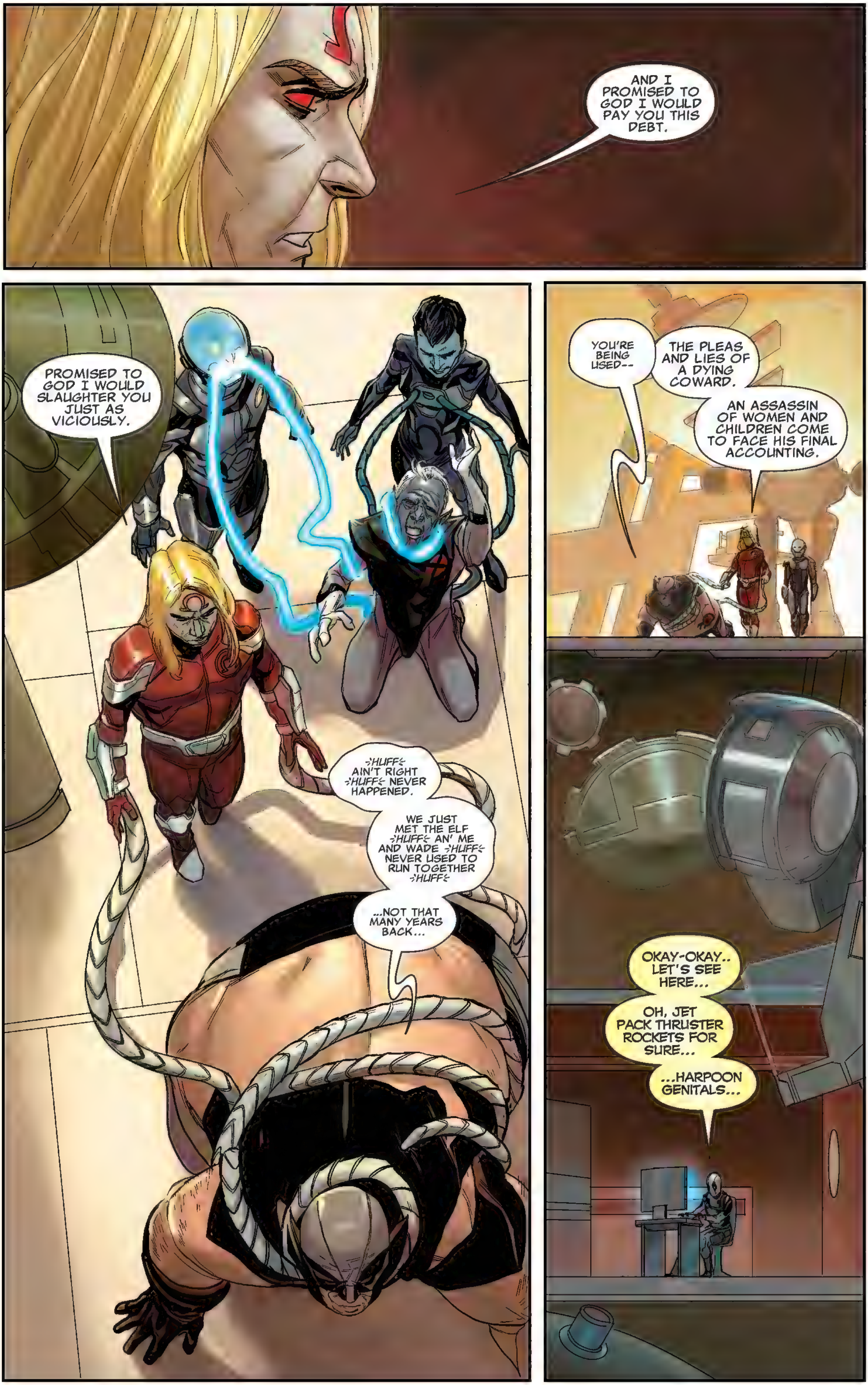

MOST IMPORTANTLY, I AM *NOT* THINKING ABOUT ELIZABETH BRADDOCK.
WASHED AWAY HER SCENT IN A SEA OF STRANGERS.
AND LOGAN WILL *SURELY* FIND WADE.
THEY'LL SLIP AND SLIDE IN THE GORE OF THEIR OPPONENTS, TRUE TO THEIR NATURE.
I AM BUSY BEING TRUE TO MINE.
AND HOW OFTEN ARE WE *TRULY* OURSELVES?
INFREQUENT BURSTS CAN'T HELP BUT EMERGE ON OCCASION, BUT TO REVEL AND SOAK, IN THE TRUTH OF OUR HEARTS...
...AN OCCASION *ALL TOO* INFREQUENT THAT MUST BE *SAVORED*.
AND I HAVEN'T GIVEN A MOMENT'S THOUGHT TO MY NIGHT WITH ELIZABETH.
OR THE EROTIC *PARTICULARS* OF IT.
HAVEN'T CONSIDERED FOR A MOMENT HER CRUEL WORDS THE FOLLOWING MORNING...
...OR THEIR *MERCILESS* ACCURACY.
JEAN-PHILLIPE...

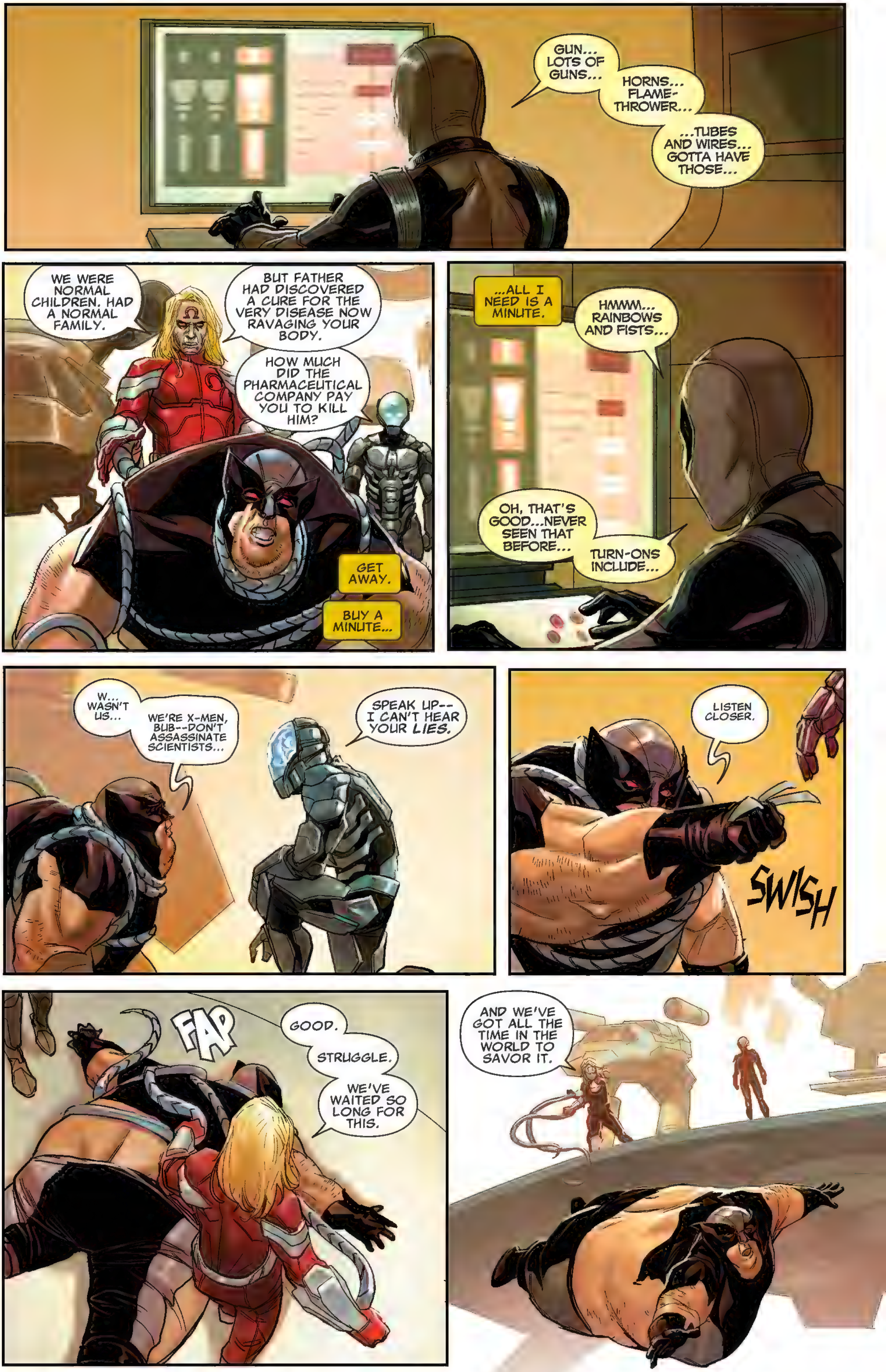

I WAS HOPING WE COULD TALK.
CAN I... DO YOU MIND IF I SIT?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON WITH ME.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU.
YES.
YOU DID.

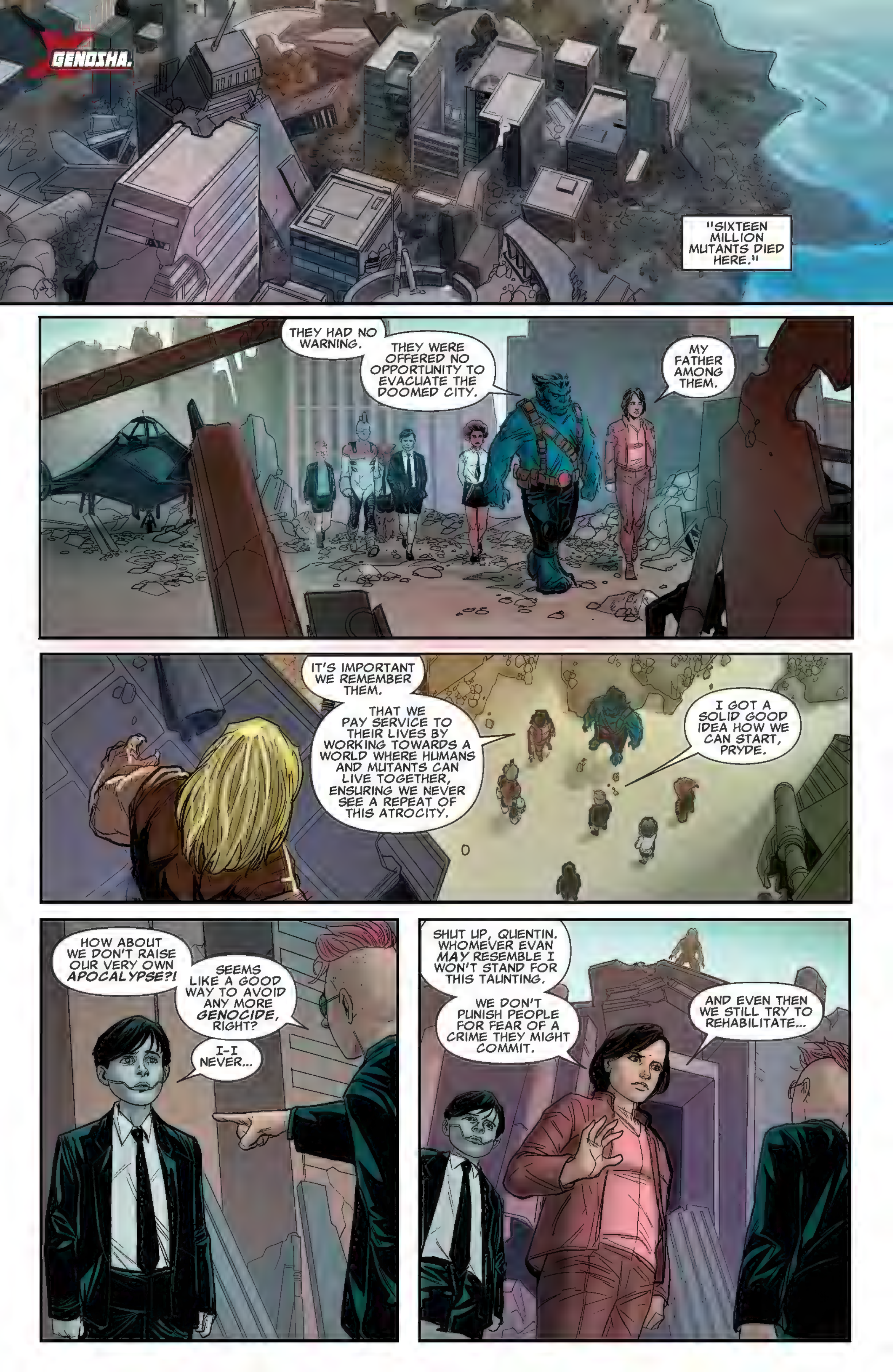

THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT YOU, SO SOON AFTER LOSING WARREN...
IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE AN *AWFUL* PERSON.
I KNOW YOU'RE UPSET, BUT IF YOU'LL LISTEN...
CAN WE JUST TALK?
THE PARTY IS OVER.
PLEASE COLLECT YOUR FAMILIARS AND SERVANTS AND GET OUT.
OKAY.
TALK.
"DOES IT HURT?"

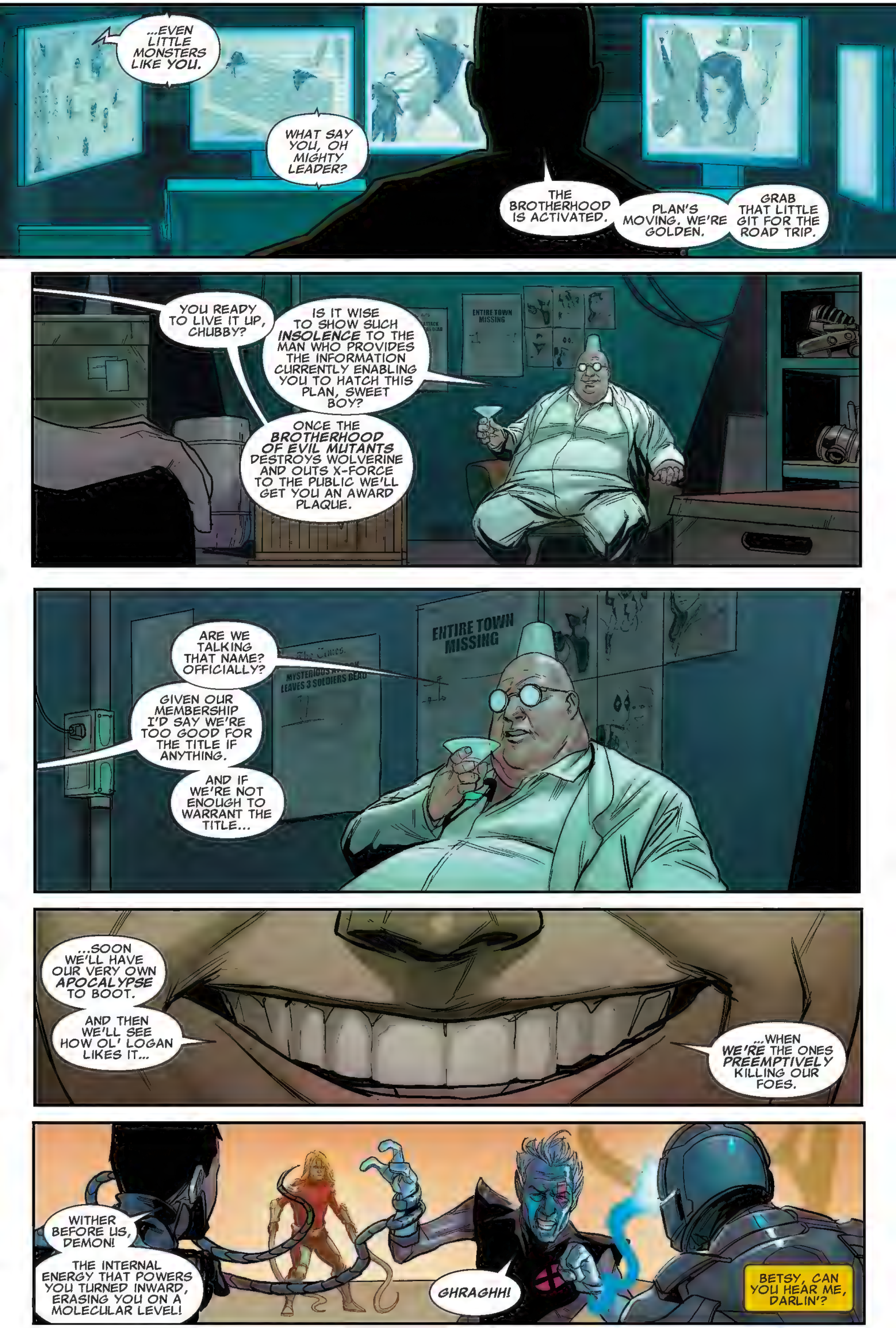

YOUR HEALING FACTOR TURNING ON ITSELF?
YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM IS ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE GIFTS OF ANY MUTANT.
WHAT IF AN AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE WERE INTRODUCED? TURBO-CHARGING IT WITH MY SUPER LUPUS FOR EXAMPLE.
IT BEGINS TO READ YOUR JOINTS, ORGANS, AND NERVOUS SYSTEM AS FOREIGN INVADERS TO BE DESTROYED.
AMBUSH.
PLANNED TO THE LETTER.
BY SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ME.
KNOWS *US.*
INFLAMMATION RUNS AMOK.
YOU SWELL WITH PUSS AND SPONTANEOUS DECAY AS YOUR BODY CONSUMES ITSELF.
NONE OF IT A COINCIDENCE.
YOU WILL DIE BLOATED AND RIDICULOUS, HOW OUR BENEFACTOR INSTRUCTED.
PSYLOCKE, FANTOMEX...ALL IN DANGER.
THE SCHOOL...
WHY WE WILLINGLY UNDERWENT THE AUGMENTATION.
TO HUMILIATE YOU THE WAY YOU HUMILIATED MY FAMILY...
"MOTHER RAN US THROUGH THE HOUSE.
"BRAVE FATHER STAYING BEHIND TO BUY TIME.

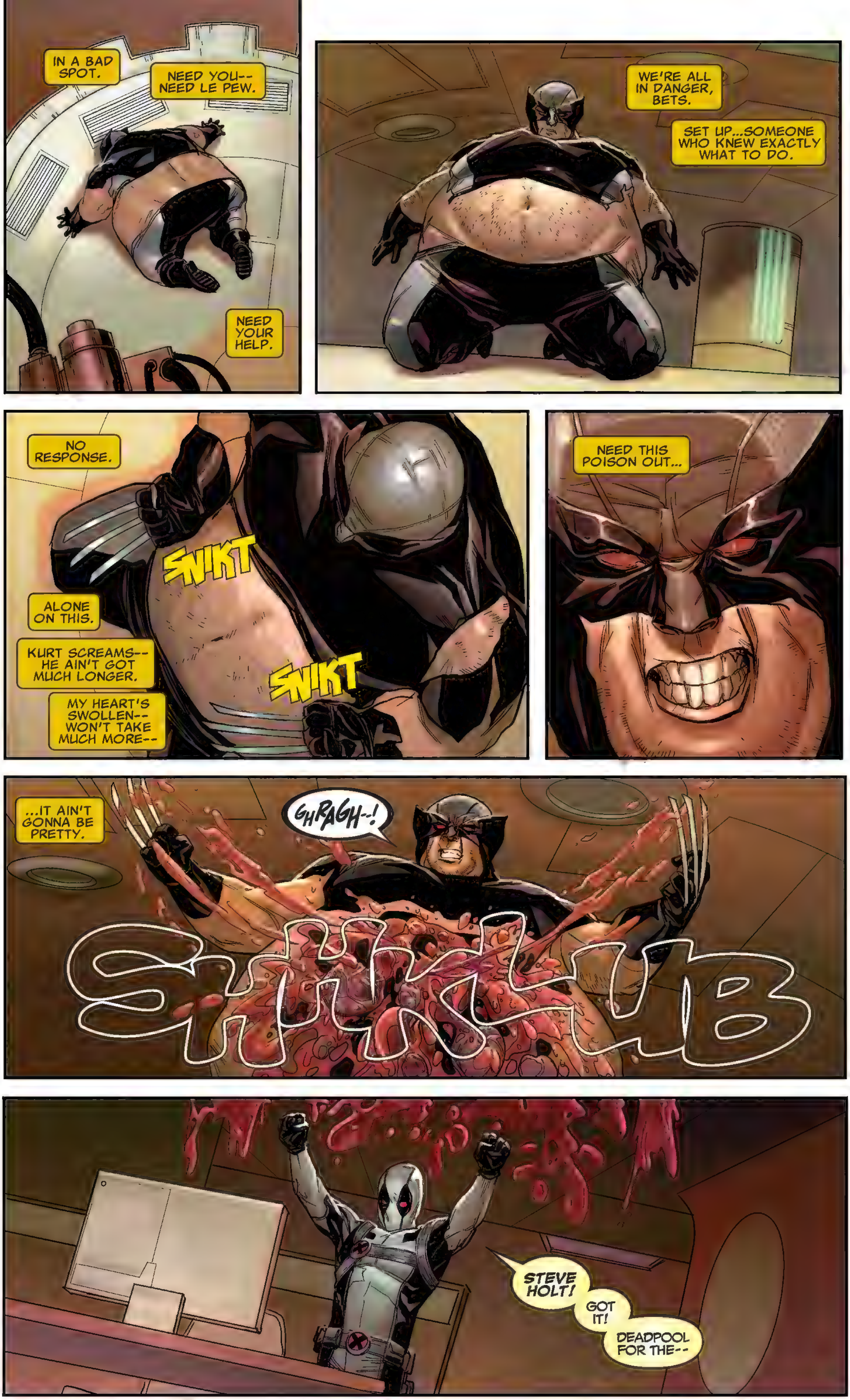

"HIS SCREAMS FILLED THE AIR.
"CUT OFF ABRUPTLY.
"THE SUDDEN SILENCE INFORMING US...
"...FATHER WAS DEAD.
"THEN YOUR FOOTSTEPS.
"ECHOING LOUDER AS YOU APPROACHED.
"TO CLEAN THE EVIDENCE.
"TO FINISH THE JOB.
"SYLVIA TRIED TO PULL ME AWAY FROM THE DOOR.
"NOT OUT OF FEAR OF BEING HEARD...
"...SHE DIDN'T WANT ME TO SEE MOTHER DIE.
"BUT I DID SEE.
"EVERYTHING."

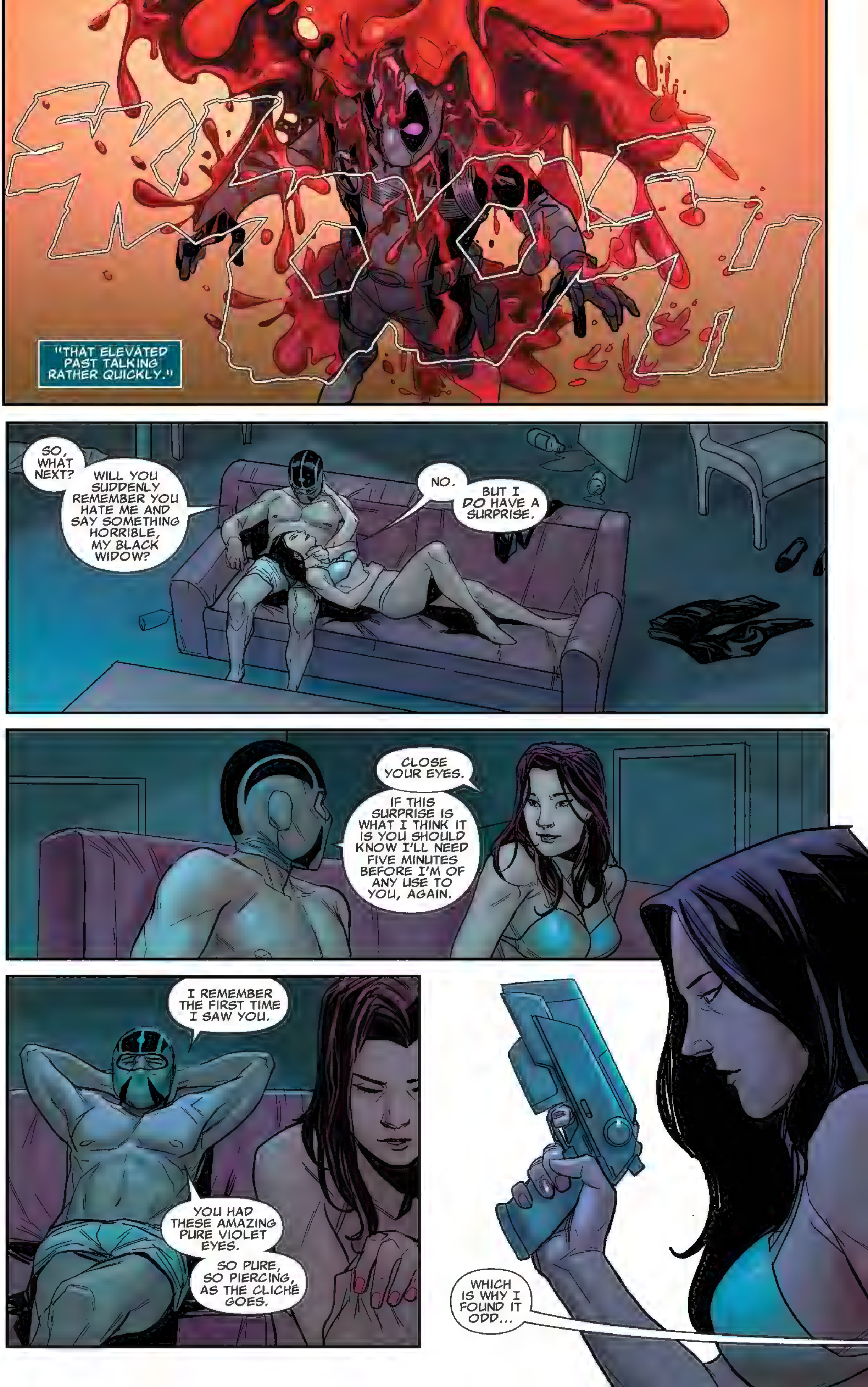

AND I PROMISED TO GOD I WOULD PAY YOU THIS DEBT.
PROMISED TO GOD I WOULD SLAUGHTER YOU JUST AS VICIOUSLY.
ⵈHUFFⵈ AIN'T RIGHT ⵈHUFFⵈ NEVER HAPPENED.
WE JUST MET THE ELF ⵈHUFFⵈ AN' ME AND WADE ⵈHUFFⵈ NEVER USED TO RUN TOGETHER ⵈHUFFⵈ
...NOT THAT MANY YEARS BACK...
YOU'RE BEING USED--
THE PLEAS AND LIES OF A DYING COWARD.
AN ASSASSIN OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN COME TO FACE HIS FINAL ACCOUNTING.
OKAY-OKAY.. LET'S SEE HERE...
OH, JET PACK THRUSTER ROCKETS FOR SURE...
...HARPOON GENITALS...

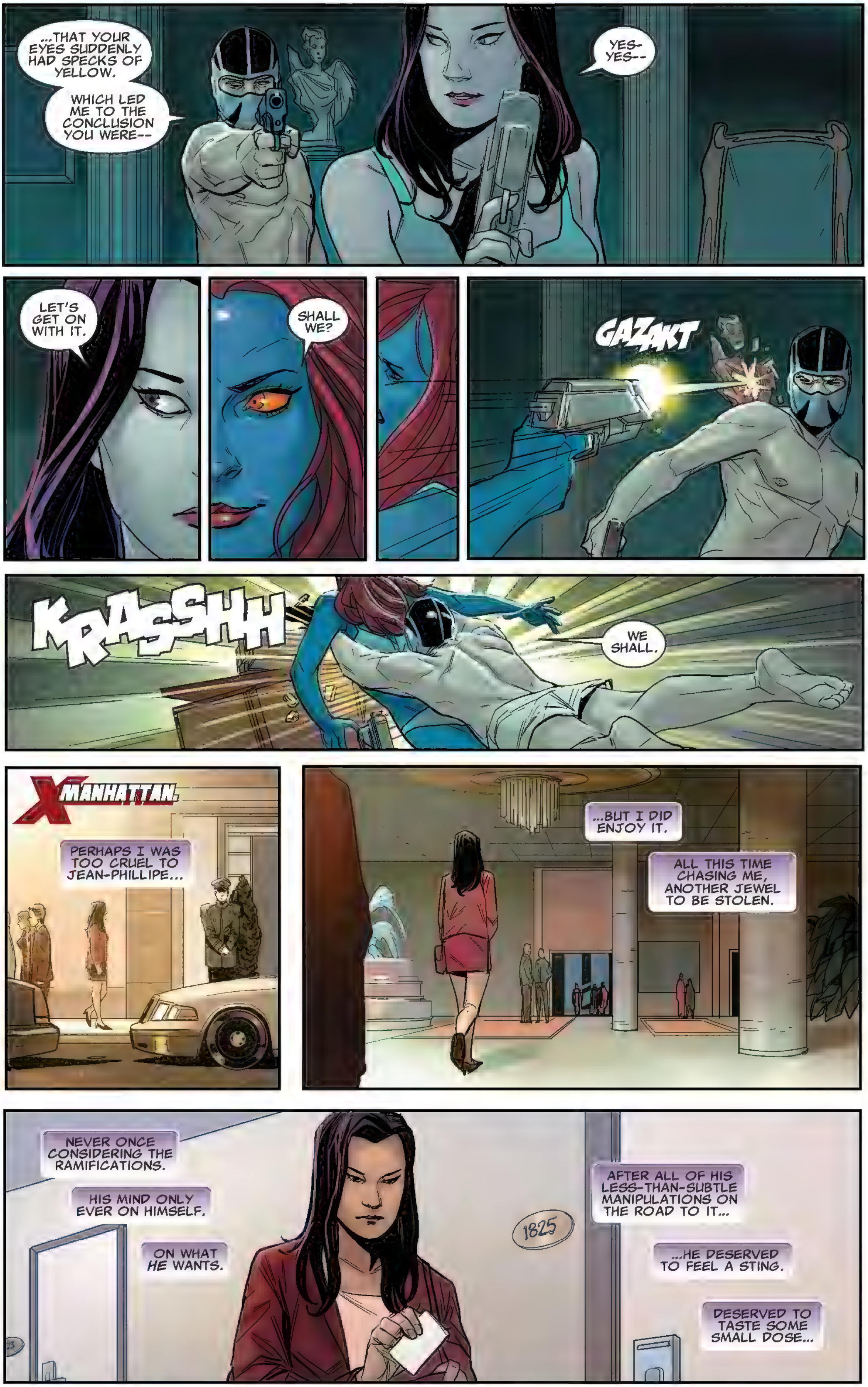

GUN... LOTS OF GUNS...
HORNS... FLAME-THROWER...
...TUBES AND WIRES... GOTTA HAVE THOSE...
WE WERE NORMAL CHILDREN. HAD A NORMAL FAMILY.
BUT FATHER HAD DISCOVERED A CURE FOR THE VERY DISEASE NOW RAVAGING YOUR BODY.
HOW MUCH DID THE PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY PAY YOU TO KILL HIM?
GET AWAY.
BUY A MINUTE...
...ALL I NEED IS A MINUTE.
HMMM... RAINBOWS AND FISTS...
OH, THAT'S GOOD...NEVER SEEN THAT BEFORE...
TURN-ONS INCLUDE...
W... WASN'T US...
WE'RE X-MEN, BUB--DON'T ASSASSINATE SCIENTISTS...
SPEAK UP-- I CAN'T HEAR YOUR LIES.
LISTEN CLOSER.
SWISH
FAP
GOOD.
STRUGGLE.
WE'VE WAITED SO LONG FOR THIS.
AND WE'VE GOT ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD TO SAVOR IT.

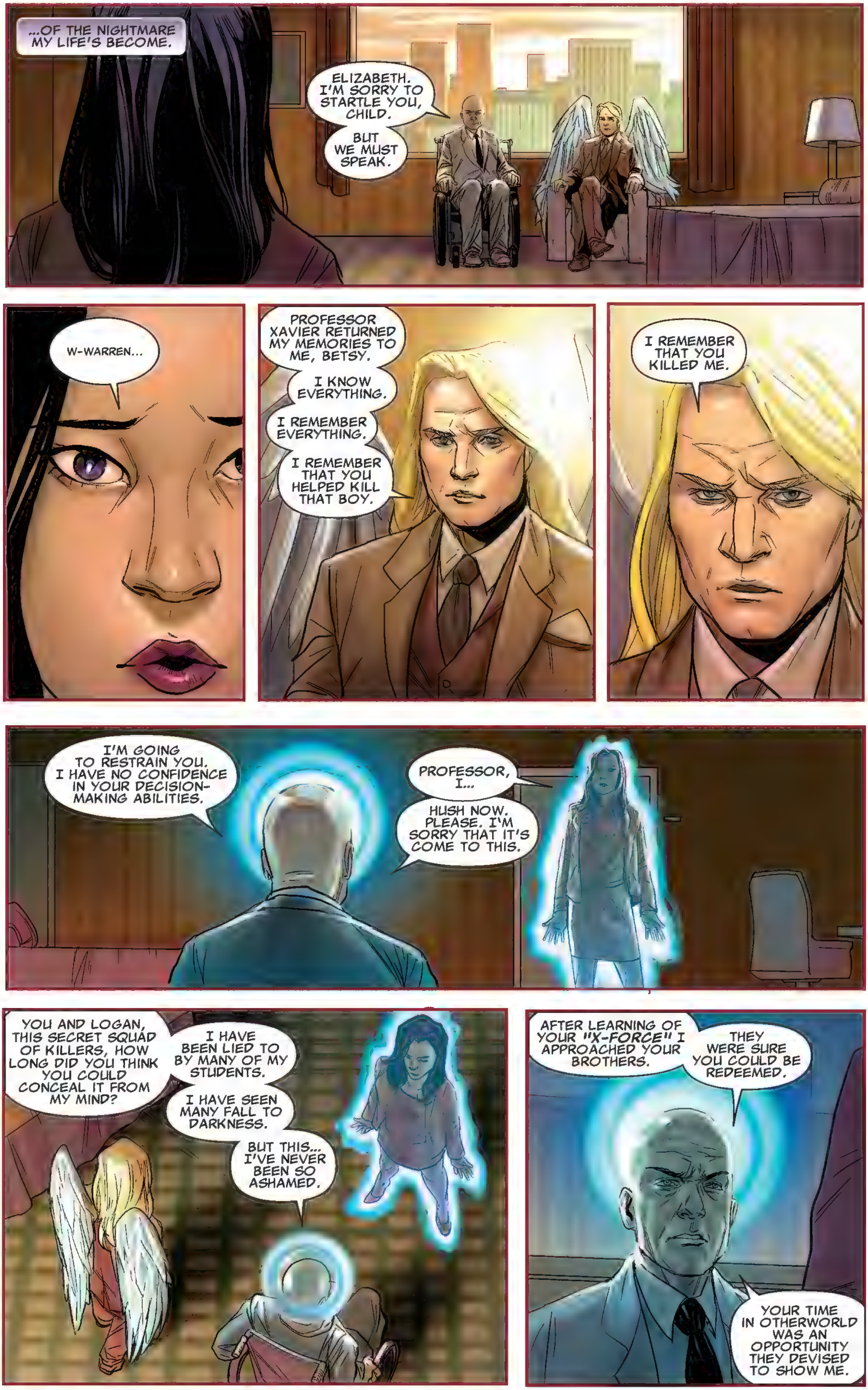

GENOSHA.
"SIXTEEN MILLION MUTANTS DIED HERE."
THEY HAD NO WARNING.
THEY WERE OFFERED NO OPPORTUNITY TO EVACUATE THE DOOMED CITY.
MY FATHER AMONG THEM.
IT'S IMPORTANT WE REMEMBER THEM.
THAT WE PAY SERVICE TO THEIR LIVES BY WORKING TOWARDS A WORLD WHERE HUMANS AND MUTANTS CAN LIVE TOGETHER, ENSURING WE NEVER SEE A REPEAT OF THIS ATROCITY.
I GOT A SOLID GOOD IDEA HOW WE CAN START, PRYDE.
HOW ABOUT WE DON'T RAISE OUR VERY OWN *APOCALYPSE?!*
SEEMS LIKE A GOOD WAY TO AVOID ANY MORE *GENOCIDE*, RIGHT?
I-I NEVER...
SHUT UP, QUENTIN. WHOMEVER EVAN *MAY* RESEMBLE I WON'T STAND FOR THIS TAUNTING.
WE DON'T PUNISH PEOPLE FOR FEAR OF A CRIME THEY MIGHT COMMIT.
AND EVEN THEN WE STILL TRY TO REHABILITATE...

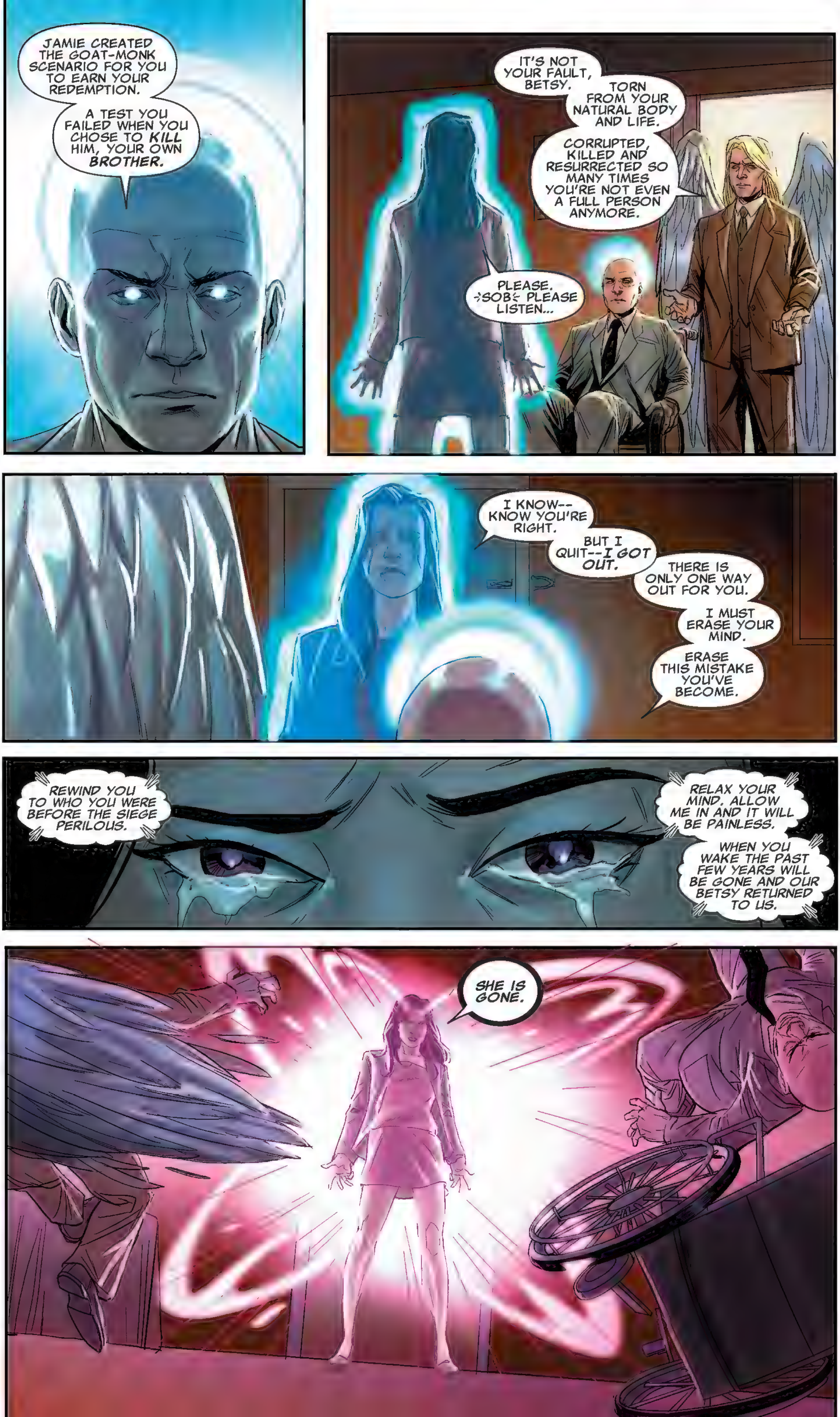

...EVEN LITTLE MONSTERS LIKE YOU.
WHAT SAY YOU, OH MIGHTY LEADER?
THE BROTHERHOOD IS ACTIVATED.
PLAN'S MOVING. WE'RE GOLDEN.
GRAB THAT LITTLE GIT FOR THE ROAD TRIP.
YOU READY TO LIVE IT UP, CHUBBY?
IS IT WISE TO SHOW SUCH *INSOLENCE* TO THE MAN WHO PROVIDES THE INFORMATION CURRENTLY ENABLING YOU TO HATCH THIS PLAN, SWEET BOY?
ENTIRE TOWN MISSING
ONCE THE *BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS* DESTROYS WOLVERINE AND OUTS X-FORCE TO THE PUBLIC WE'LL GET YOU AN AWARD PLAQUE.
ARE WE TALKING THAT NAME? OFFICIALLY?
ENTIRE TOWN MISSING
GIVEN OUR MEMBERSHIP I'D SAY WE'RE TOO GOOD FOR THE TITLE IF ANYTHING.
AND IF WE'RE NOT ENOUGH TO WARRANT THE TITLE...
...SOON WE'LL HAVE OUR VERY OWN *APOCALYPSE* TO BOOT.
AND THEN WE'LL SEE HOW OL' LOGAN LIKES IT...
...WHEN *WE'RE* THE ONES *PREEMPTIVELY* KILLING OUR FOES.
WITHER BEFORE US, DEMON!
THE INTERNAL ENERGY THAT POWERS YOU TURNED INWARD, ERASING YOU ON A MOLECULAR LEVEL!
GHRAGHH!
BETSY, CAN YOU HEAR ME, DARLIN'?

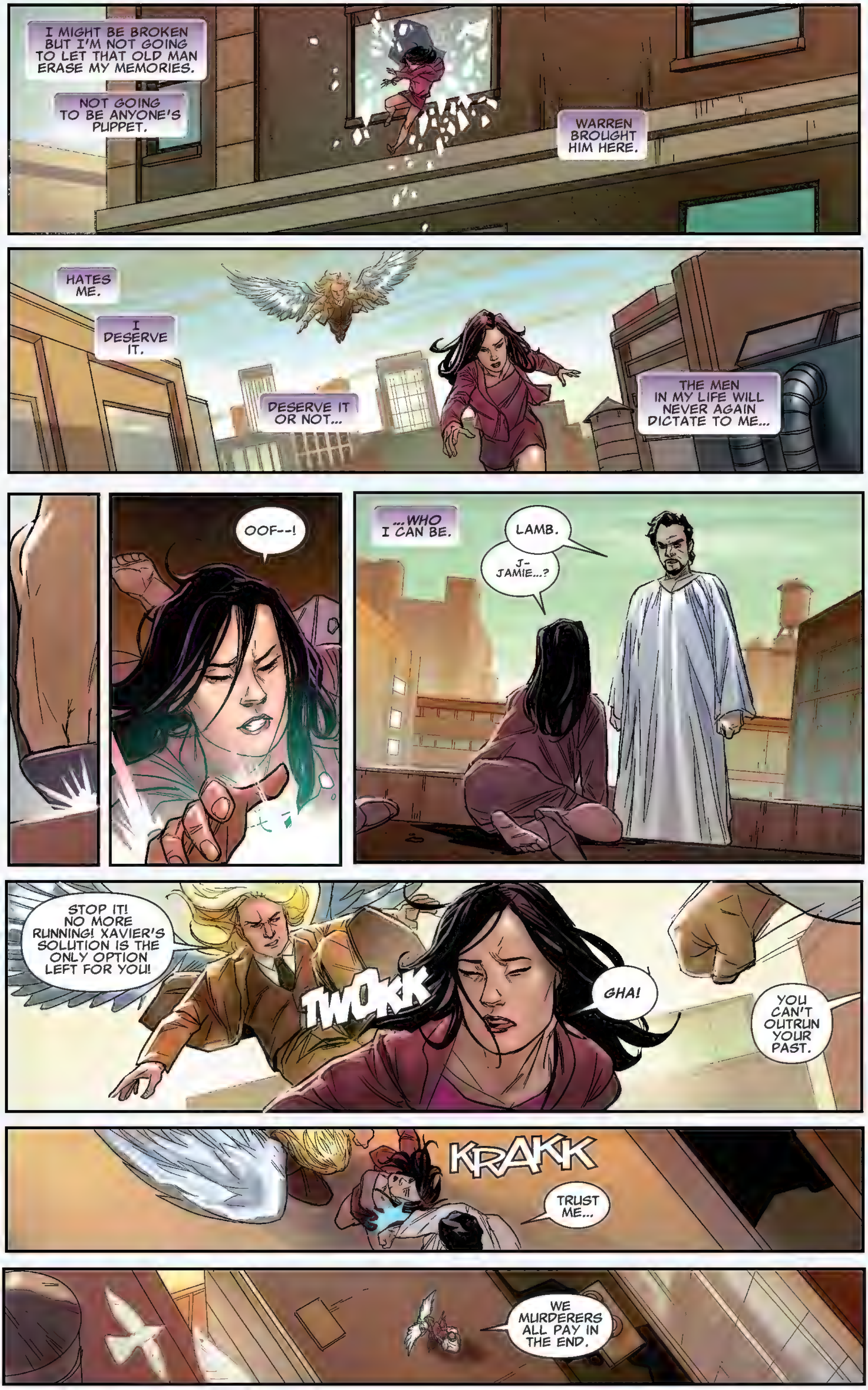

IN A BAD SPOT.
NEED YOU-- NEED LE PEW.
NEED YOUR HELP.
WE'RE ALL IN DANGER, BETS.
SET UP...SOMEONE WHO KNEW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO.
NO RESPONSE.
SNIKT
ALONE ON THIS.
KURT SCREAMS-- HE AIN'T GOT MUCH LONGER.
SNIKT
MY HEART'S SWOLLEN-- WON'T TAKE MUCH MORE--
NEED THIS POISON OUT...
...IT AIN'T GONNA BE PRETTY.
GHRAGH--!
SHHHLUB
STEVE HOLT!
GOT IT!
DEADPOOL FOR THE--

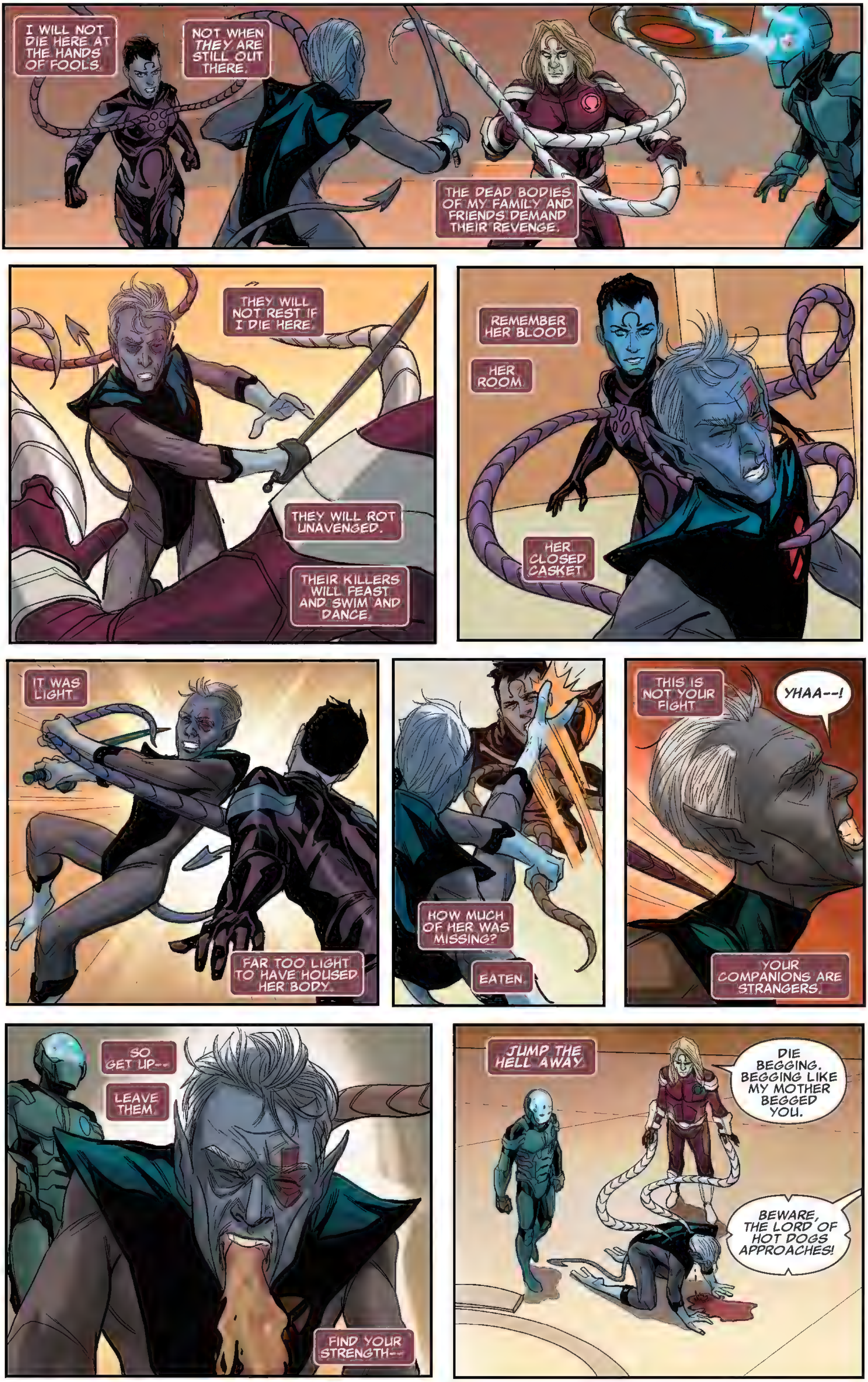

"THAT ELEVATED PAST TALKING RATHER QUICKLY."
SO, WHAT NEXT?
WILL YOU SUDDENLY REMEMBER YOU HATE ME AND SAY SOMETHING HORRIBLE, MY BLACK WIDOW?
NO.
BUT I *DO* HAVE A SURPRISE.
CLOSE YOUR EYES.
IF THIS SURPRISE IS WHAT I THINK IT IS YOU SHOULD KNOW I'LL NEED FIVE MINUTES BEFORE I'M OF ANY USE TO YOU, AGAIN.
I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU.
YOU HAD THESE AMAZING PURE VIOLET EYES.
SO PURE, SO PIERCING, AS THE CLICHÉ GOES.
WHICH IS WHY I FOUND IT ODD...

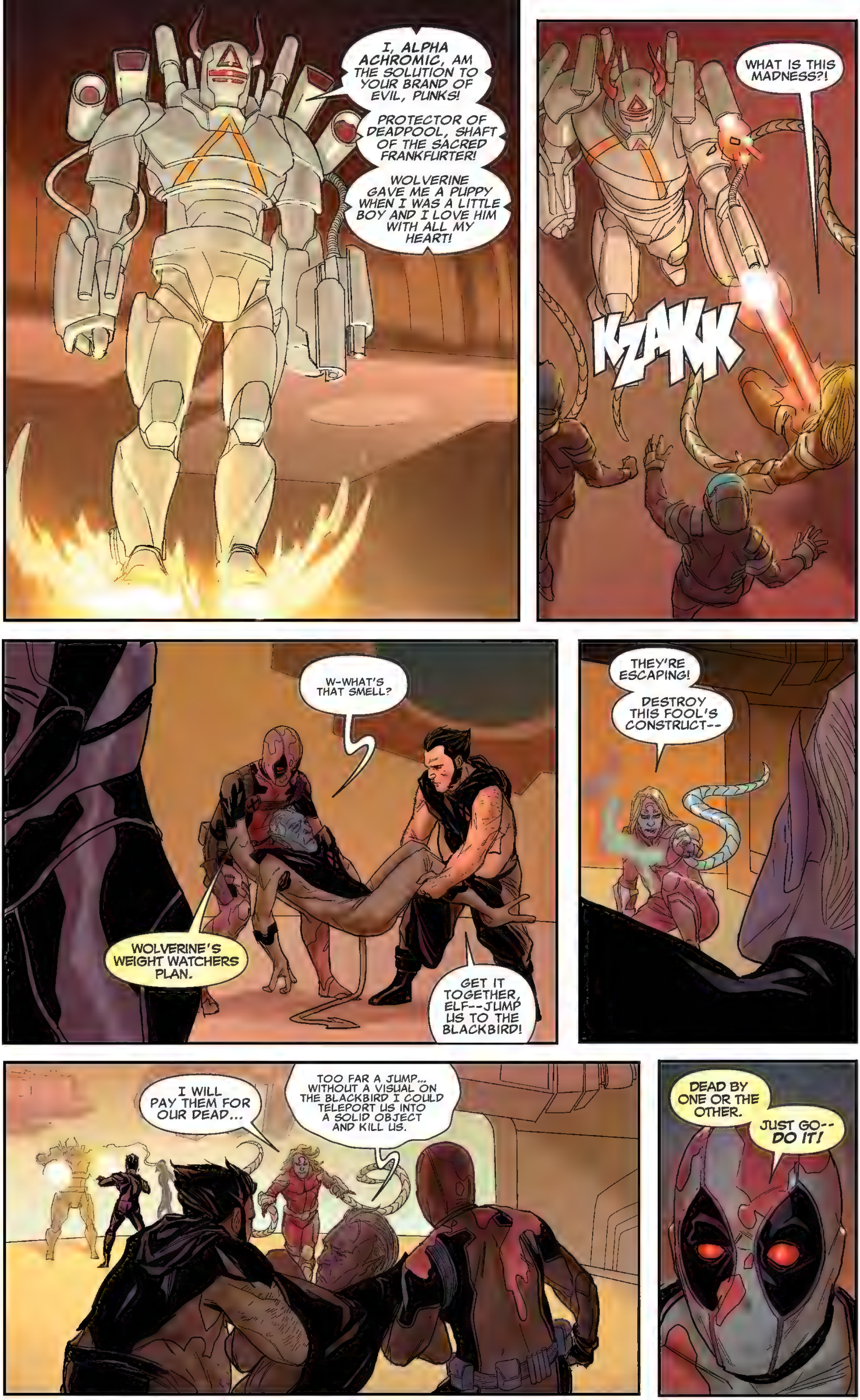

...THAT YOUR EYES SUDDENLY HAD SPECKS OF YELLOW.
WHICH LED ME TO THE CONCLUSION YOU WERE--
YES-YES--
LET'S GET ON WITH IT.
SHALL WE?
GAZAKT
KRASSHH
WE SHALL.
X-MANHATTAN.
PERHAPS I WAS TOO CRUEL TO JEAN-PHILLIPE...
...BUT I DID ENJOY IT.
ALL THIS TIME CHASING ME, ANOTHER JEWEL TO BE STOLEN.
NEVER ONCE CONSIDERING THE RAMIFICATIONS.
HIS MIND ONLY EVER ON HIMSELF.
ON WHAT *HE* WANTS.
1825
AFTER ALL OF HIS LESS-THAN-SUBTLE MANIPULATIONS ON THE ROAD TO IT...
...HE DESERVED TO FEEL A STING.
DESERVED TO TASTE SOME SMALL DOSE...

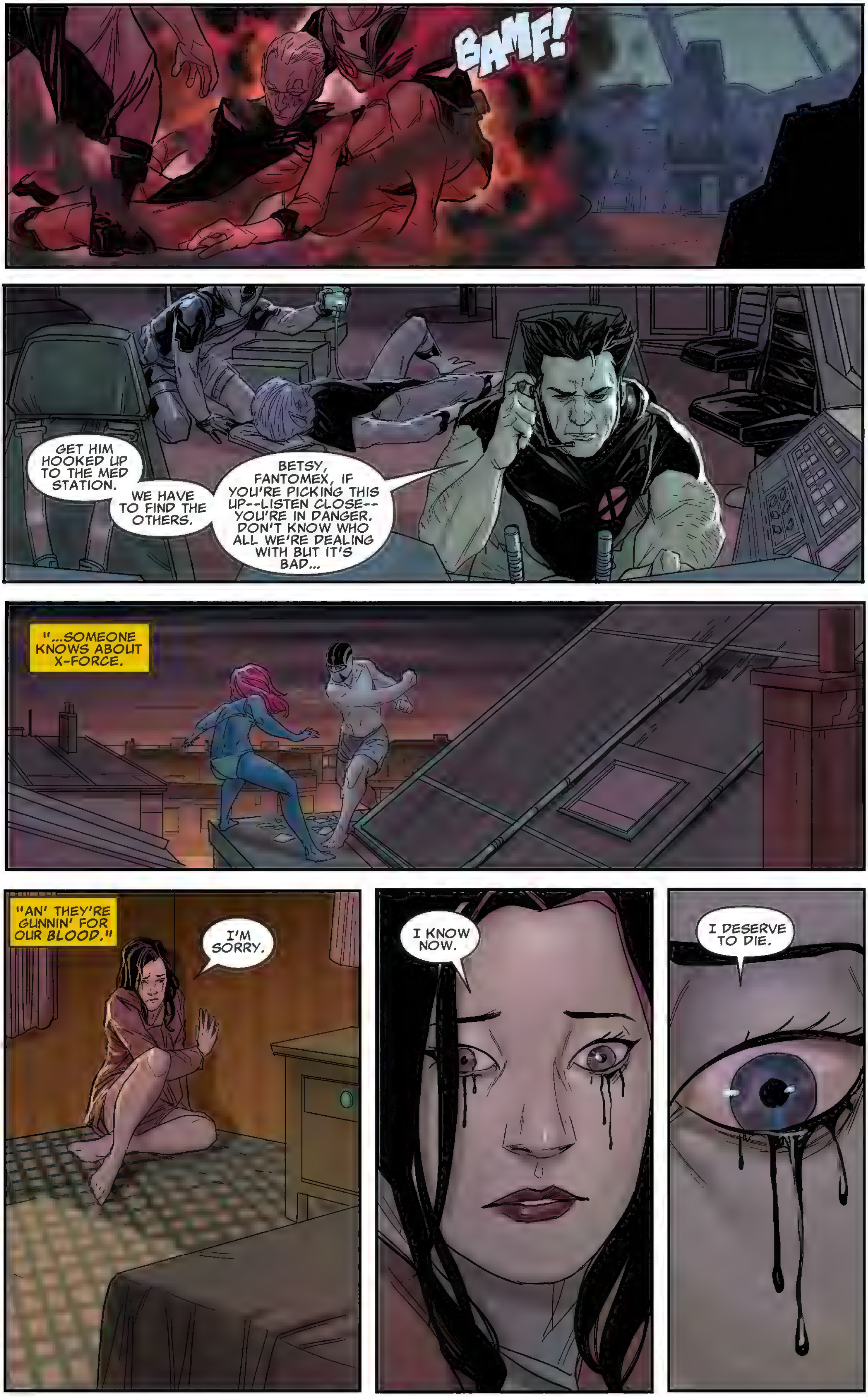

...OF THE NIGHTMARE MY LIFE'S BECOME.
ELIZABETH. I'M SORRY TO STARTLE YOU, CHILD.
BUT WE MUST SPEAK.
W-WARREN...
PROFESSOR XAVIER RETURNED MY MEMORIES TO ME, BETSY.
I KNOW EVERYTHING.
I REMEMBER EVERYTHING.
I REMEMBER THAT YOU HELPED KILL THAT BOY.
I REMEMBER THAT YOU KILLED ME.
I'M GOING TO RESTRAIN YOU. I HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN YOUR DECISION-MAKING ABILITIES.
PROFESSOR, I...
HUSH NOW. PLEASE. I'M SORRY THAT IT'S COME TO THIS.
YOU AND LOGAN, THIS SECRET SQUAD OF KILLERS, HOW LONG DID YOU THINK YOU COULD CONCEAL IT FROM MY MIND?
I HAVE BEEN LIED TO BY MANY OF MY STUDENTS.
I HAVE SEEN MANY FALL TO DARKNESS.
BUT THIS... I'VE NEVER BEEN SO ASHAMED.
AFTER LEARNING OF YOUR "X-FORCE" I APPROACHED YOUR BROTHERS.
THEY WERE SURE YOU COULD BE REDEEMED.
YOUR TIME IN OTHERWORLD WAS AN OPPORTUNITY THEY DEVISED TO SHOW ME.


JAMIE CREATED THE GOAT-MONK SCENARIO FOR YOU TO EARN YOUR REDEMPTION.
A TEST YOU FAILED WHEN YOU CHOSE TO **KILL** HIM, YOUR OWN **BROTHER.**
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, BETSY.
TORN FROM YOUR NATURAL BODY AND LIFE.
CORRUPTED, KILLED AND RESURRECTED SO MANY TIMES YOU'RE NOT EVEN A FULL PERSON ANYMORE.
PLEASE. ⊰SOB⊱ PLEASE LISTEN...
I KNOW-- KNOW YOU'RE RIGHT.
BUT I QUIT--*I GOT OUT.*
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY OUT FOR YOU.
I MUST ERASE YOUR MIND.
ERASE THIS MISTAKE YOU'VE BECOME.
REWIND YOU TO WHO YOU WERE BEFORE THE SIEGE PERILOUS.
RELAX YOUR MIND. ALLOW ME IN AND IT WILL BE PAINLESS.
WHEN YOU WAKE THE PAST FEW YEARS WILL BE GONE AND OUR BETSY RETURNED TO US.
SHE IS GONE.


I MIGHT BE BROKEN BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET THAT OLD MAN ERASE MY MEMORIES.
NOT GOING TO BE ANYONE'S PUPPET.
WARREN BROUGHT HIM HERE.
HATES ME.
I DESERVE IT.
DESERVE IT OR NOT...
THE MEN IN MY LIFE WILL NEVER AGAIN DICTATE TO ME...
OOF--!
...WHO I CAN BE.
LAMB.
J- JAMIE...?
STOP IT! NO MORE RUNNING! XAVIER'S SOLUTION IS THE ONLY OPTION LEFT FOR YOU!
TWOKK
GHA!
YOU CAN'T OUTRUN YOUR PAST.
KRAKK
TRUST ME...
WE MURDERERS ALL PAY IN THE END.


I WILL NOT DIE HERE AT THE HANDS OF FOOLS.
NOT WHEN *THEY* ARE STILL OUT THERE.
THE DEAD BODIES OF MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS DEMAND THEIR REVENGE.
THEY WILL NOT REST IF I DIE HERE.
THEY WILL ROT UNAVENGED.
THEIR KILLERS WILL FEAST AND SWIM AND DANCE.
REMEMBER HER BLOOD
HER ROOM
HER CLOSED CASKET
IT WAS LIGHT.
FAR TOO LIGHT TO HAVE HOUSED HER BODY.
HOW MUCH OF HER WAS MISSING?
EATEN.
THIS IS NOT YOUR FIGHT
YHAA--!
YOUR COMPANIONS ARE STRANGERS.
SO GET UP--
LEAVE THEM.
FIND YOUR STRENGTH--
JUMP THE HELL AWAY
DIE BEGGING. BEGGING LIKE MY MOTHER BEGGED YOU.
BEWARE, THE LORD OF HOT DOGS APPROACHES!

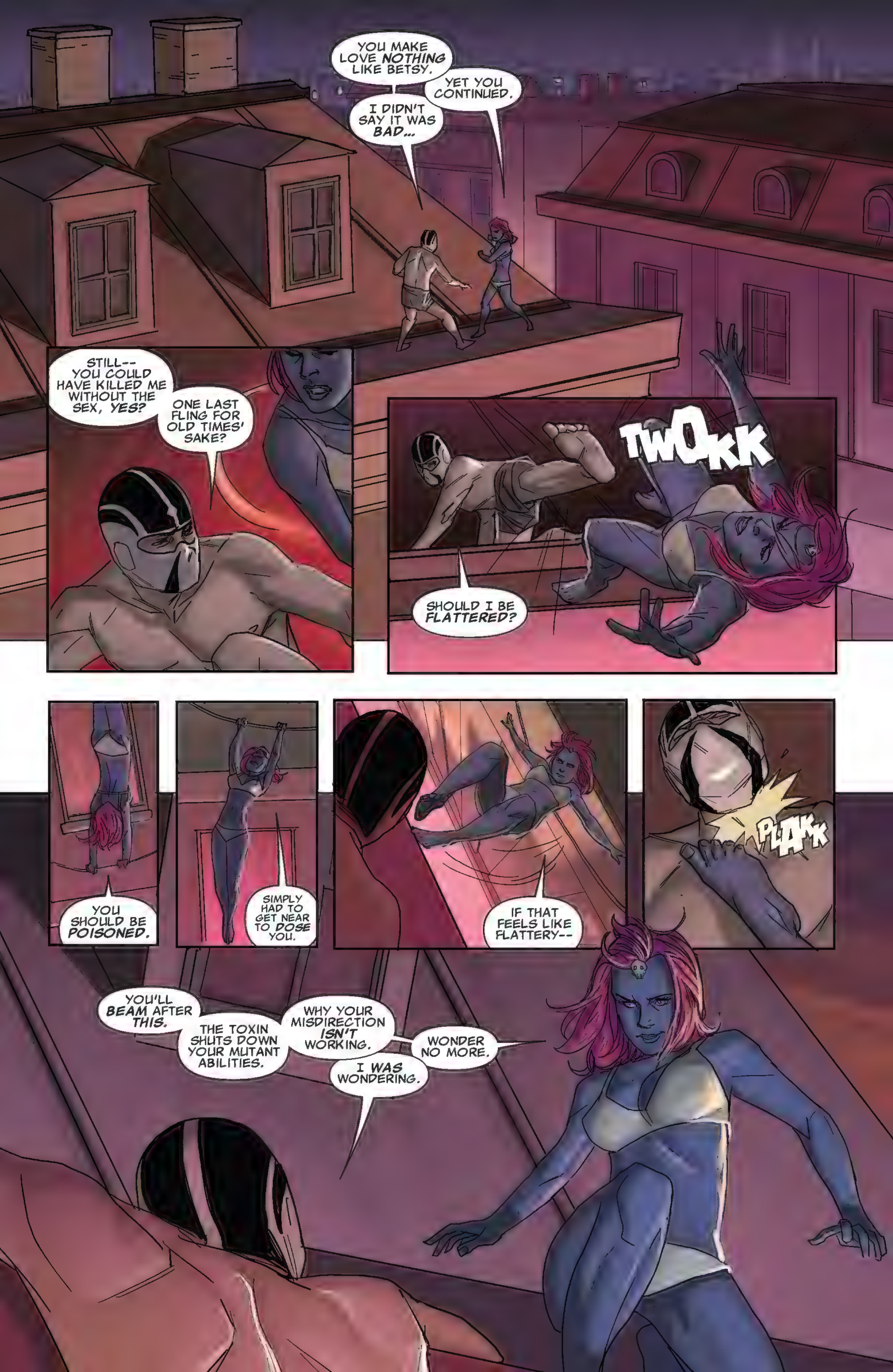

I, ALPHA ACHROMIC, AM THE SOLUTION TO YOUR BRAND OF EVIL, PUNKS!
PROTECTOR OF DEADPOOL, SHAFT OF THE SACRED FRANKFURTER!
WOLVERINE GAVE ME A PUPPY WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY AND I LOVE HIM WITH ALL MY HEART!
WHAT IS THIS MADNESS?!
KZAKK
W-WHAT'S THAT SMELL?
WOLVERINE'S WEIGHT WATCHERS PLAN.
GET IT TOGETHER, ELF--JUMP US TO THE BLACKBIRD!
THEY'RE ESCAPING!
DESTROY THIS FOOL'S CONSTRUCT--
I WILL PAY THEM FOR OUR DEAD...
TOO FAR A JUMP... WITHOUT A VISUAL ON THE BLACKBIRD I COULD TELEPORT US INTO A SOLID OBJECT AND KILL US.
DEAD BY ONE OR THE OTHER.
JUST GO-- DO IT!

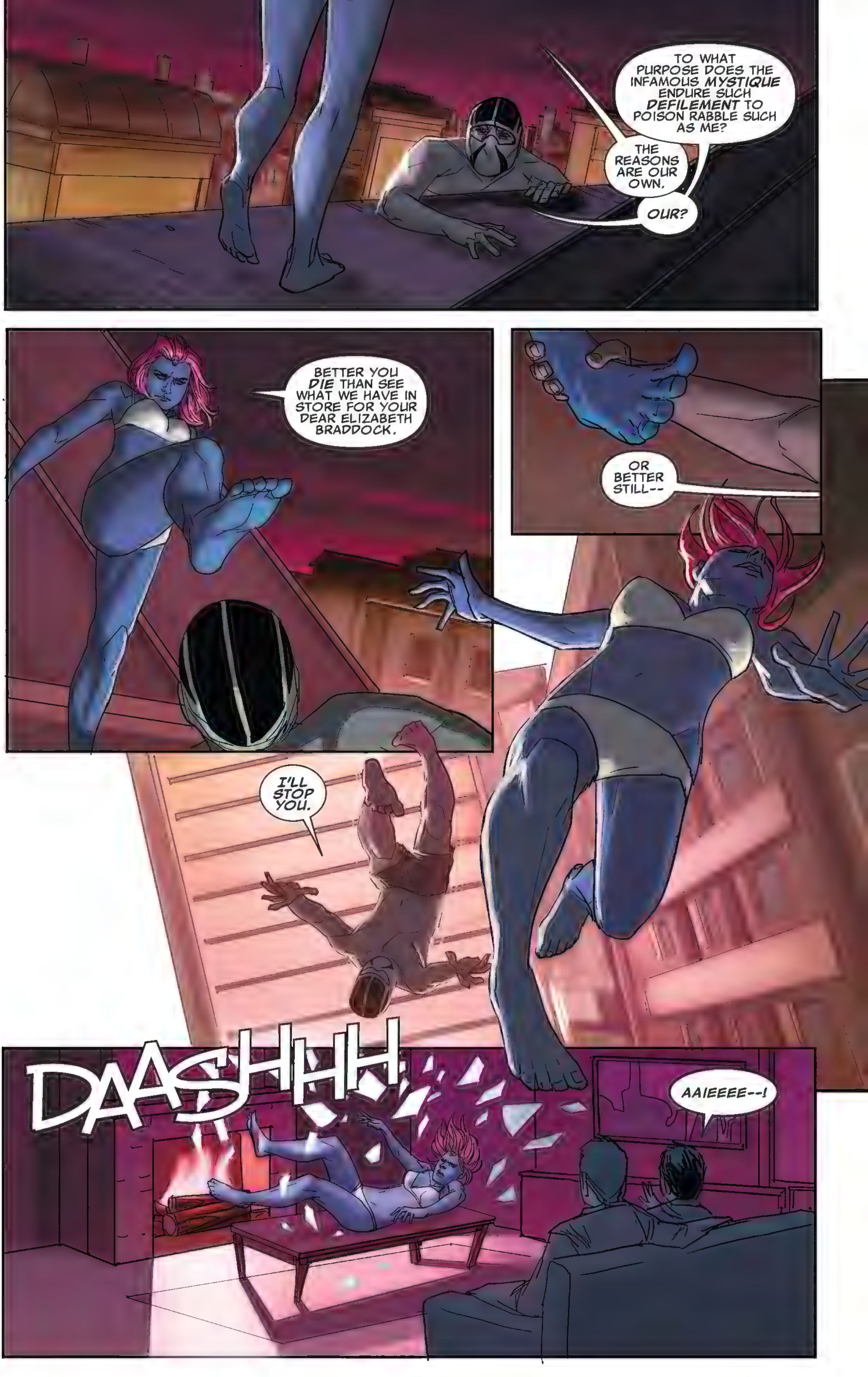

BAMF!
GET HIM HOOKED UP TO THE MED STATION.
WE HAVE TO FIND THE OTHERS.
BETSY, FANTOMEX, IF YOU'RE PICKING THIS UP--LISTEN CLOSE--YOU'RE IN DANGER. DON'T KNOW WHO ALL WE'RE DEALING WITH BUT IT'S BAD...
"...SOMEONE KNOWS ABOUT X-FORCE.
"AN' THEY'RE GUNNIN' FOR OUR BLOOD."
I'M SORRY.
I KNOW NOW.
I DESERVE TO DIE.

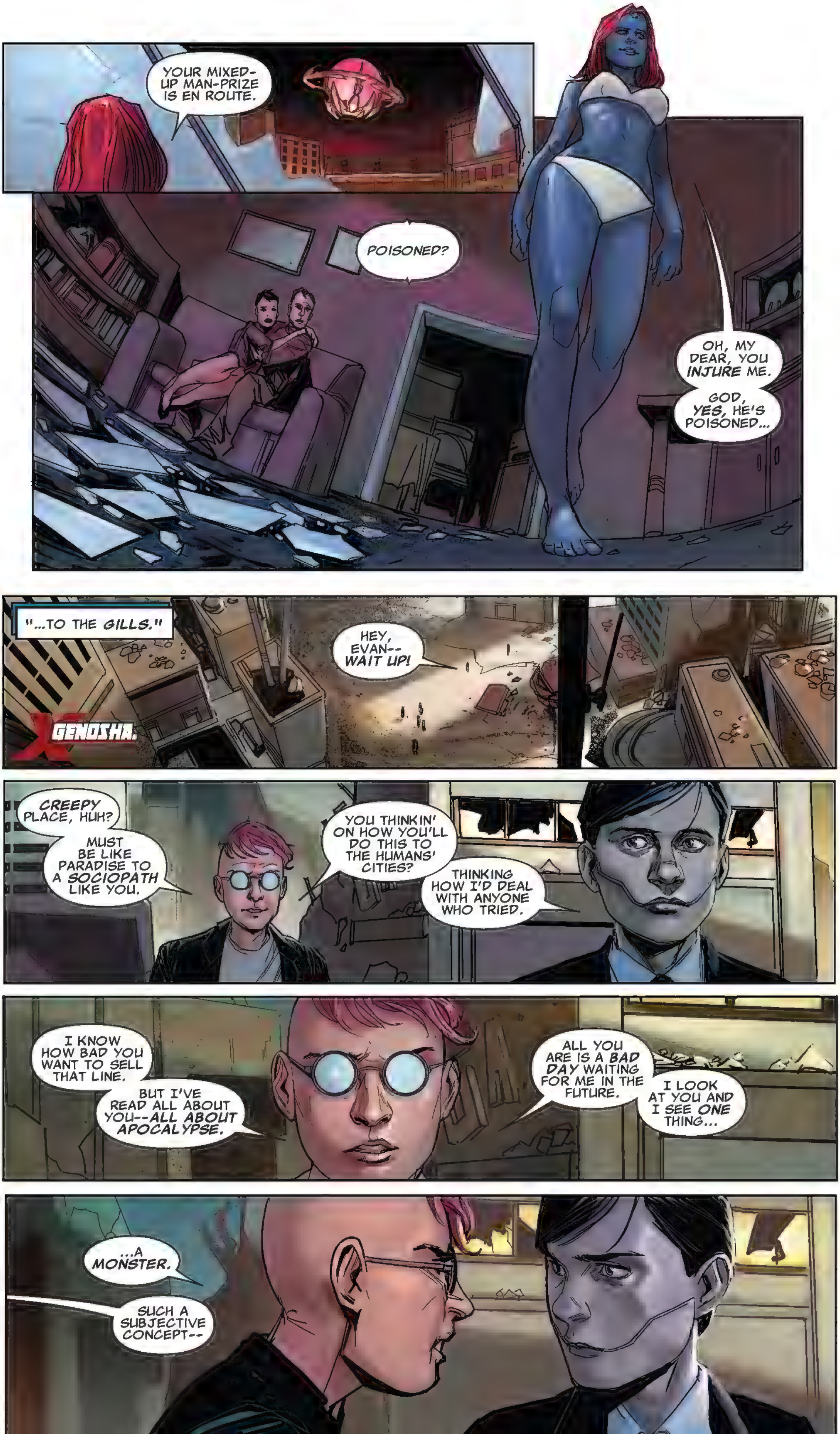
27

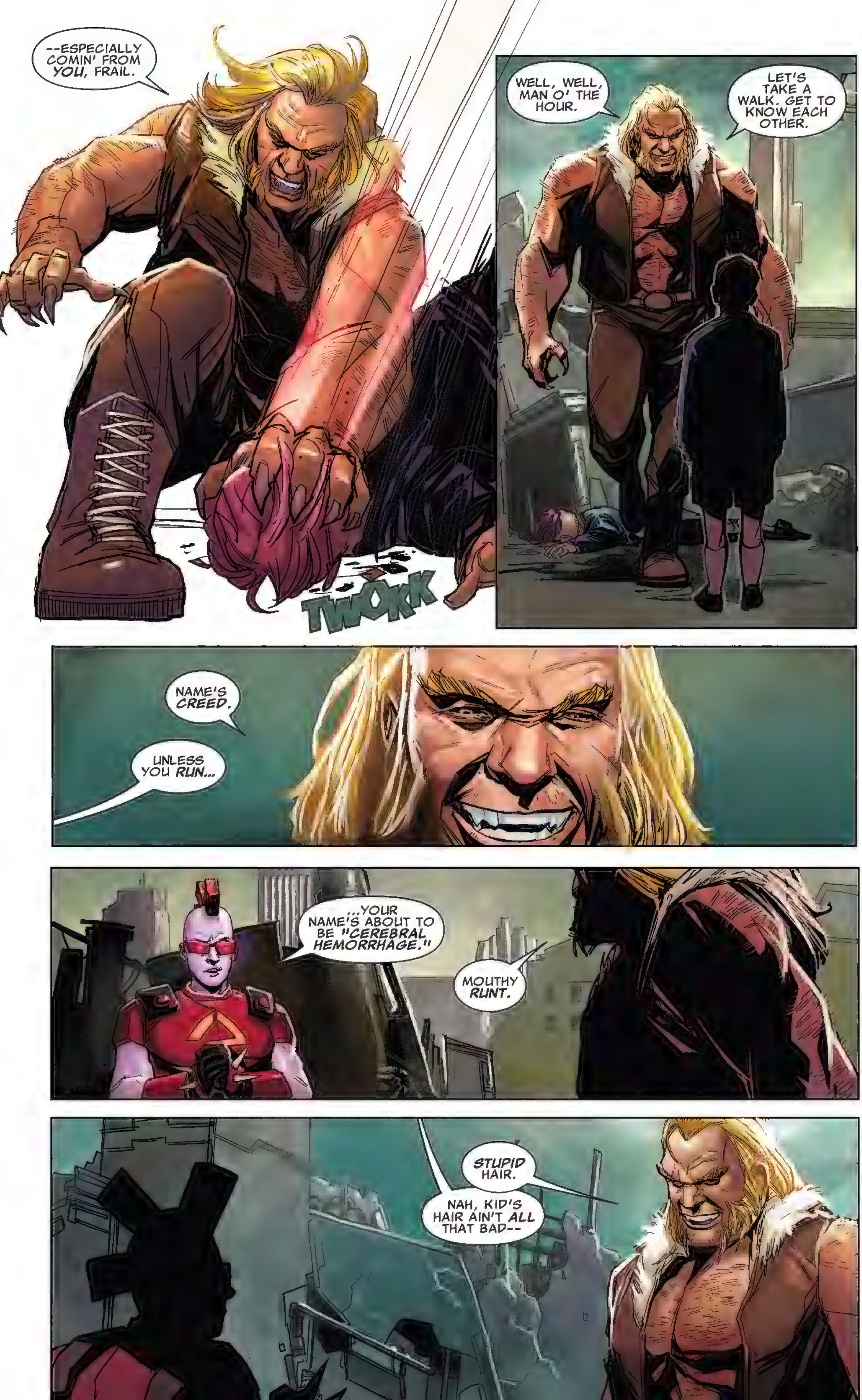
FINAL EXECUTION

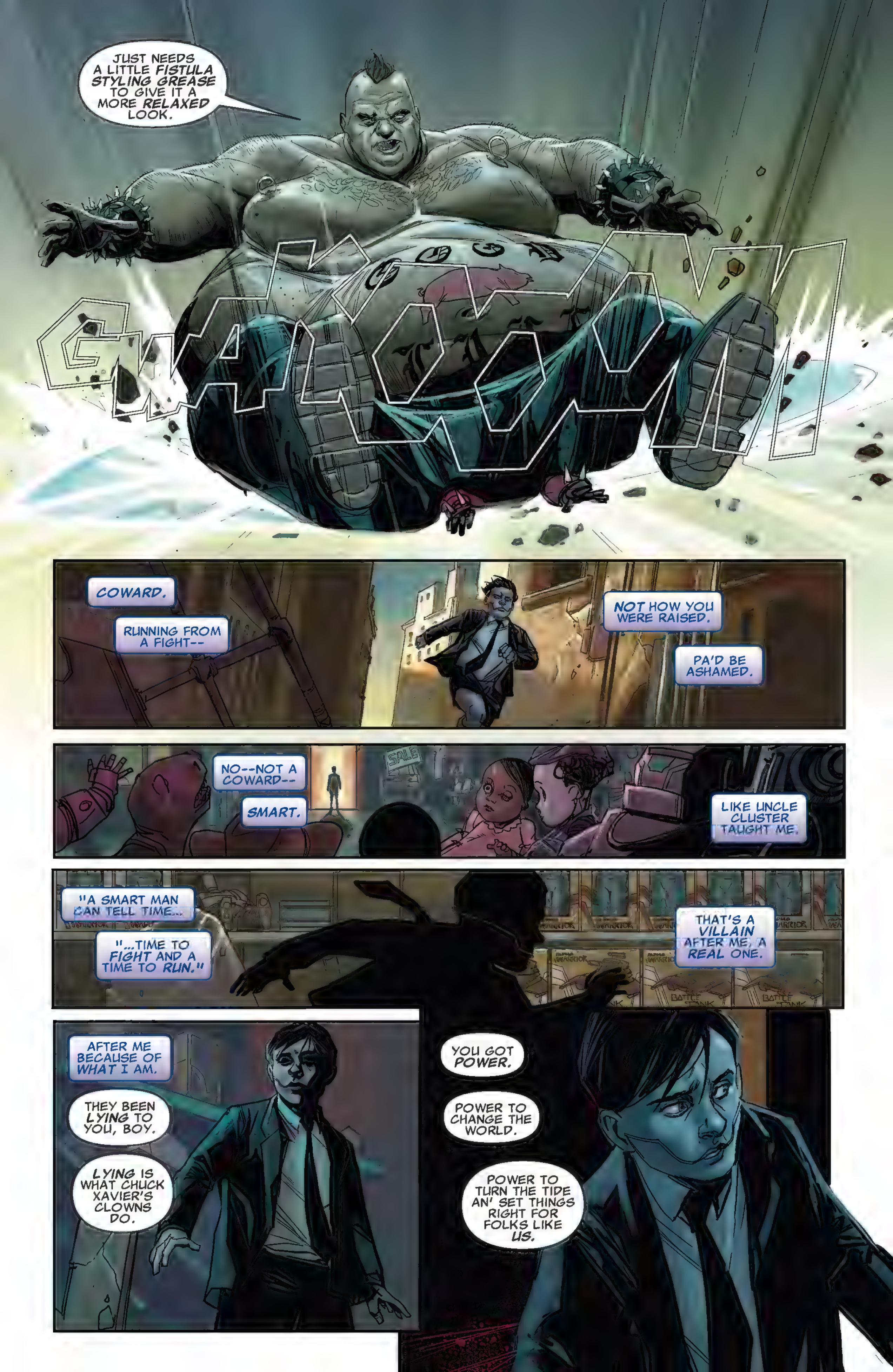
CHAPTER 3: PATTERNS

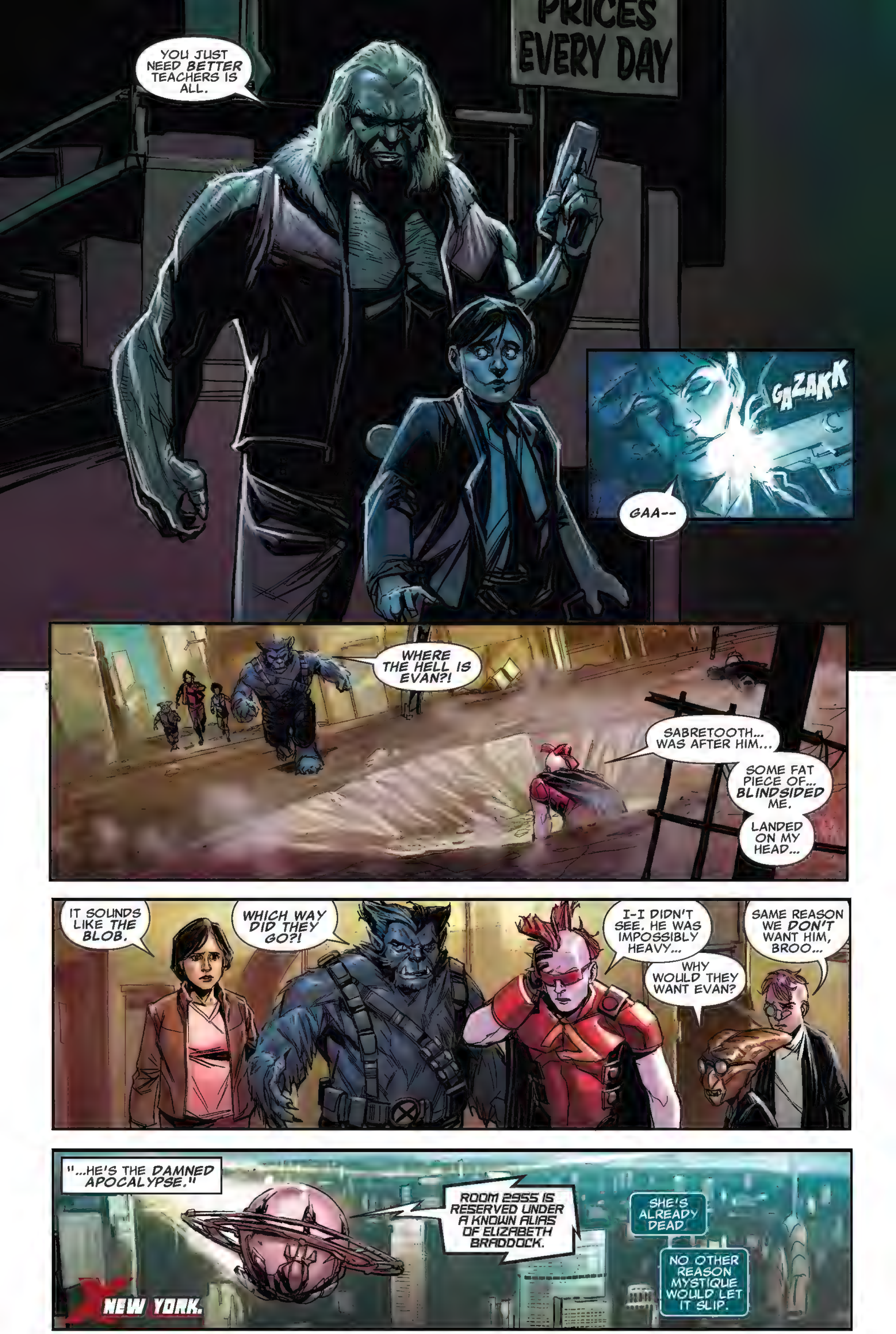

YOU MAKE LOVE *NOTHING* LIKE BETSY.
I DIDN'T SAY IT WAS *BAD...*
YET YOU CONTINUED.
STILL-- YOU COULD HAVE KILLED ME WITHOUT THE SEX, *YES?*
ONE LAST FLING FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE?
TWOKK
SHOULD I BE *FLATTERED?*
YOU SHOULD BE *POISONED.*
SIMPLY HAD TO GET NEAR TO *DOSE* YOU.
IF THAT FEELS LIKE FLATTERY--
PLAKK
YOU'LL *BEAM* AFTER *THIS.*
THE TOXIN SHUTS DOWN YOUR MUTANT ABILITIES.
WHY YOUR MISDIRECTION *ISN'T* WORKING.
I *WAS* WONDERING.
WONDER NO MORE.

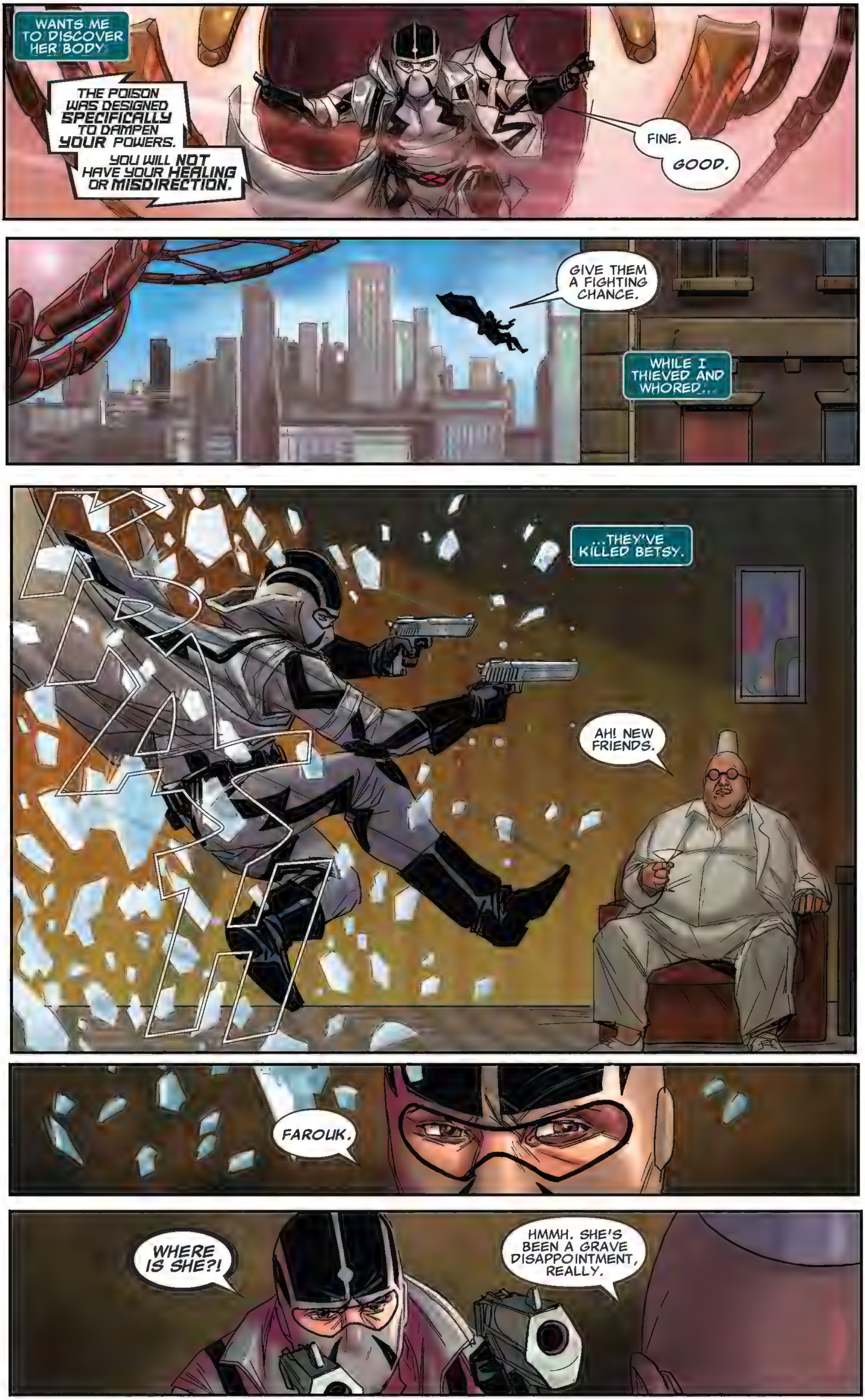

TO WHAT PURPOSE DOES THE INFAMOUS *MYSTIQUE* ENDURE SUCH *DEFILEMENT* TO POISON RABBLE SUCH AS ME?
THE REASONS ARE OUR OWN.
OUR?
BETTER YOU *DIE* THAN SEE WHAT WE HAVE IN STORE FOR YOUR DEAR ELIZABETH BRADDOCK.
OR BETTER STILL--
I'LL STOP YOU.
DAASHHHH
AAIEEEE--!

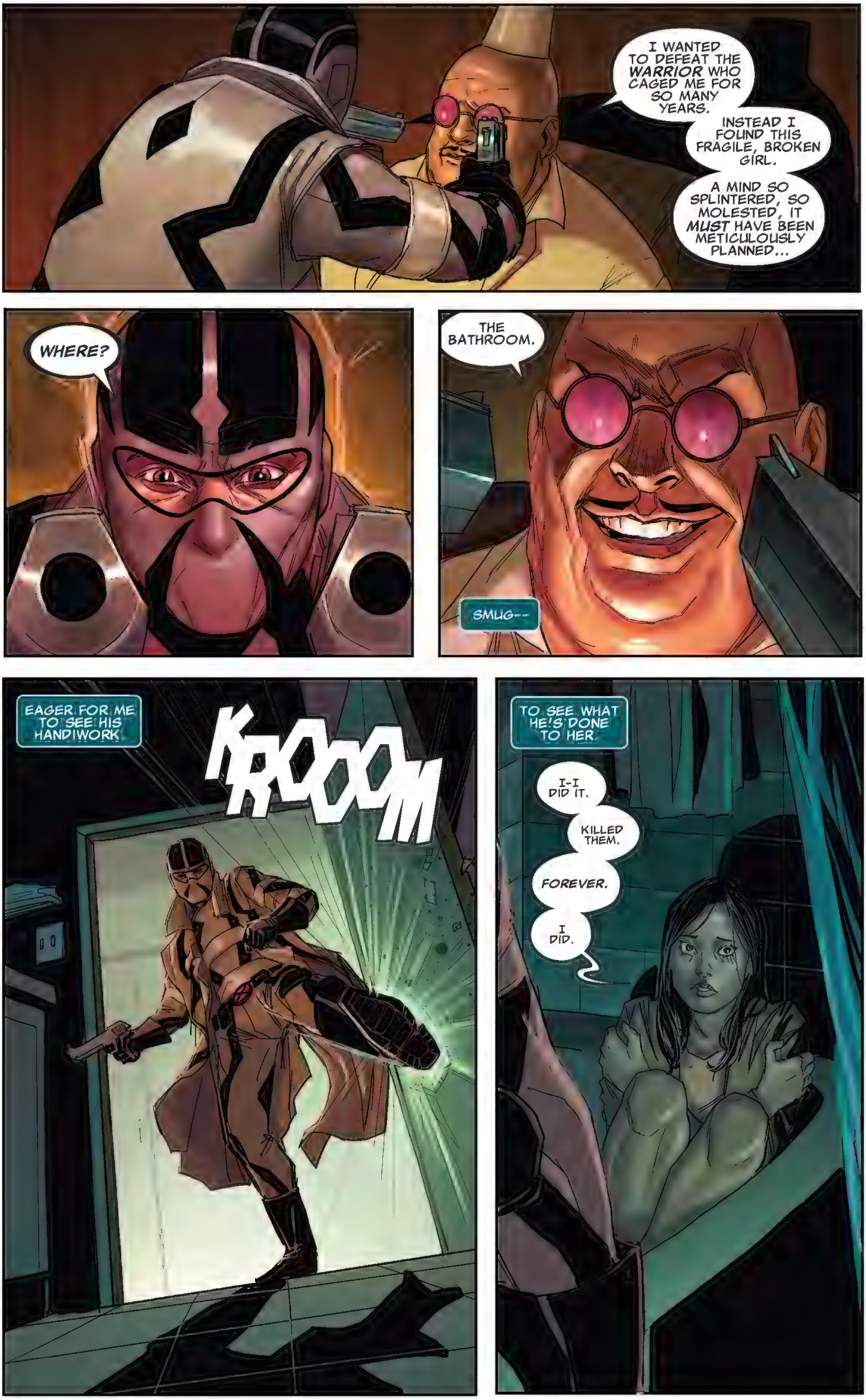

YOUR MIXED-UP MAN-PRIZE IS EN ROUTE.
POISONED?
OH, MY DEAR, YOU *INJURE* ME.
GOD, *YES,* HE'S POISONED...
"...TO THE *GILLS.*"
GENOSHA.
HEY, EVAN-- *WAIT UP!*
CREEPY PLACE, HUH?
MUST BE LIKE PARADISE TO A *SOCIOPATH* LIKE YOU.
YOU THINKIN' ON HOW YOU'LL DO THIS TO THE HUMANS' CITIES?
THINKING HOW I'D DEAL WITH ANYONE WHO TRIED.
I KNOW HOW BAD YOU WANT TO SELL THAT LINE.
BUT I'VE READ ALL ABOUT YOU--*ALL ABOUT APOCALYPSE.*
ALL YOU ARE IS A *BAD DAY* WAITING FOR ME IN THE FUTURE.
I LOOK AT YOU AND I SEE *ONE* THING...
...A *MONSTER.*
SUCH A SUBJECTIVE CONCEPT--

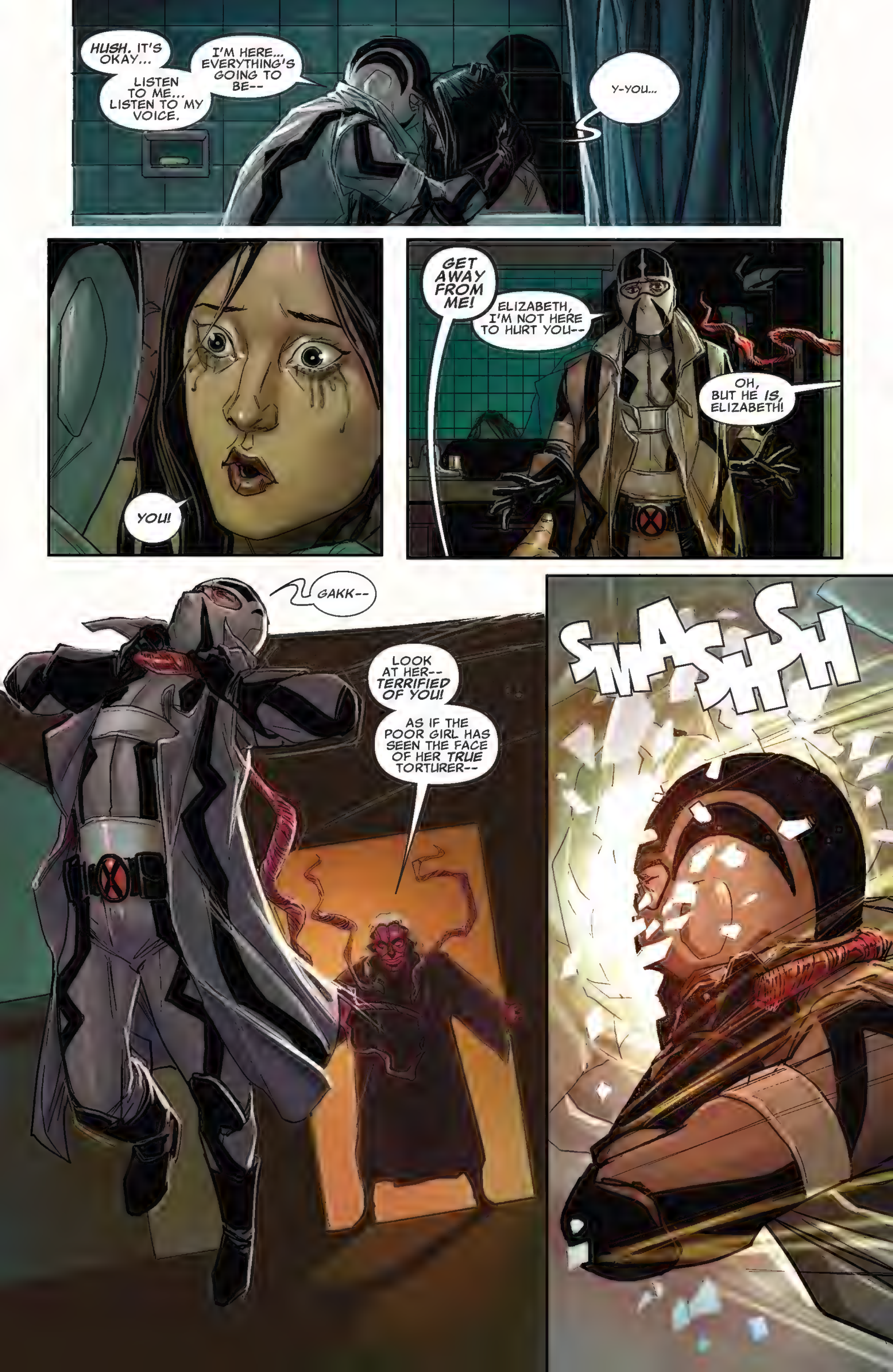

--ESPECIALLY COMIN' FROM *YOU*, FRAIL.
TWOKK
WELL, WELL, MAN O' THE HOUR.
LET'S TAKE A WALK. GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER.
NAME'S *CREED*.
UNLESS YOU *RUN*...
...YOUR NAME'S ABOUT TO BE *"CEREBRAL HEMORRHAGE."*
MOUTHY *RUNT*.
STUPID HAIR.
NAH, KID'S HAIR AIN'T *ALL* THAT BAD--

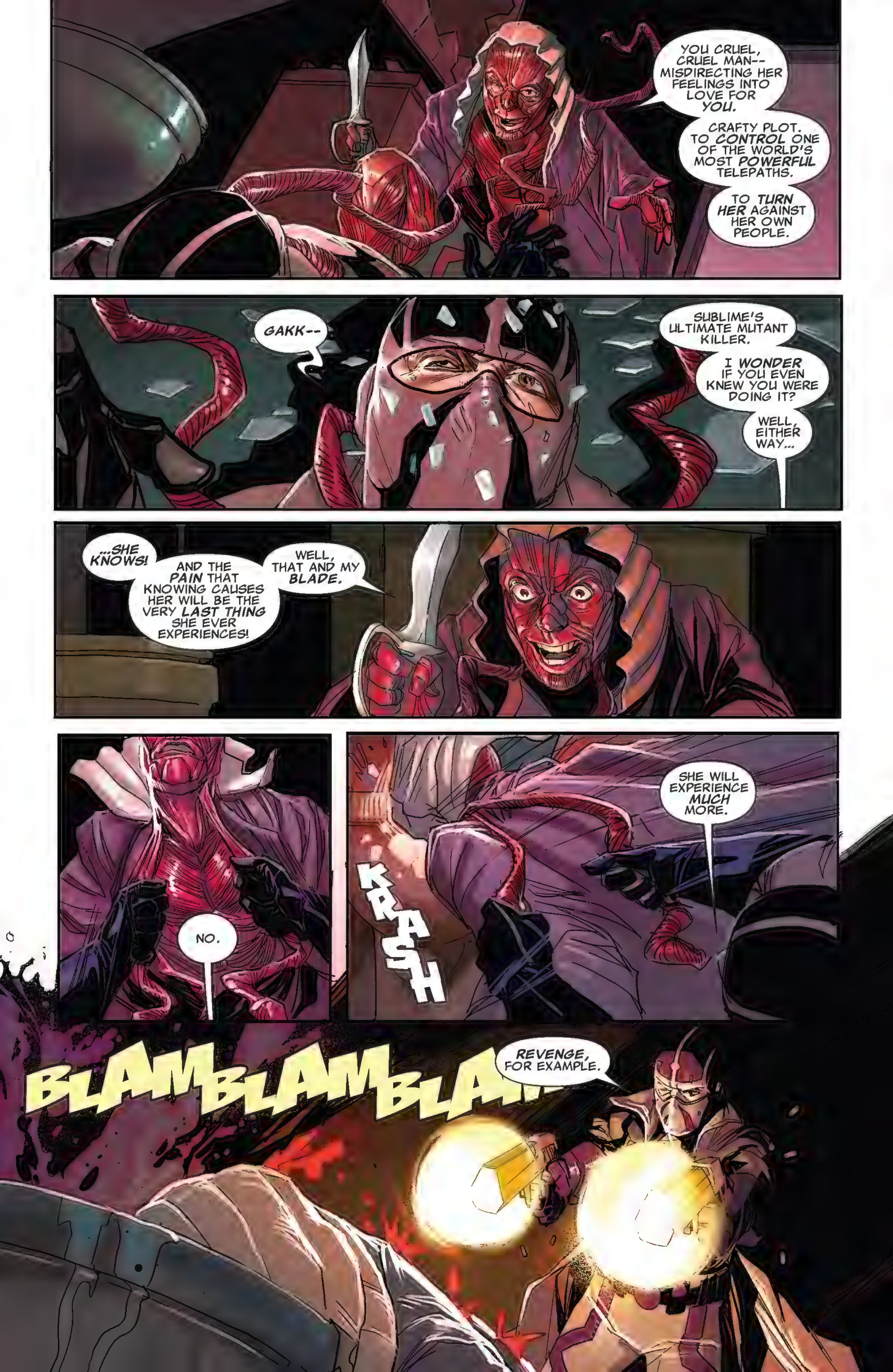

JUST NEEDS A LITTLE *FISTULA STYLING GREASE* TO GIVE IT A MORE *RELAXED* LOOK.
GWAKOOM
COWARD.
RUNNING FROM A FIGHT--
NOT HOW YOU WERE RAISED.
PA'D BE ASHAMED.
NO--NOT A COWARD--
SMART.
SALE
LIKE UNCLE CLUSTER TAUGHT ME.
"A SMART MAN CAN TELL TIME...
"...TIME TO *FIGHT* AND A TIME TO *RUN*."
THAT'S A *VILLAIN* AFTER ME, A *REAL* ONE.
AFTER ME BECAUSE OF *WHAT I AM.*
THEY BEEN *LYING* TO YOU, BOY.
LYING IS WHAT CHUCK XAVIER'S CLOWNS DO.
YOU GOT *POWER.*
POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD.
POWER TO TURN THE TIDE AN' SET THINGS RIGHT FOR FOLKS LIKE *US.*

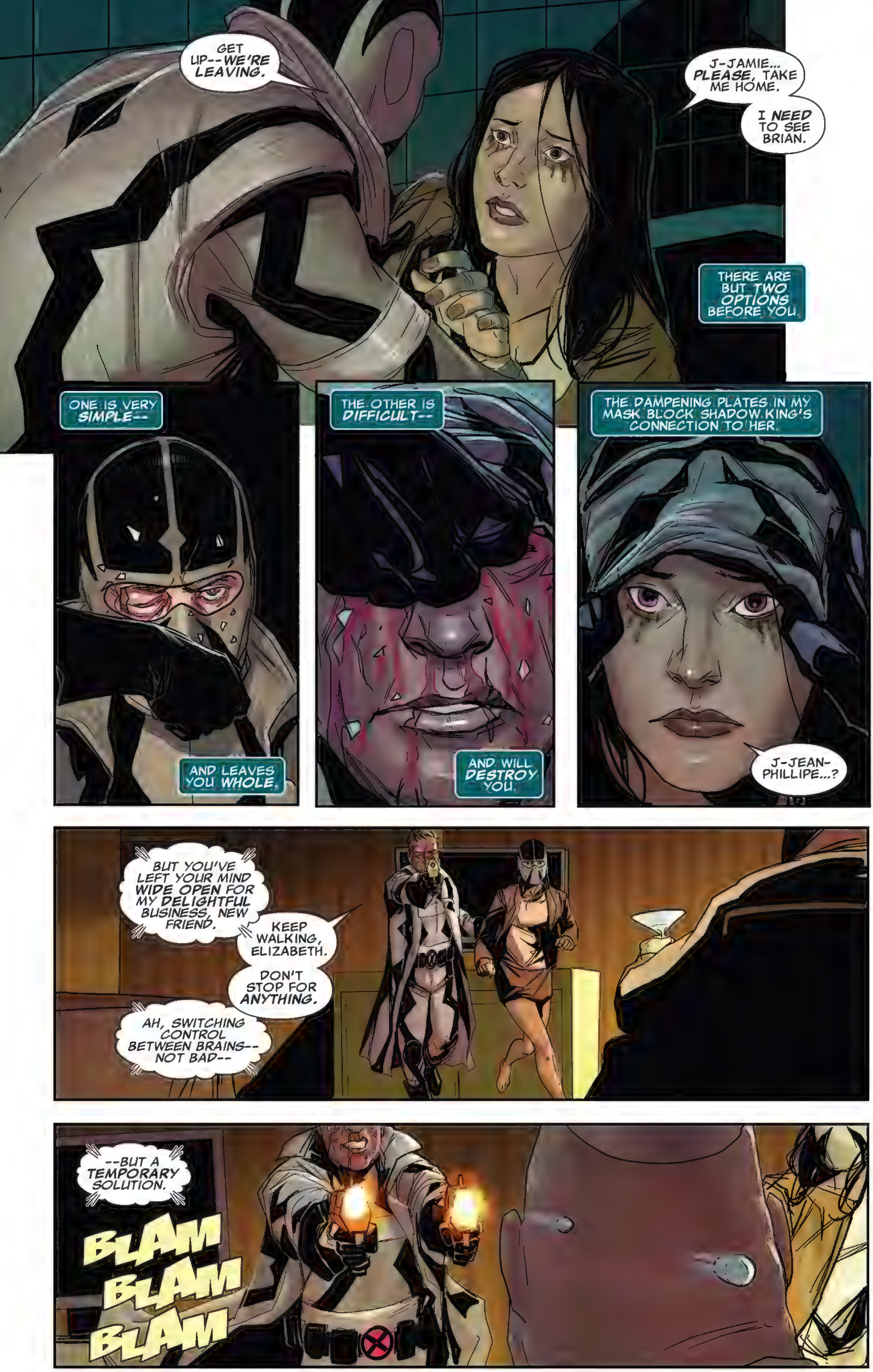

PRICES EVERY DAY
YOU JUST NEED BETTER TEACHERS IS ALL.
GAZAKK
GAA--
WHERE THE HELL IS EVAN?!
SABRETOOTH... WAS AFTER HIM...
SOME FAT PIECE OF... BLINDSIDED ME.
LANDED ON MY HEAD...
IT SOUNDS LIKE THE BLOB.
WHICH WAY DID THEY GO?!
I-I DIDN'T SEE. HE WAS IMPOSSIBLY HEAVY...
WHY WOULD THEY WANT EVAN?
SAME REASON WE DON'T WANT HIM, BROO...
"...HE'S THE DAMNED APOCALYPSE."
ROOM 2955 IS RESERVED UNDER A KNOWN ALIAS OF ELIZABETH BRADDOCK.
SHE'S ALREADY DEAD
NO OTHER REASON MYSTIQUE WOULD LET IT SLIP.
NEW YORK.

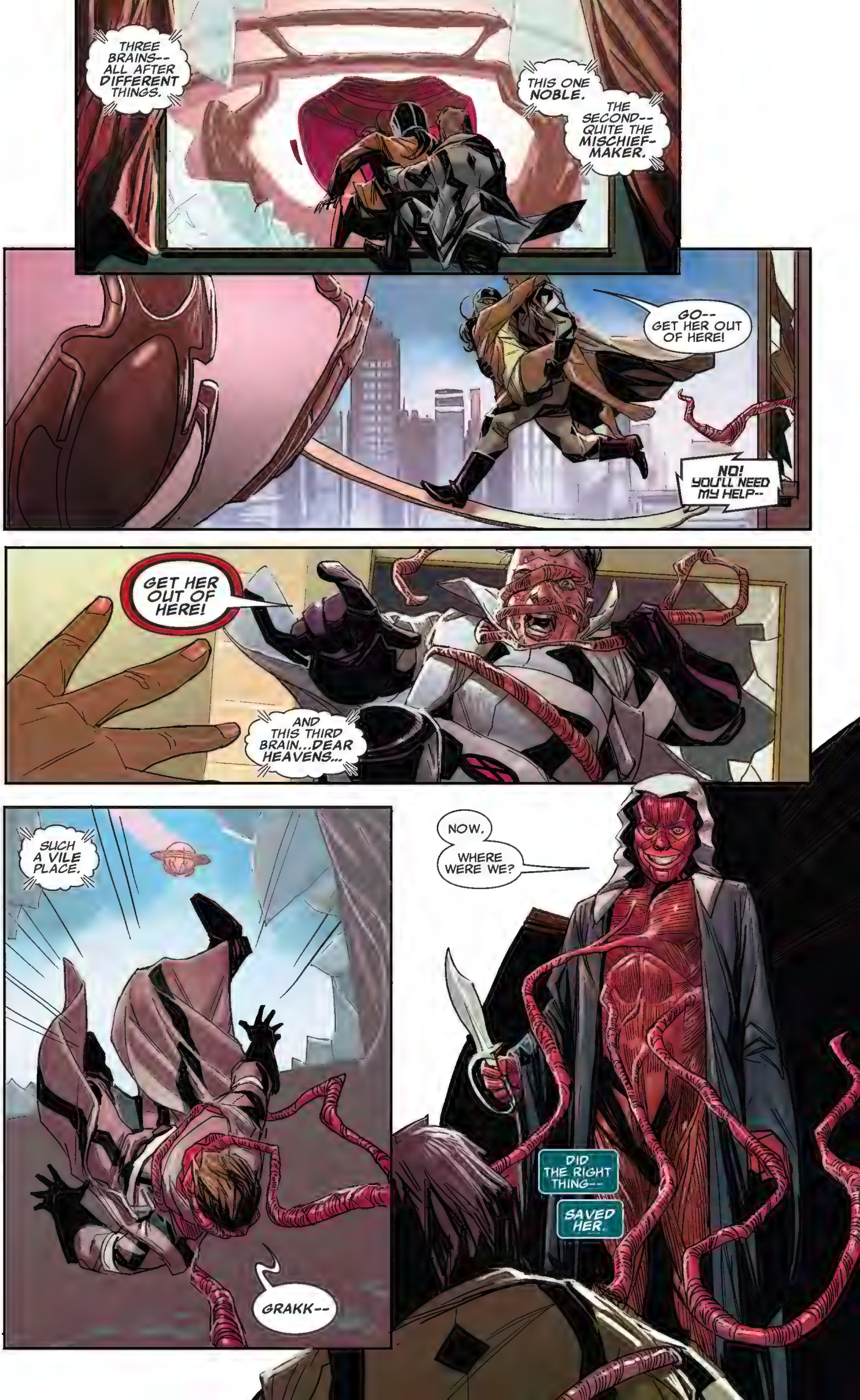

WANTS ME TO DISCOVER HER BODY
THE POISON WAS DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO DAMPEN YOUR POWERS.
YOU WILL NOT HAVE YOUR HEALING OR MISDIRECTION.
FINE.
GOOD.
GIVE THEM A FIGHTING CHANCE.
WHILE I THIEVED AND WHORED...
KRASH
...THEY'VE KILLED BETSY.
AH! NEW FRIENDS.
FAROUK.
WHERE IS SHE?!
HMMH. SHE'S BEEN A GRAVE DISAPPOINTMENT, REALLY.

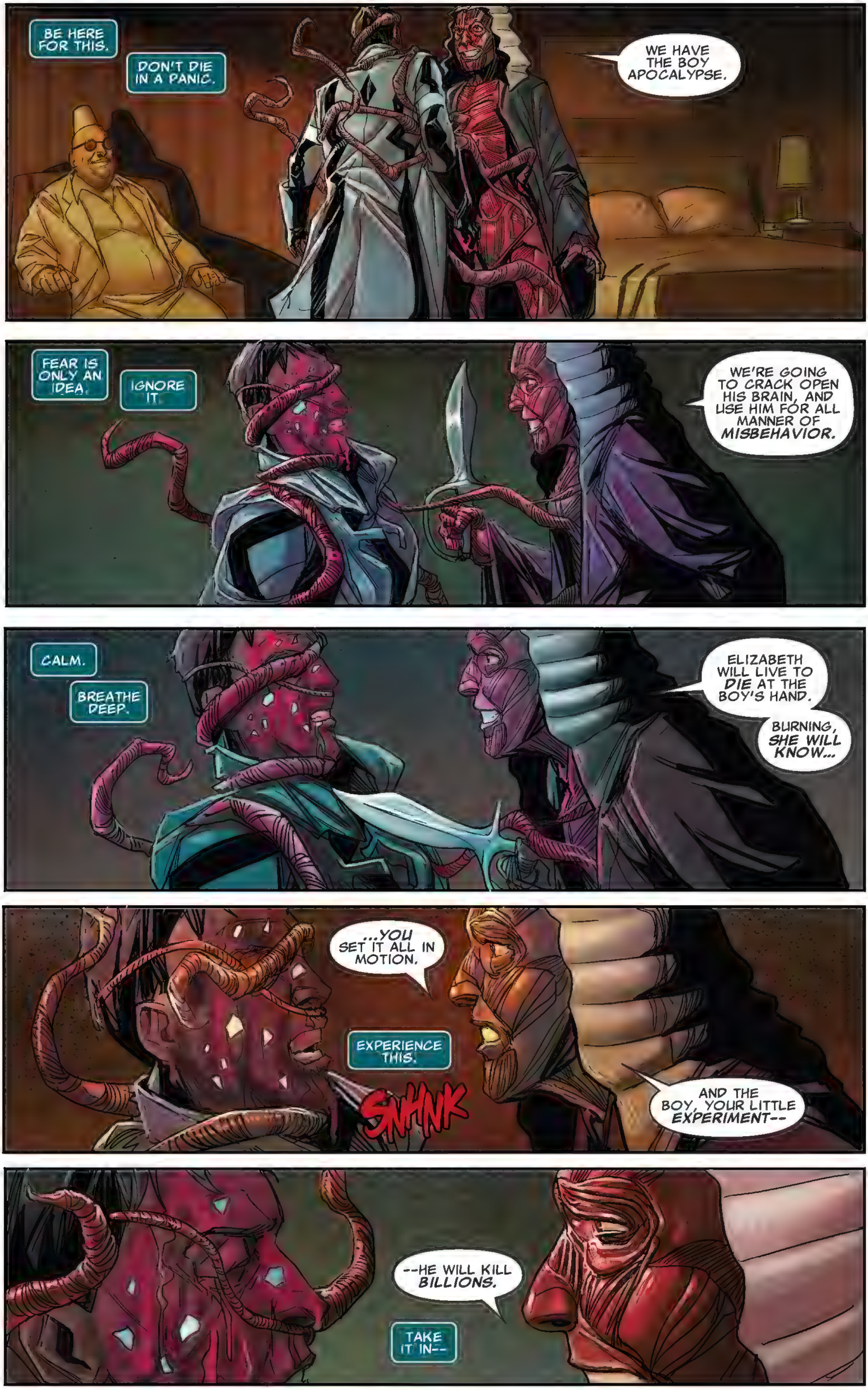

I WANTED TO DEFEAT THE WARRIOR WHO CAGED ME FOR SO MANY YEARS.
INSTEAD I FOUND THIS FRAGILE, BROKEN GIRL.
A MIND SO SPLINTERED, SO MOLESTED, IT MUST HAVE BEEN METICULOUSLY PLANNED...
WHERE?
THE BATHROOM.
SMUG--
EAGER FOR ME TO SEE HIS HANDIWORK.
KROOOM
TO SEE WHAT HE'S DONE TO HER.
I-I DID IT.
KILLED THEM.
FOREVER.
I DID.

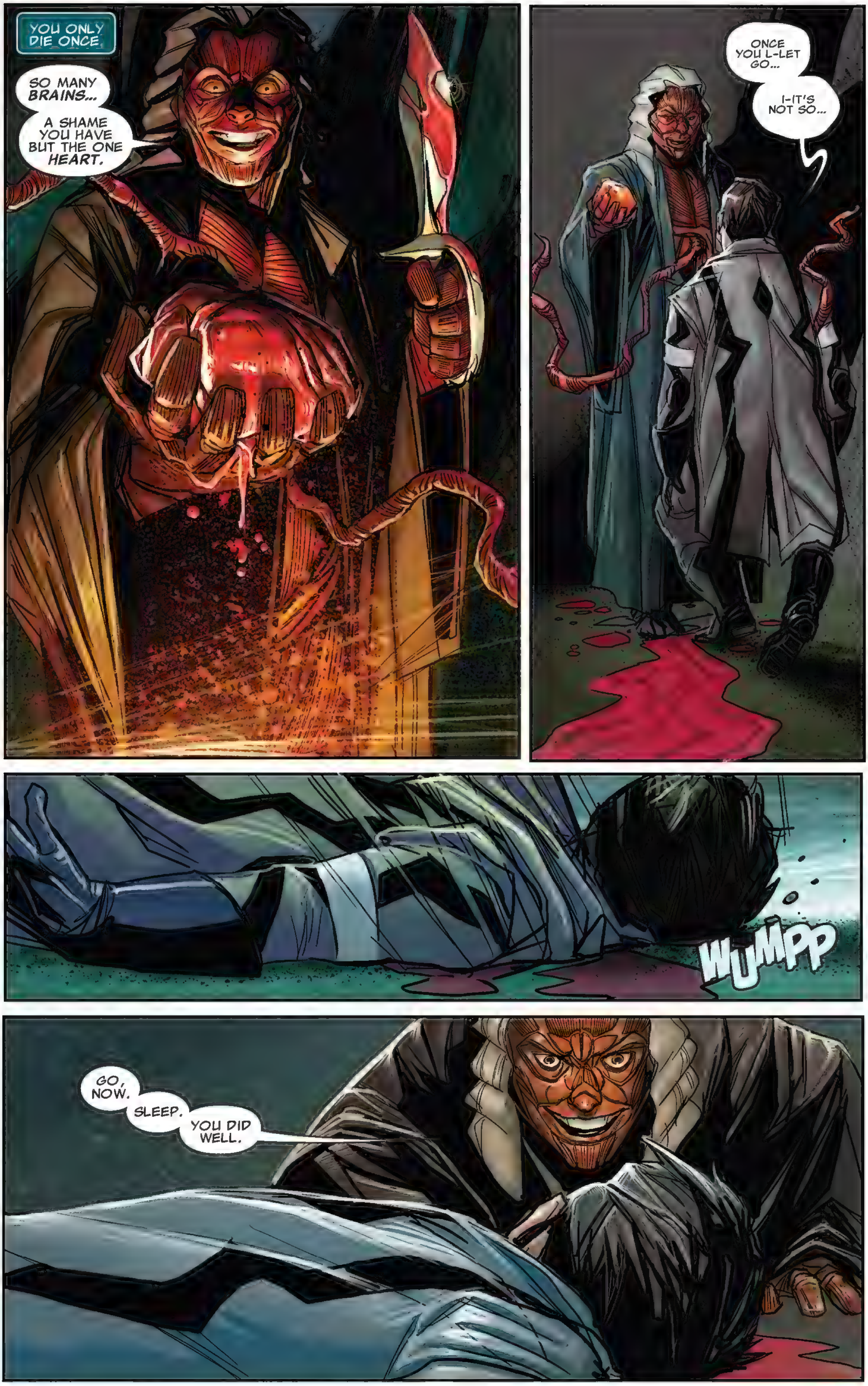

HUSH. IT'S OKAY...
LISTEN TO ME... LISTEN TO MY VOICE.
I'M HERE... EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE--
Y-YOU...
YOU!
GET AWAY FROM ME!
ELIZABETH, I'M NOT HERE TO HURT YOU--
OH, BUT HE *IS,* ELIZABETH!
GAKK--
LOOK AT HER-- *TERRIFIED* OF *YOU!*
AS IF THE POOR GIRL HAS SEEN THE FACE OF HER *TRUE* TORTURER--
SMASHSH

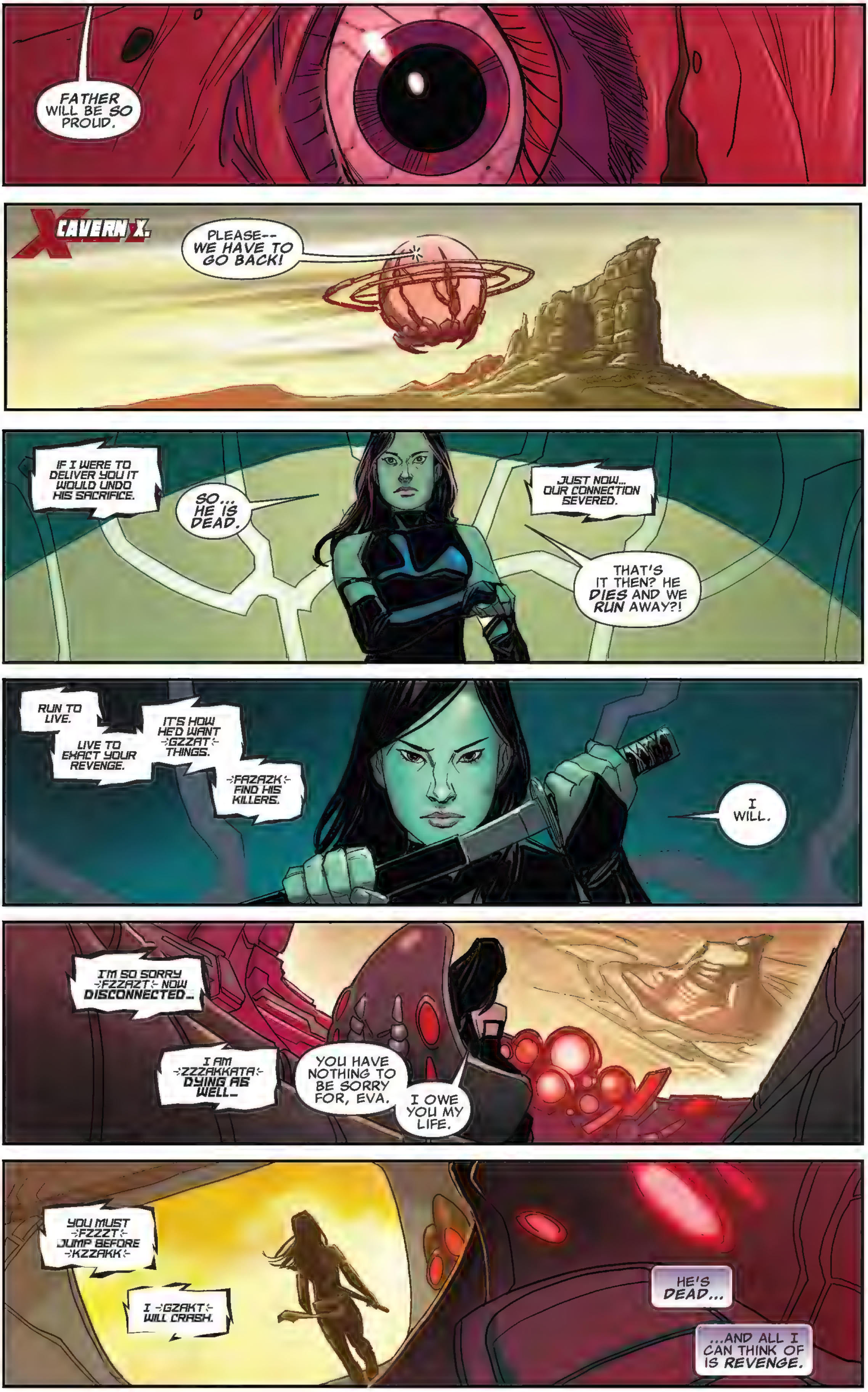

YOU CRUEL, CRUEL MAN--MISDIRECTING HER FEELINGS INTO LOVE FOR YOU.
CRAFTY PLOT. TO CONTROL ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL TELEPATHS.
TO TURN HER AGAINST HER OWN PEOPLE.
GAKK--
SUBLIME'S ULTIMATE MUTANT KILLER.
I WONDER IF YOU EVEN KNEW YOU WERE DOING IT?
WELL, EITHER WAY...
...SHE KNOWS!
AND THE PAIN THAT KNOWING CAUSES HER WILL BE THE VERY LAST THING SHE EVER EXPERIENCES!
WELL, THAT AND MY BLADE.
NO.
KRASH
SHE WILL EXPERIENCE MUCH MORE.
BLAM BLAM BLAM
REVENGE, FOR EXAMPLE.

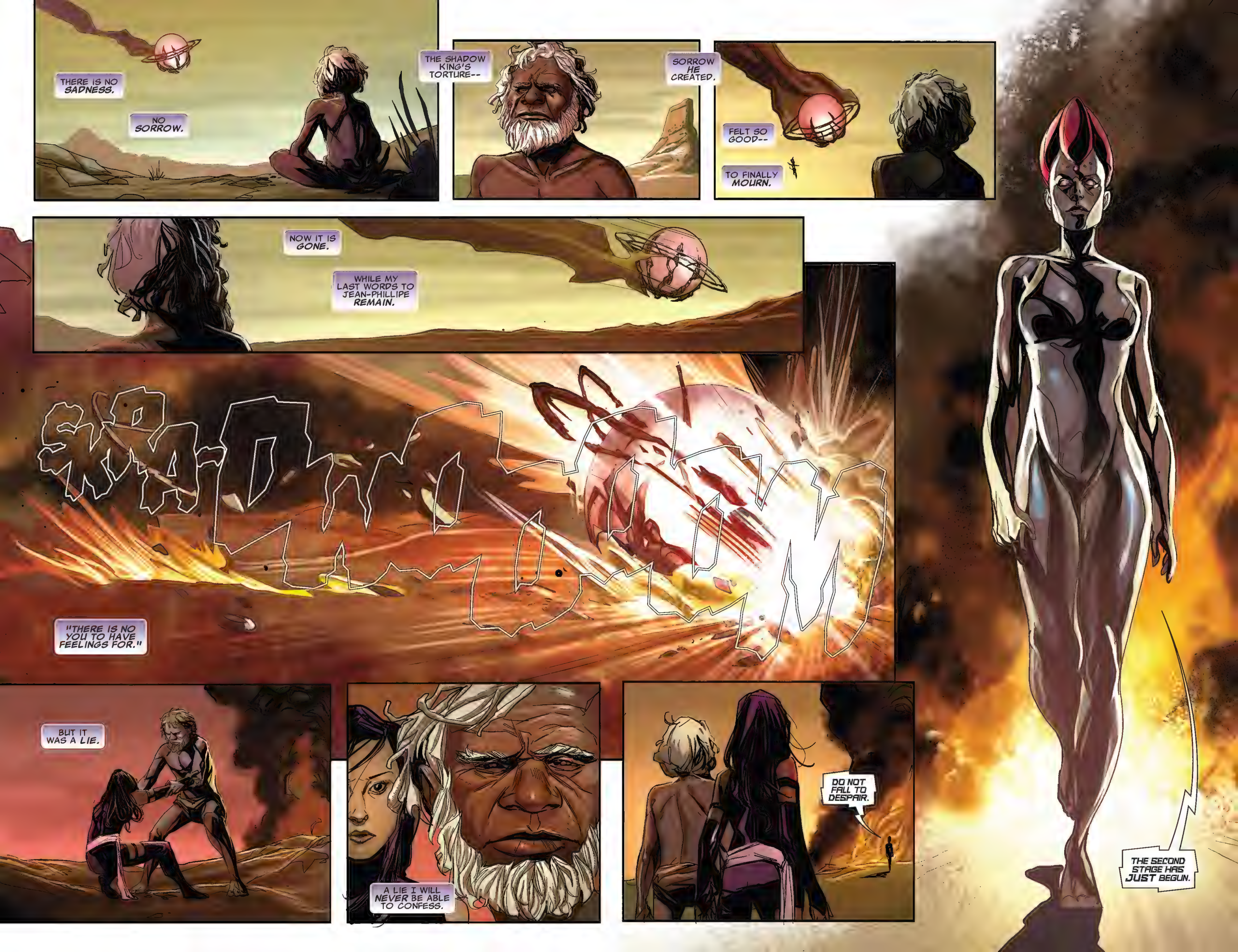

GET UP--WE'RE LEAVING.
J-JAMIE... PLEASE, TAKE ME HOME.
I NEED TO SEE BRIAN.
THERE ARE BUT TWO OPTIONS BEFORE YOU.
ONE IS VERY SIMPLE--
AND LEAVES YOU WHOLE.
THE OTHER IS DIFFICULT--
AND WILL DESTROY YOU.
THE DAMPENING PLATES IN MY MASK BLOCK SHADOW KING'S CONNECTION TO HER.
J-JEAN-PHILLIPE...?
BUT YOU'VE LEFT YOUR MIND WIDE OPEN FOR MY DELIGHTFUL BUSINESS, NEW FRIEND.
KEEP WALKING, ELIZABETH.
DON'T STOP FOR ANYTHING.
AH, SWITCHING CONTROL BETWEEN BRAINS--NOT BAD--
--BUT A TEMPORARY SOLUTION.
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

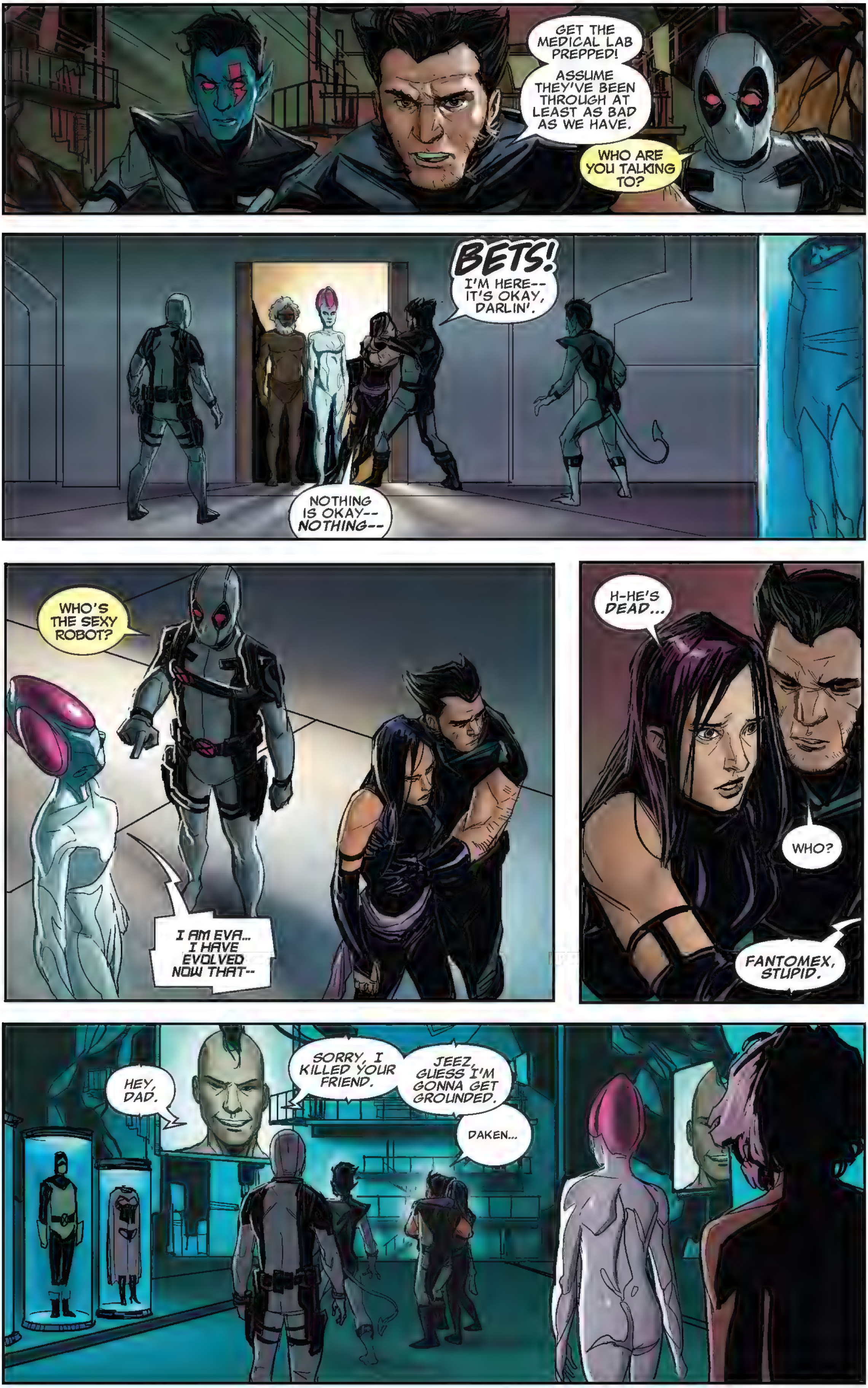

THREE BRAINS-- ALL AFTER DIFFERENT THINGS.
THIS ONE NOBLE.
THE SECOND-- QUITE THE MISCHIEF-MAKER.
GO-- GET HER OUT OF HERE!
NO! YOU'LL NEED MY HELP--
GET HER OUT OF HERE!
AND THIS THIRD BRAIN...DEAR HEAVENS...
SUCH A VILE PLACE.
GRAKK--
NOW.
WHERE WERE WE?
DID THE RIGHT THING--
SAVED HER.

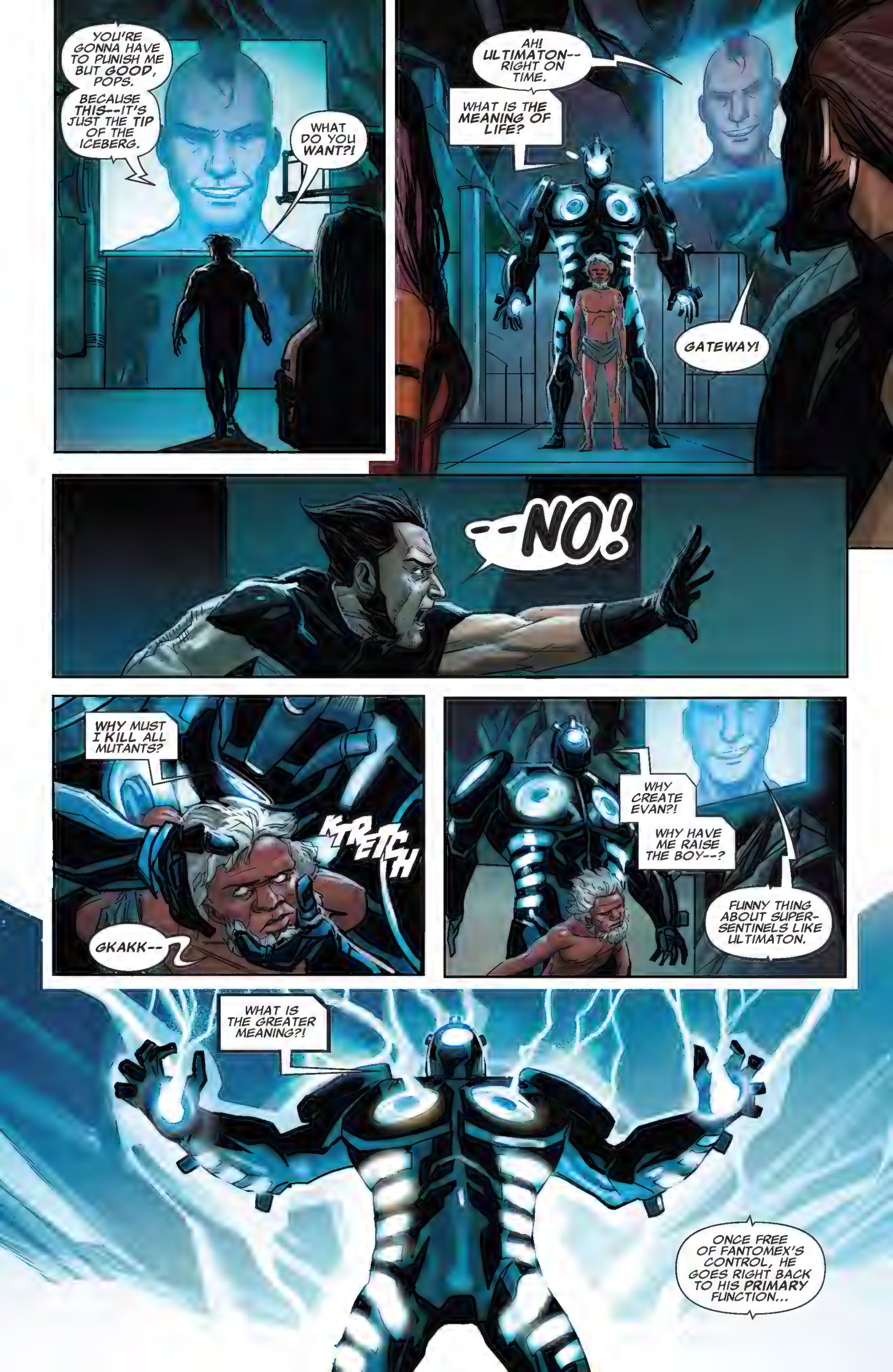

BE HERE FOR THIS.
DON'T DIE IN A PANIC.
WE HAVE THE BOY APOCALYPSE.
FEAR IS ONLY AN IDEA.
IGNORE IT.
WE'RE GOING TO CRACK OPEN HIS BRAIN, AND USE HIM FOR ALL MANNER OF MISBEHAVIOR.
CALM.
BREATHE DEEP.
ELIZABETH WILL LIVE TO DIE AT THE BOY'S HAND.
BURNING, SHE WILL KNOW...
...YOU SET IT ALL IN MOTION.
EXPERIENCE THIS.
SNHNK
AND THE BOY, YOUR LITTLE EXPERIMENT--
--HE WILL KILL BILLIONS.
TAKE IT IN--

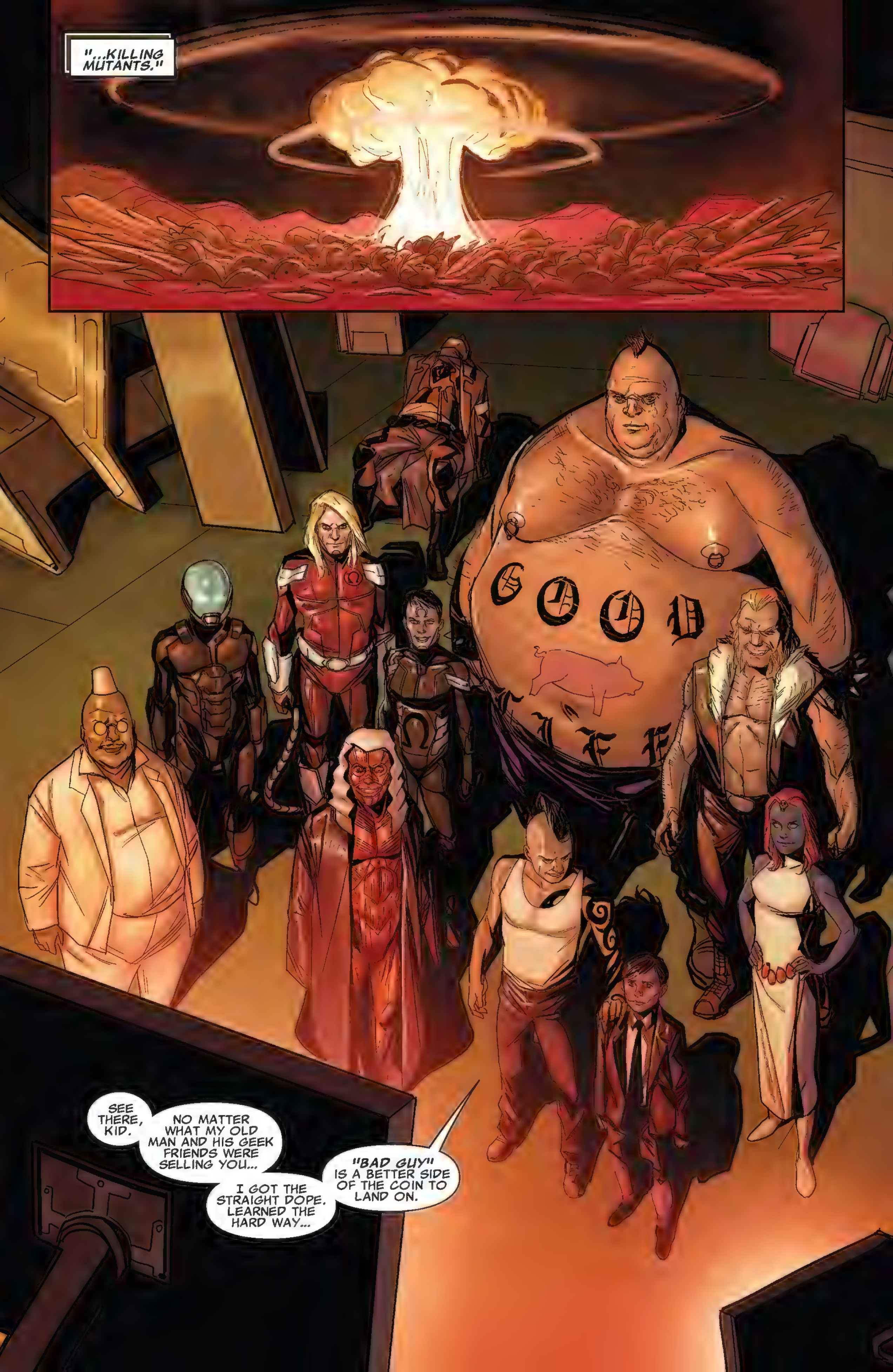

YOU ONLY DIE ONCE
SO MANY BRAINS...
A SHAME YOU HAVE BUT THE ONE HEART.
ONCE YOU L-LET GO...
I-IT'S NOT SO...
WUMPP
GO, NOW.
SLEEP.
YOU DID WELL.

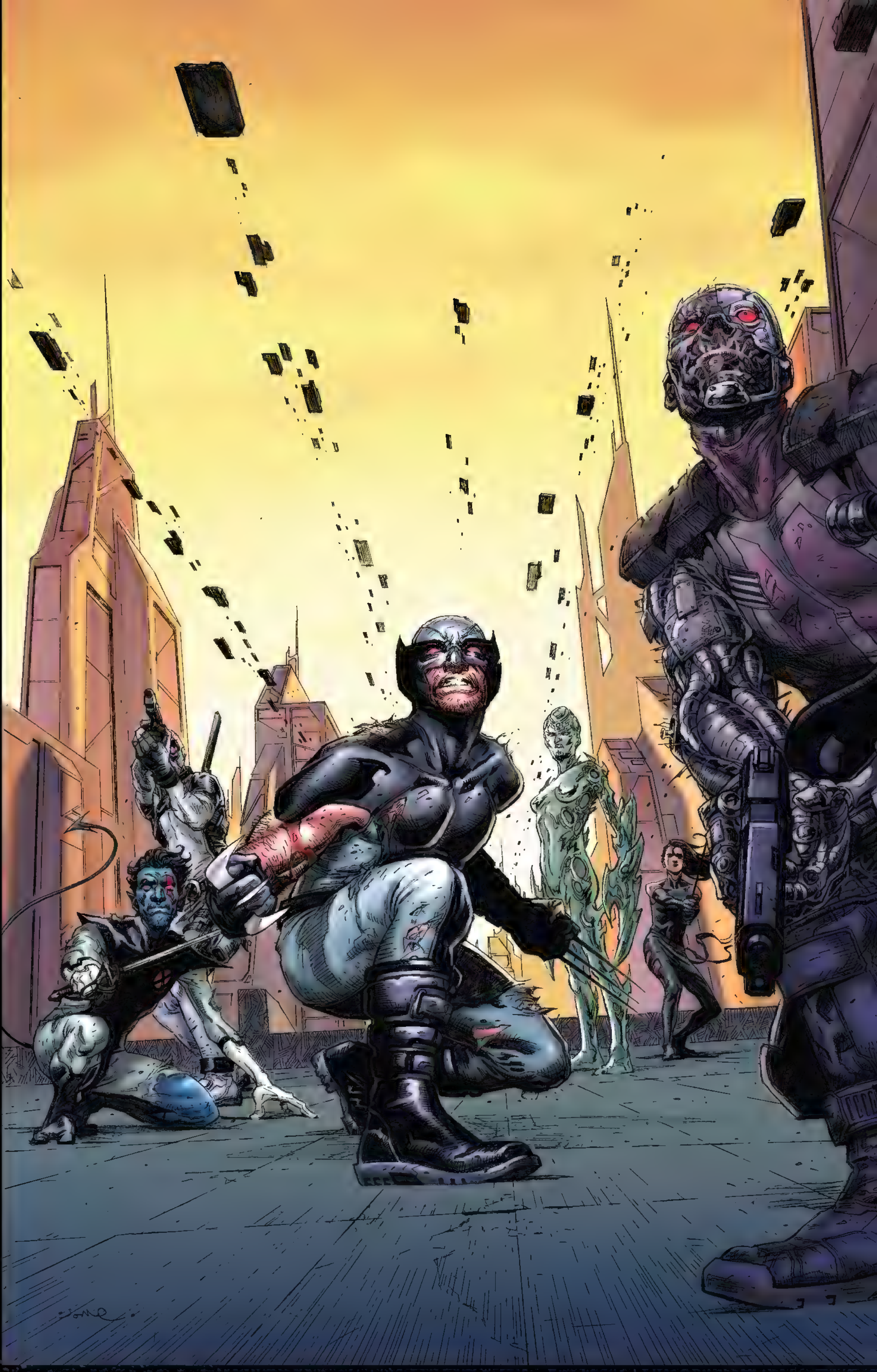

FATHER WILL BE SO PROUD.
CAVERN X.
PLEASE-- WE HAVE TO GO BACK!
IF I WERE TO DELIVER YOU IT WOULD UNDO HIS SACRIFICE.
SO... HE IS DEAD.
JUST NOW... OUR CONNECTION SEVERED.
THAT'S IT THEN? HE DIES AND WE RUN AWAY?!
RUN TO LIVE.
LIVE TO EXACT YOUR REVENGE.
IT'S HOW HE'D WANT -GZZAT- THINGS.
-FAZAZK- FIND HIS KILLERS.
I WILL.
I'M SO SORRY -FZZAZT- NOW DISCONNECTED...
I AM -ZZZAKKATA- DYING AS WELL...
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO BE SORRY FOR, EVA.
I OWE YOU MY LIFE.
YOU MUST -FZZZT- JUMP BEFORE -KZZAKK-
I -GZAKT- WILL CRASH.
HE'S DEAD...
...AND ALL I CAN THINK OF IS REVENGE.


THERE IS NO SADNESS.
NO SORROW.
THE SHADOW KING'S TORTURE--
SORROW HE CREATED.
FELT SO GOOD--
TO FINALLY MOURN.
NOW IT IS GONE.
WHILE MY LAST WORDS TO JEAN-PHILLIPE REMAIN.
SKRADOOOOM
"THERE IS NO YOU TO HAVE FEELINGS FOR."
BUT IT WAS A LIE.
A LIE I WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO CONFESS.
DO NOT FALL TO DESPAIR.
THE SECOND STAGE HAS JUST BEGUN.


GET THE MEDICAL LAB PREPPED!
ASSUME THEY'VE BEEN THROUGH AT LEAST AS BAD AS WE HAVE.
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
BETS! I'M HERE-- IT'S OKAY, DARLIN'.
NOTHING IS OKAY-- NOTHING--
WHO'S THE SEXY ROBOT?
I AM EVA... I HAVE EVOLVED NOW THAT--
H-HE'S DEAD...
WHO?
FANTOMEX, STUPID.
HEY, DAD.
SORRY, I KILLED YOUR FRIEND.
JEEZ, GUESS I'M GONNA GET GROUNDED.
DAKEN...


YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO PUNISH ME BUT GOOD, POPS.
BECAUSE THIS--IT'S JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
AH! ULTIMATON--RIGHT ON TIME.
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
GATEWAY!
--NO!
WHY MUST I KILL ALL MUTANTS?
KRETCH
GKAKK--
WHY CREATE EVAN?!
WHY HAVE ME RAISE THE BOY--?
FUNNY THING ABOUT SUPER-SENTINELS LIKE ULTIMATON.
WHAT IS THE GREATER MEANING?!
ONCE FREE OF FANTOMEX'S CONTROL, HE GOES RIGHT BACK TO HIS PRIMARY FUNCTION...


"...KILLING MUTANTS."
GOOD
SEE THERE, KID.
NO MATTER WHAT MY OLD MAN AND HIS GEEK FRIENDS WERE SELLING YOU...
I GOT THE STRAIGHT DOPE. LEARNED THE HARD WAY...
"BAD GUY" IS A BETTER SIDE OF THE COIN TO LAND ON.

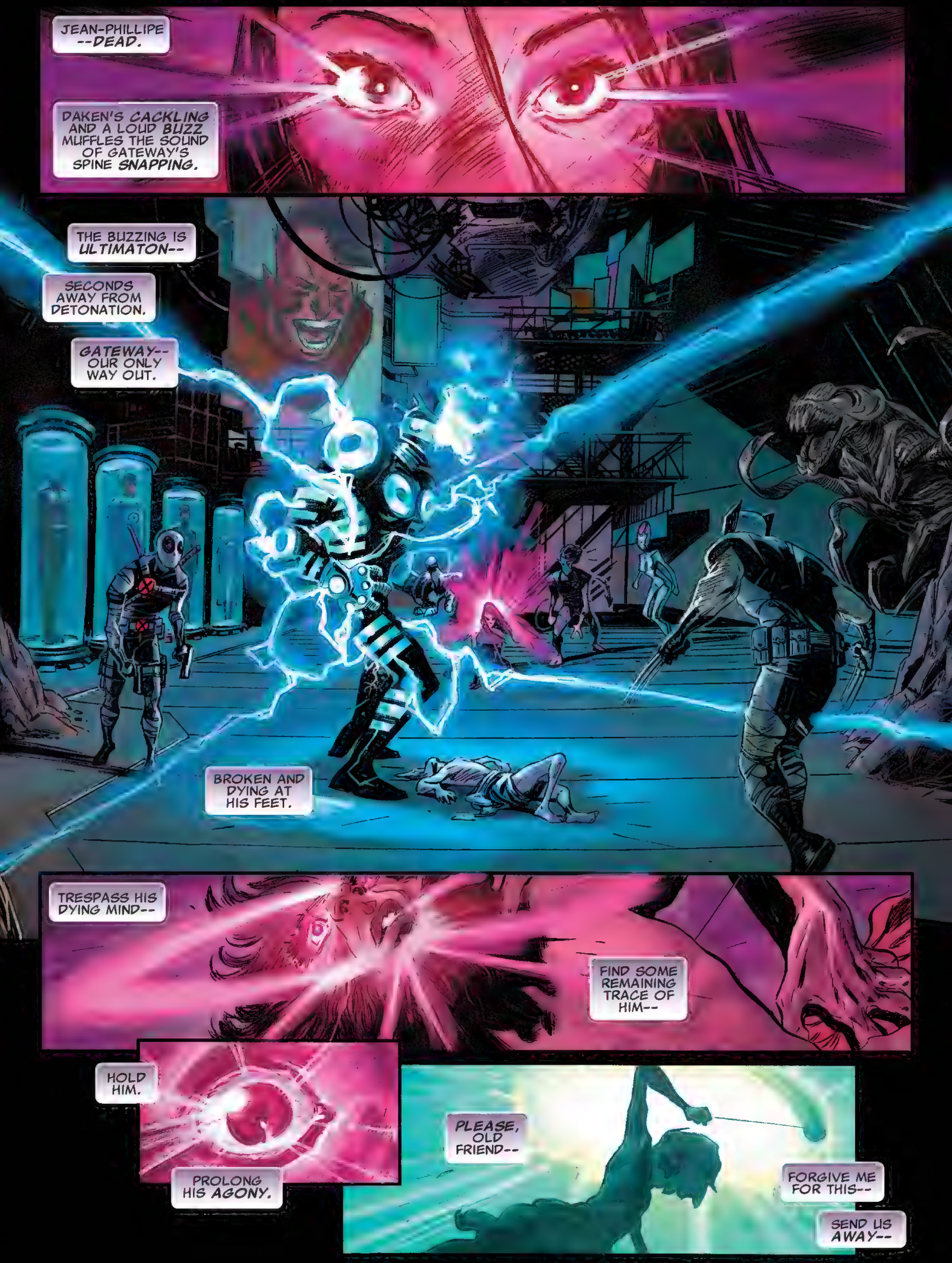


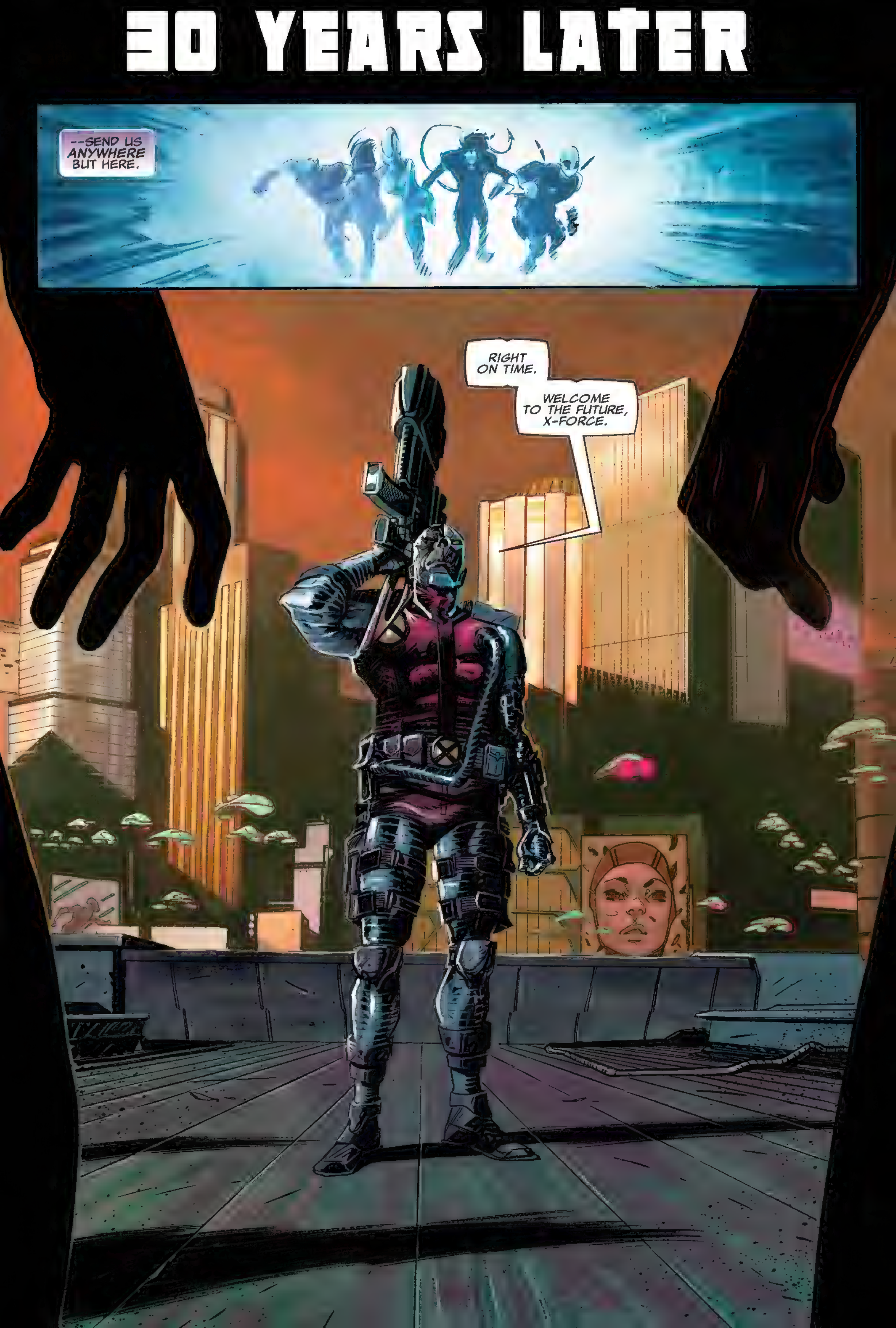
28

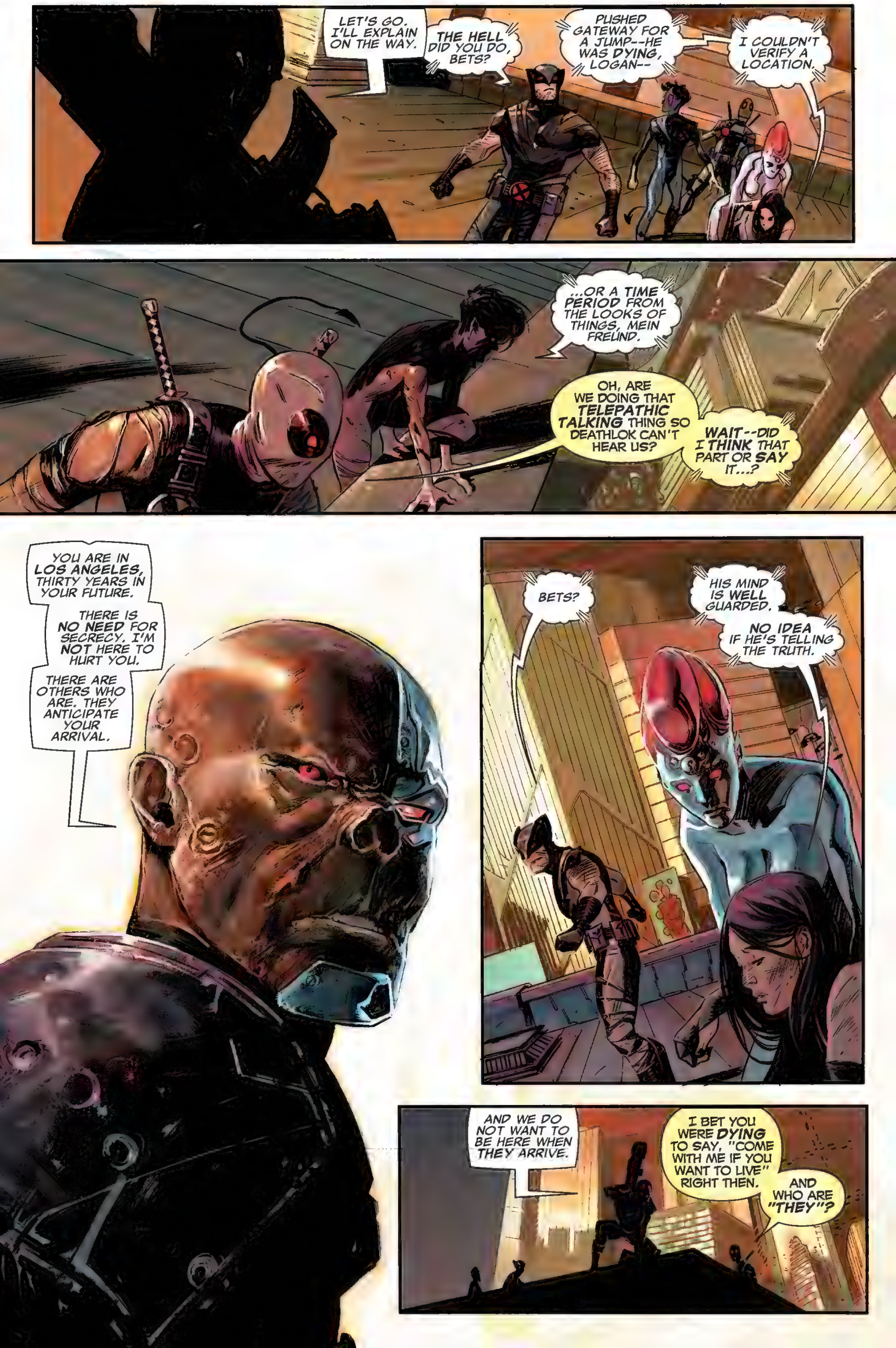
FINAL EXECUTION

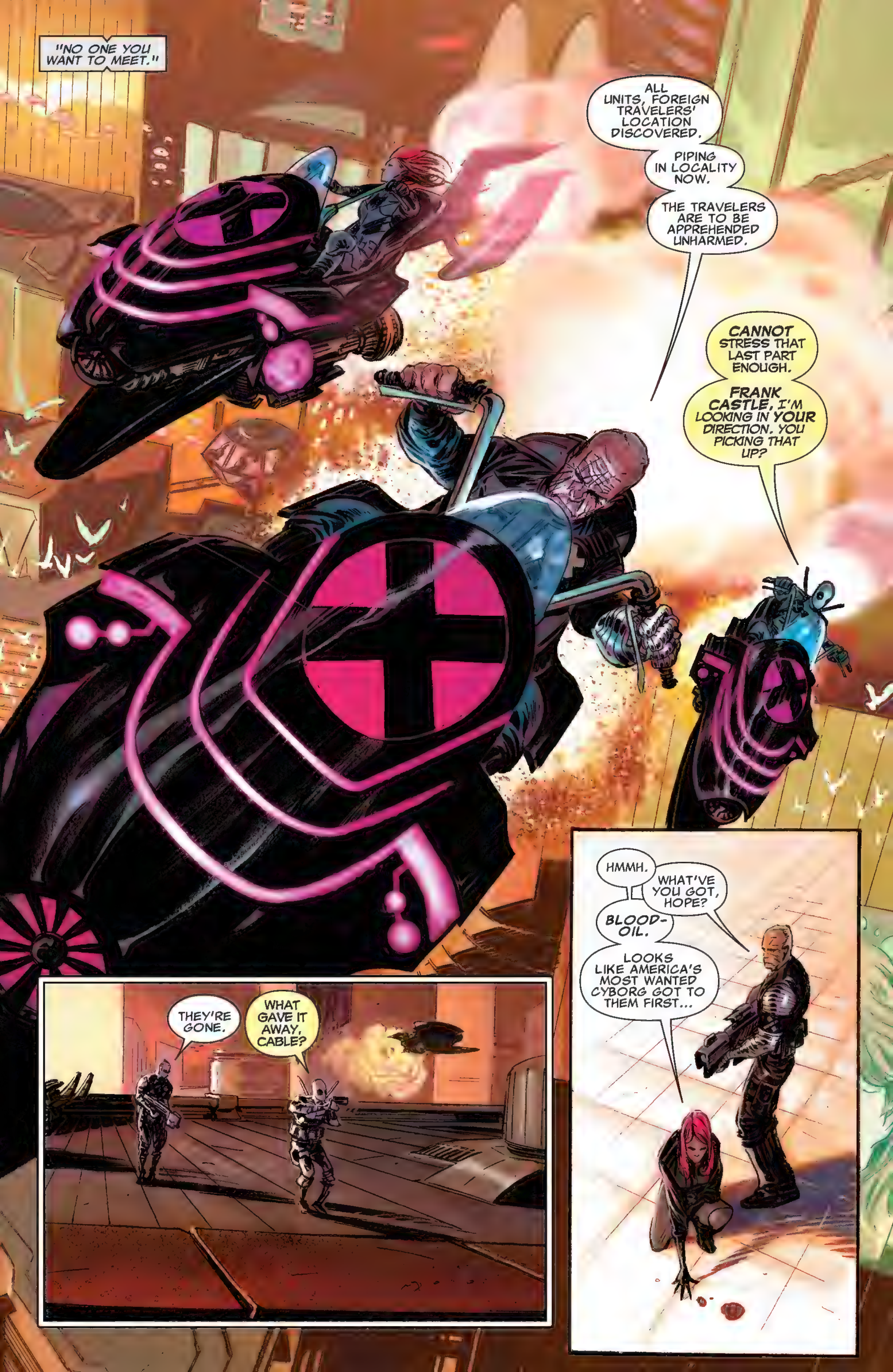
CHAPTER 4: DAYS OF PREEMPTIVE FUTURE

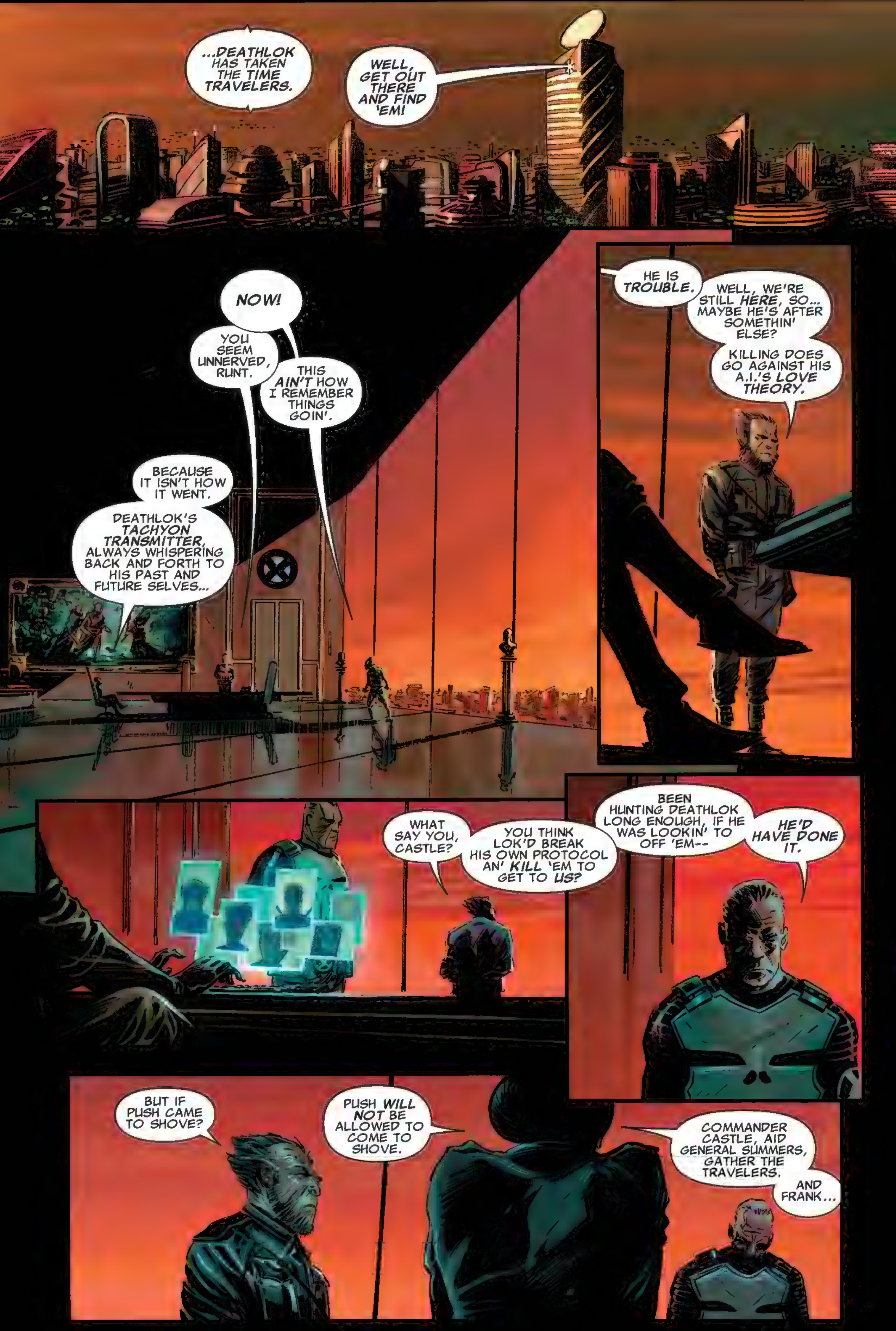
30 SECONDS AGO

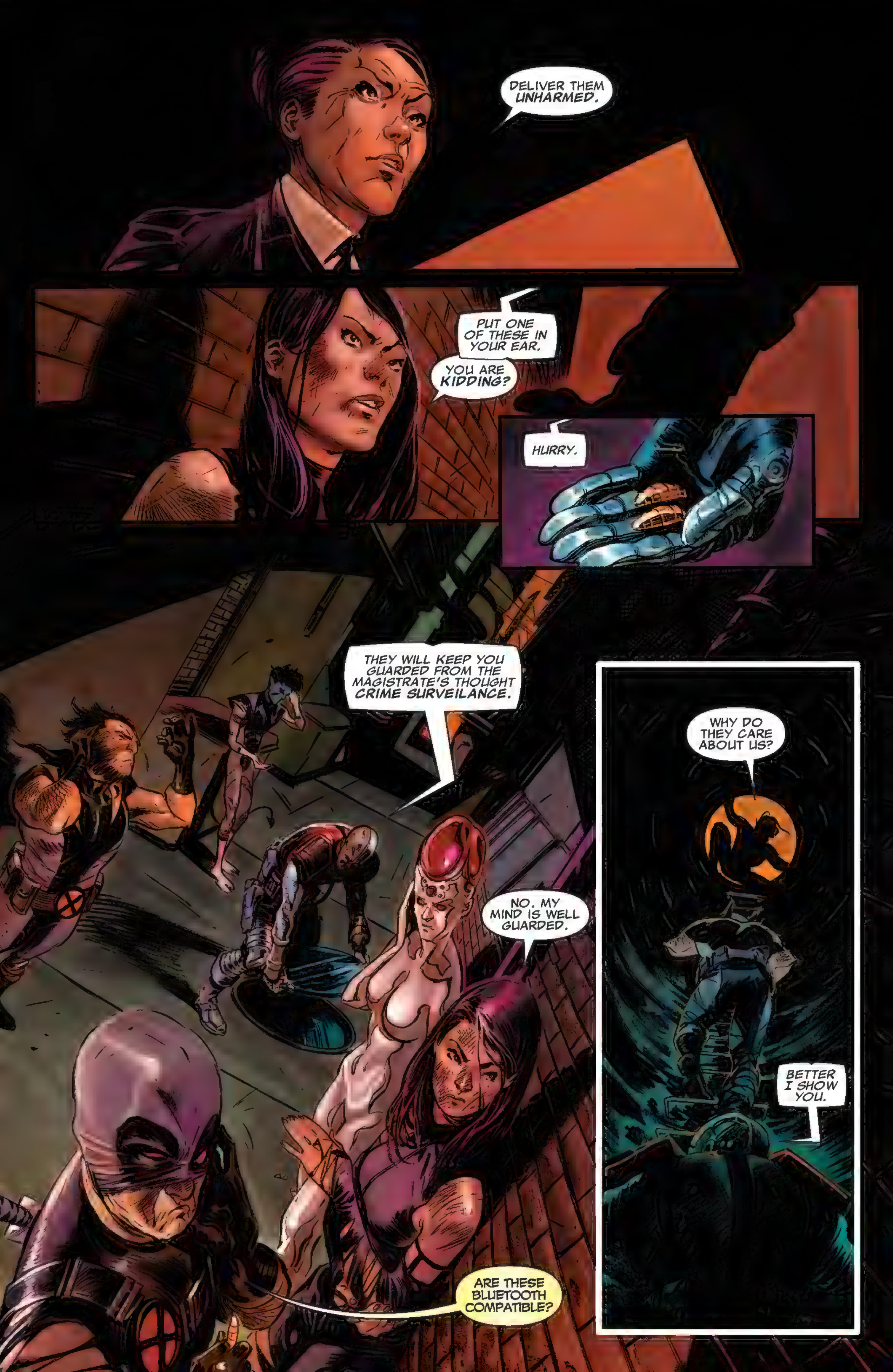

JEAN-PHILLIPE --*DEAD.*
DAKEN'S *CACKLING* AND A LOUD *BUZZ* MUFFLES THE SOUND OF GATEWAY'S SPINE *SNAPPING.*
THE BUZZING IS *ULTIMATON--*
SECONDS AWAY FROM DETONATION.
GATEWAY-- OUR ONLY WAY OUT.
BROKEN AND DYING AT HIS FEET.
TRESPASS HIS DYING MIND--
FIND SOME REMAINING TRACE OF HIM--
HOLD HIM.
PROLONG HIS *AGONY.*
PLEASE, OLD FRIEND--
FORGIVE ME FOR THIS--
SEND US *AWAY--*

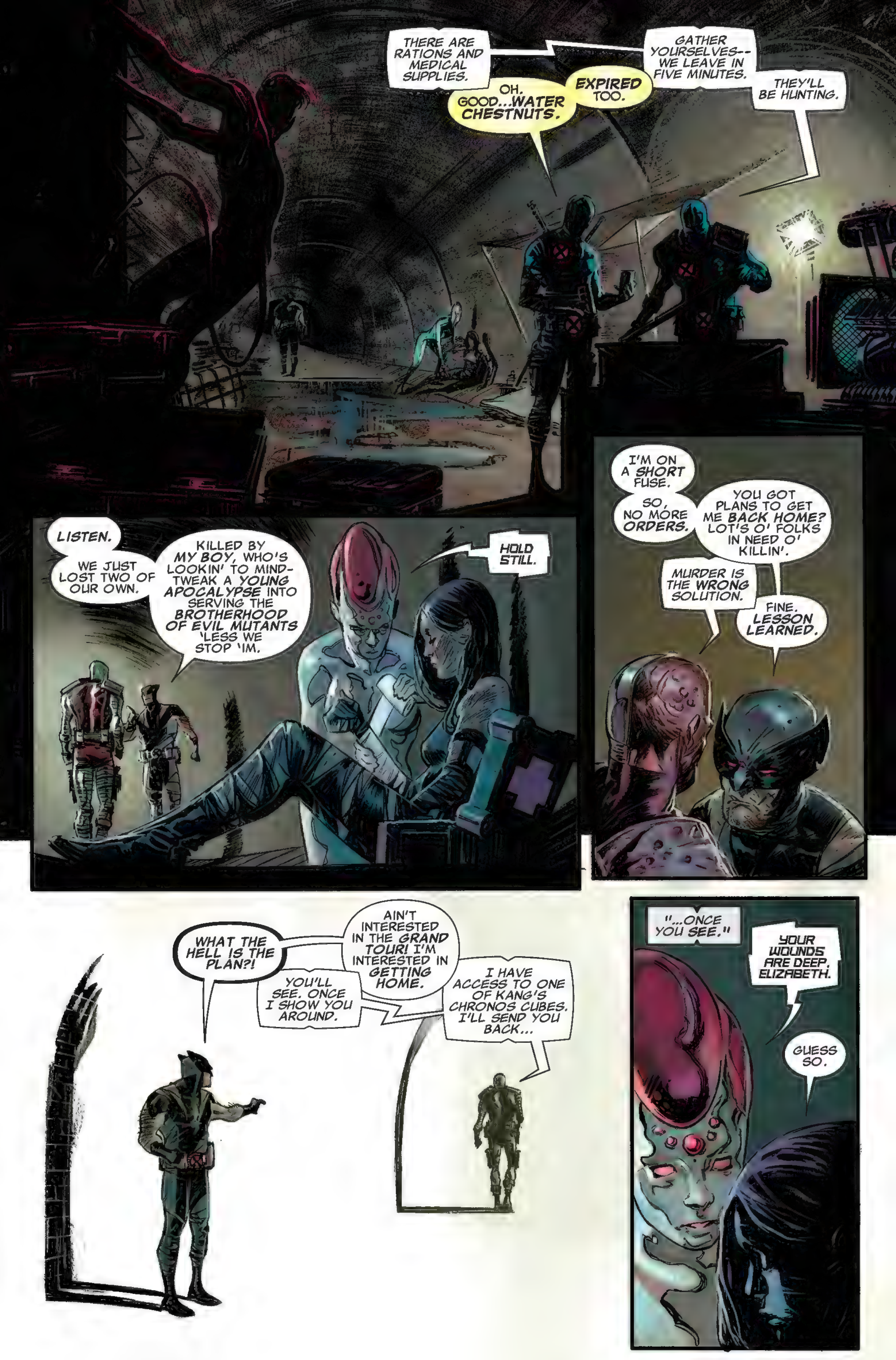

30 YEARS LATER
--SEND US ANYWHERE BUT HERE.
RIGHT ON TIME.
WELCOME TO THE FUTURE, X-FORCE.

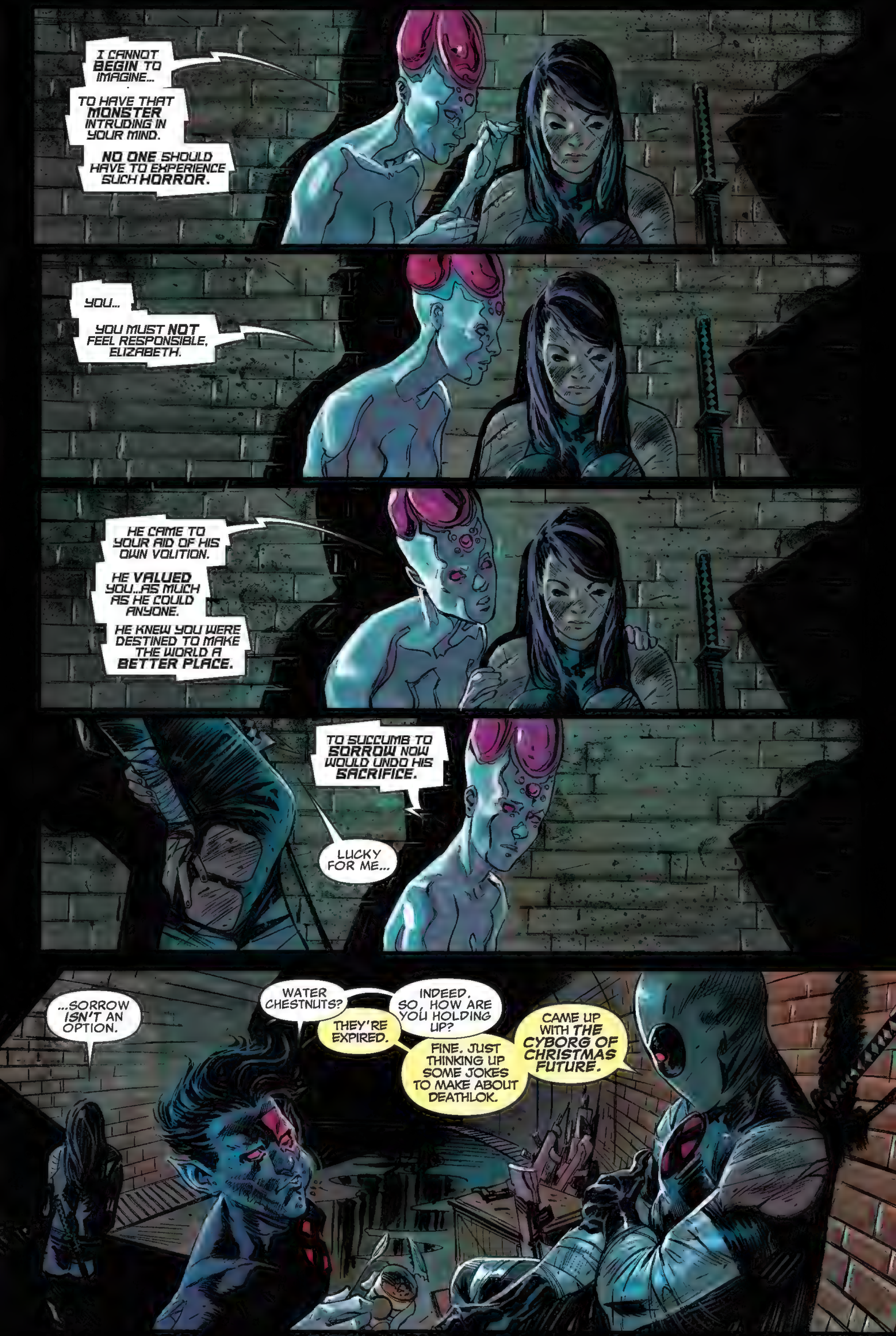

LET'S GO. I'LL EXPLAIN ON THE WAY.
THE HELL DID YOU DO, BETS?
PUSHED GATEWAY FOR A JUMP--HE WAS DYING, LOGAN--
I COULDN'T VERIFY A LOCATION.
...OR A TIME PERIOD FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, MEIN FREUND.
OH, ARE WE DOING THAT TELEPATHIC TALKING THING SO DEATHLOK CAN'T HEAR US?
WAIT--DID I THINK THAT PART OR SAY IT...?
YOU ARE IN LOS ANGELES, THIRTY YEARS IN YOUR FUTURE.
THERE IS NO NEED FOR SECRECY. I'M NOT HERE TO HURT YOU.
THERE ARE OTHERS WHO ARE. THEY ANTICIPATE YOUR ARRIVAL.
BETS?
HIS MIND IS WELL GUARDED.
NO IDEA IF HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH.
AND WE DO NOT WANT TO BE HERE WHEN THEY ARRIVE.
I BET YOU WERE DYING TO SAY, "COME WITH ME IF YOU WANT TO LIVE" RIGHT THEN.
AND WHO ARE "THEY"?

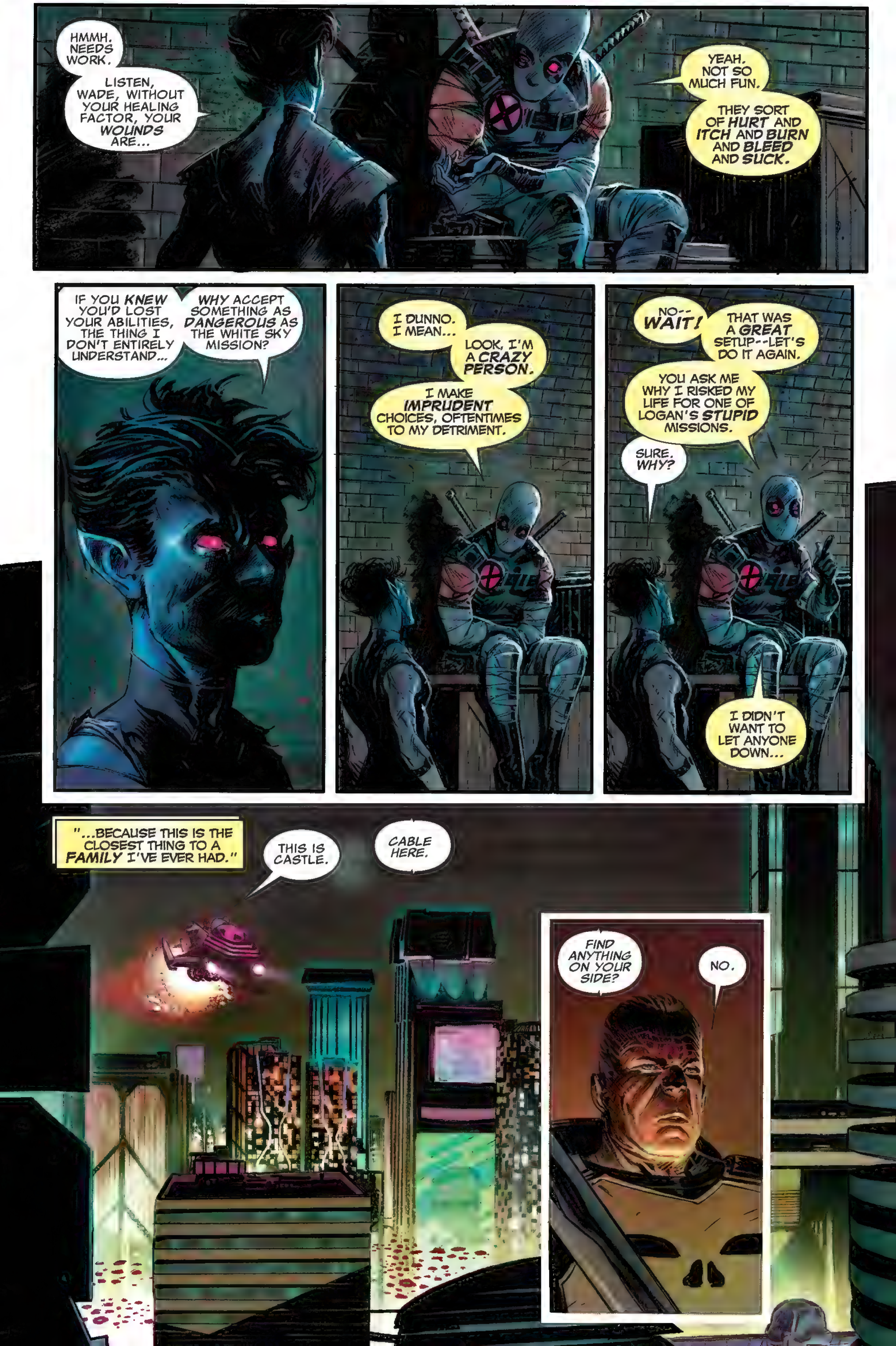

"NO ONE YOU WANT TO MEET."
ALL UNITS, FOREIGN TRAVELERS' LOCATION DISCOVERED.
PIPING IN LOCALITY NOW.
THE TRAVELERS ARE TO BE APPREHENDED UNHARMED.
CANNOT STRESS THAT LAST PART ENOUGH.
FRANK CASTLE, I'M LOOKING IN **YOUR** DIRECTION. YOU PICKING THAT UP?
THEY'RE GONE.
WHAT GAVE IT AWAY, CABLE?
HMMH.
WHAT'VE YOU GOT, HOPE?
BLOOD-OIL.
LOOKS LIKE AMERICA'S MOST WANTED CYBORG GOT TO THEM FIRST...

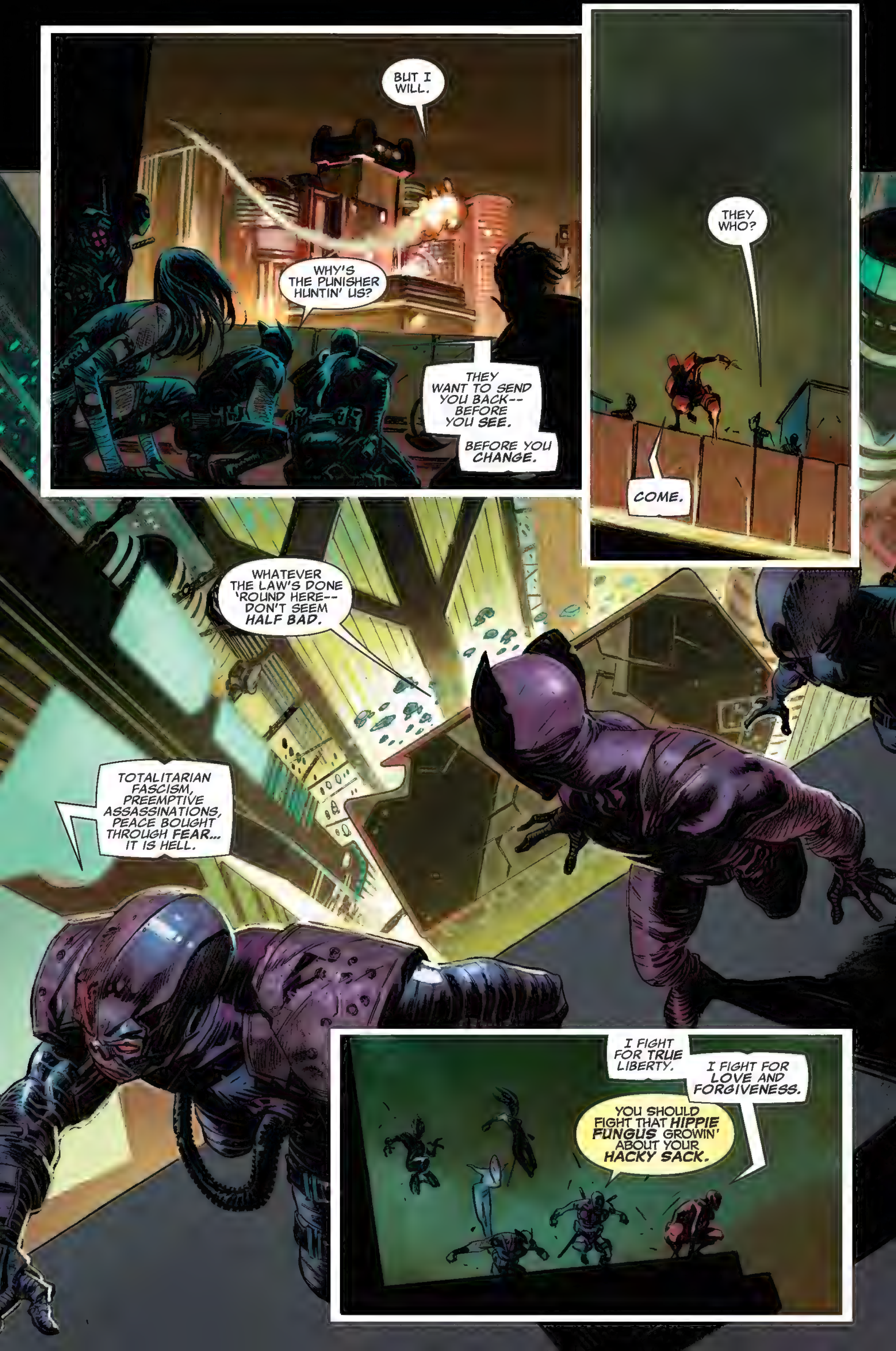

...DEATHLOK HAS TAKEN THE TIME TRAVELERS.
WELL, GET OUT THERE AND FIND 'EM!
NOW!
YOU SEEM UNNERVED, RUNT.
THIS AIN'T HOW I REMEMBER THINGS GOIN'.
BECAUSE IT ISN'T HOW IT WENT.
DEATHLOK'S TACHYON TRANSMITTER, ALWAYS WHISPERING BACK AND FORTH TO HIS PAST AND FUTURE SELVES...
HE IS TROUBLE.
WELL, WE'RE STILL HERE, SO... MAYBE HE'S AFTER SOMETHIN' ELSE?
KILLING DOES GO AGAINST HIS A.I.'S LOVE THEORY.
WHAT SAY YOU, CASTLE?
YOU THINK LOK'D BREAK HIS OWN PROTOCOL AN' KILL 'EM TO GET TO US?
BEEN HUNTING DEATHLOK LONG ENOUGH, IF HE WAS LOOKIN' TO OFF 'EM--
HE'D HAVE DONE IT.
BUT IF PUSH CAME TO SHOVE?
PUSH WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO COME TO SHOVE.
COMMANDER CASTLE, AID GENERAL SUMMERS, GATHER THE TRAVELERS.
AND FRANK...

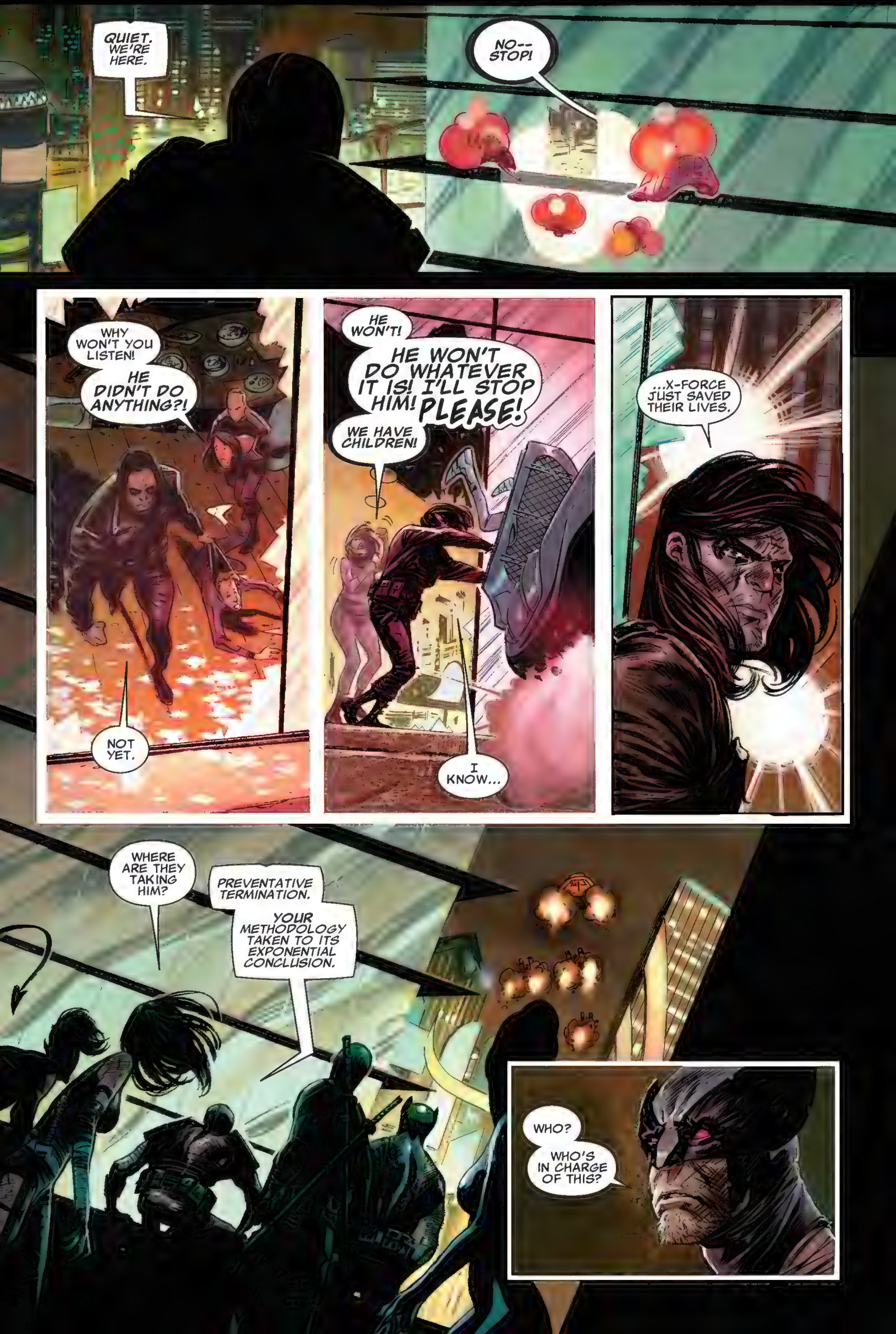

DELIVER THEM UNHARMED.
PUT ONE OF THESE IN YOUR EAR.
YOU ARE KIDDING?
HURRY.
THEY WILL KEEP YOU GUARDED FROM THE MAGISTRATE'S THOUGHT CRIME SURVEILANCE.
NO. MY MIND IS WELL GUARDED.
ARE THESE BLUETOOTH COMPATIBLE?
WHY DO THEY CARE ABOUT US?
BETTER I SHOW YOU.

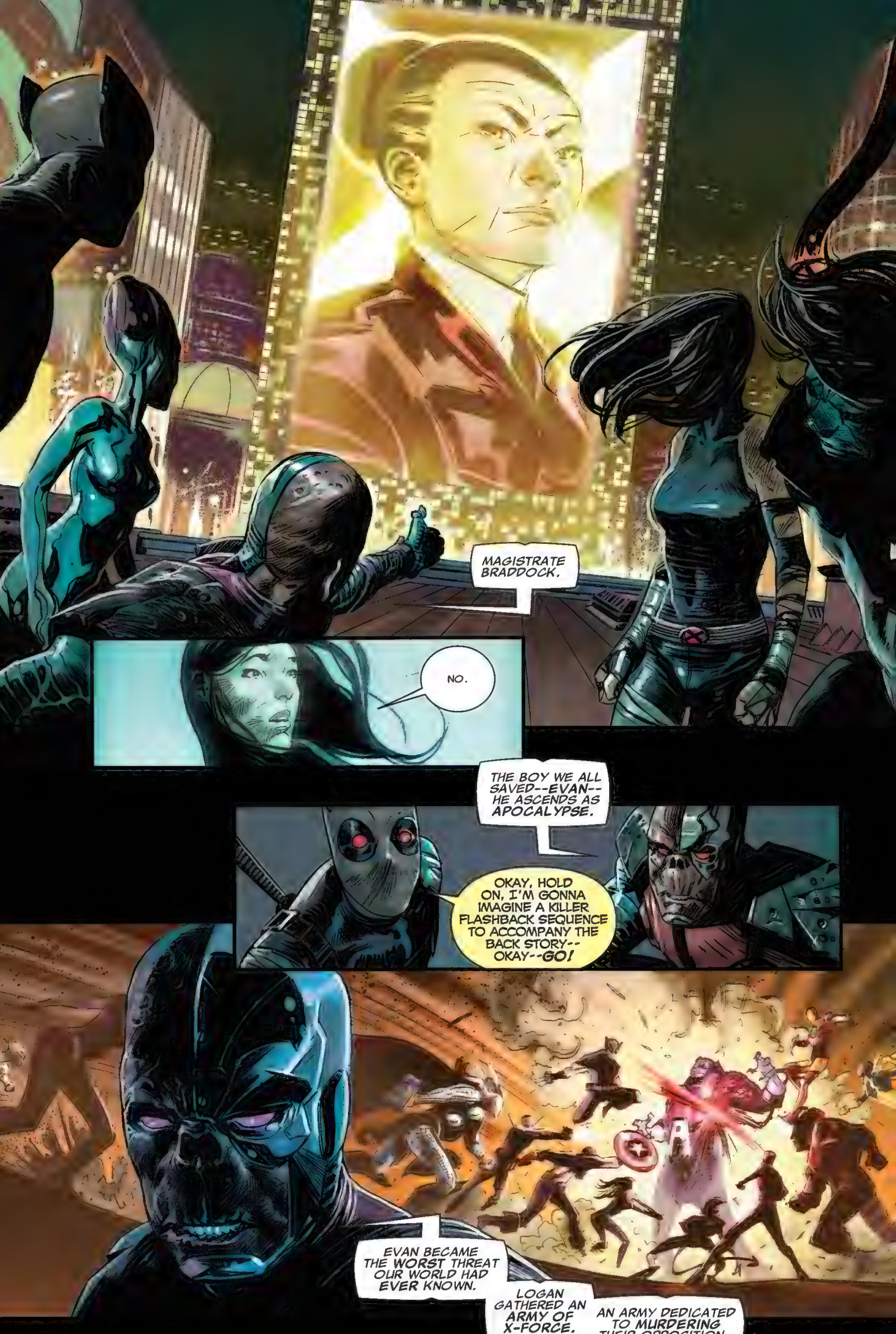

THERE ARE RATIONS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES.
OH. GOOD...WATER CHESTNUTS.
EXPIRED TOO.
GATHER YOURSELVES-- WE LEAVE IN FIVE MINUTES.
THEY'LL BE HUNTING.
LISTEN.
WE JUST LOST TWO OF OUR OWN.
KILLED BY MY BOY, WHO'S LOOKIN' TO MIND-TWEAK A YOUNG APOCALYPSE INTO SERVING THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS 'LESS WE STOP 'IM.
HOLD STILL.
I'M ON A SHORT FUSE.
SO, NO MORE ORDERS.
YOU GOT PLANS TO GET ME BACK HOME? LOT'S O' FOLKS IN NEED O' KILLIN'.
MURDER IS THE WRONG SOLUTION.
FINE. LESSON LEARNED.
WHAT THE HELL IS THE PLAN?!
AIN'T INTERESTED IN THE GRAND TOUR! I'M INTERESTED IN GETTING HOME.
YOU'LL SEE. ONCE I SHOW YOU AROUND.
I HAVE ACCESS TO ONE OF KANG'S CHRONOS CUBES. I'LL SEND YOU BACK...
"...ONCE YOU SEE."
YOUR WOUNDS ARE DEEP, ELIZABETH.
GUESS SO.

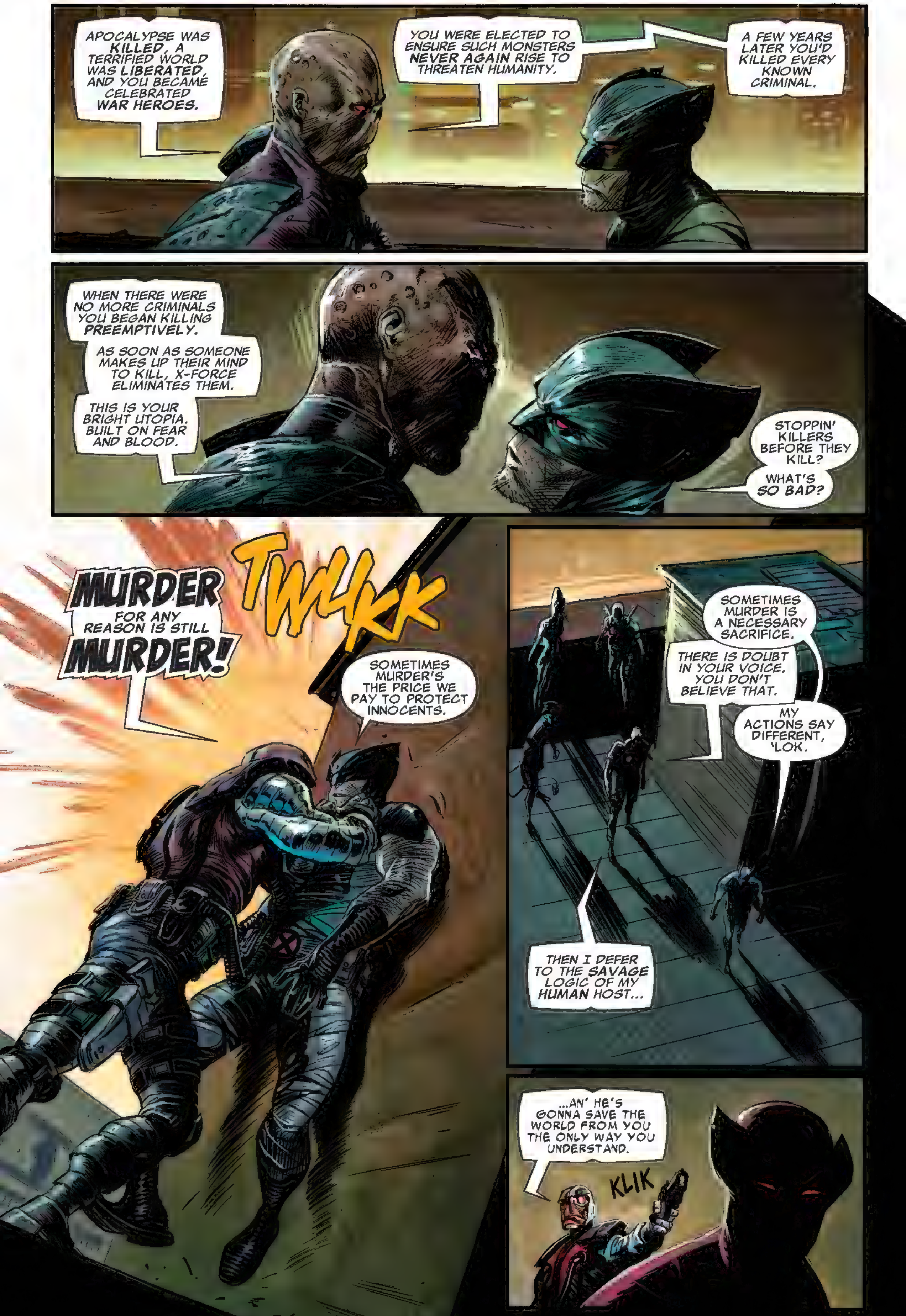

I CANNOT BEGIN TO IMAGINE...
TO HAVE THAT MONSTER INTRUDING IN YOUR MIND.
NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO EXPERIENCE SUCH HORROR.
YOU...
YOU MUST NOT FEEL RESPONSIBLE, ELIZABETH.
HE CAME TO YOUR AID OF HIS OWN VOLITION.
HE VALUED YOU...AS MUCH AS HE COULD ANYONE.
HE KNEW YOU WERE DESTINED TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.
TO SUCCUMB TO SORROW NOW WOULD UNDO HIS SACRIFICE.
LUCKY FOR ME...
...SORROW ISN'T AN OPTION.
WATER CHESTNUTS?
THEY'RE EXPIRED.
INDEED. SO, HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?
FINE. JUST THINKING UP SOME JOKES TO MAKE ABOUT DEATHLOK.
CAME UP WITH THE CYBORG OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE.

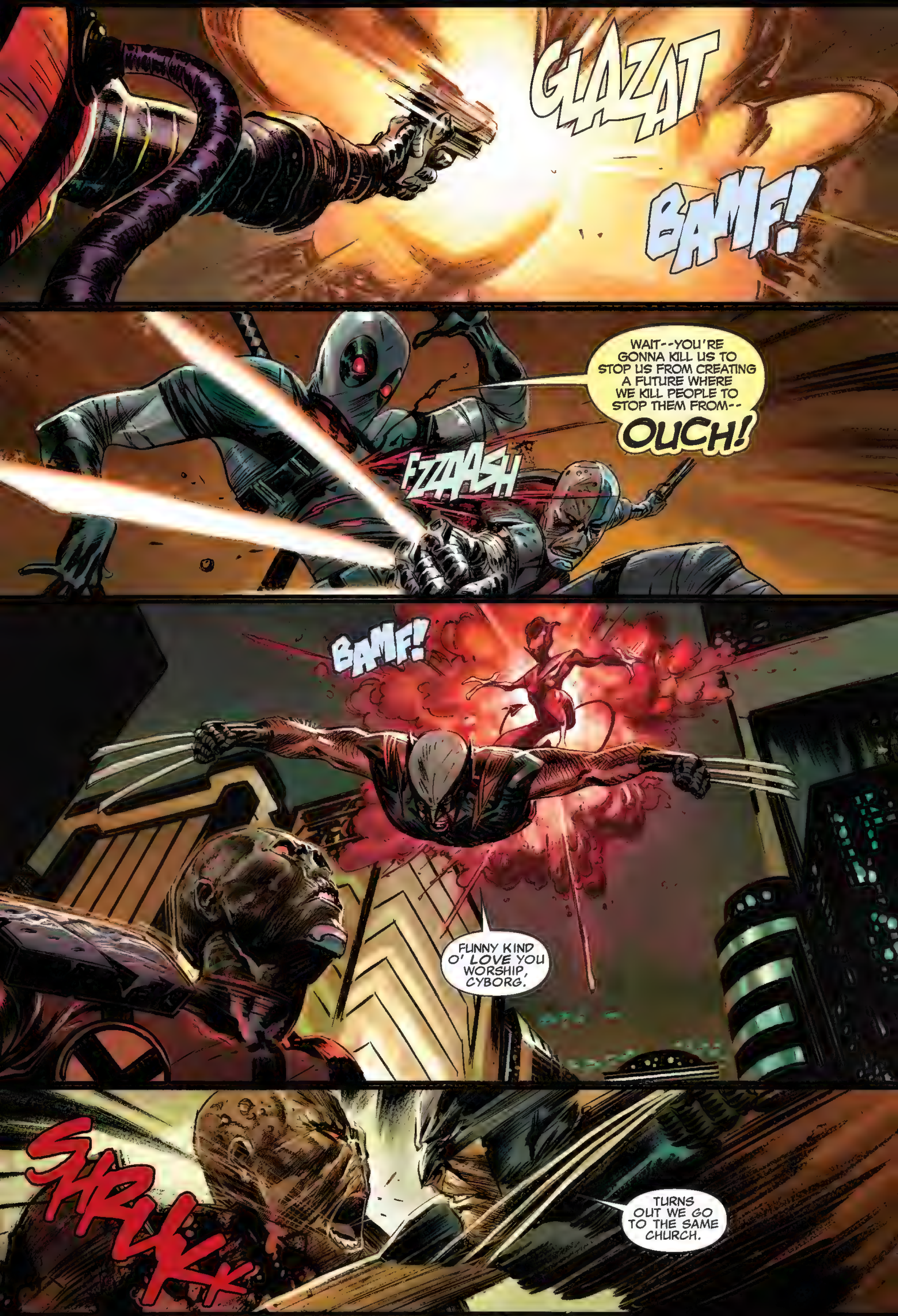

HMMH. NEEDS WORK.
LISTEN, WADE, WITHOUT YOUR HEALING FACTOR, YOUR *WOUNDS* ARE...
YEAH. NOT SO MUCH FUN.
THEY SORT OF *HURT* AND *ITCH* AND *BURN* AND *BLEED* AND *SUCK*.
IF YOU *KNEW* YOU'D LOST YOUR ABILITIES, THE THING I DON'T ENTIRELY UNDERSTAND...
WHY ACCEPT SOMETHING AS *DANGEROUS* AS THE WHITE SKY MISSION?
I DUNNO. I MEAN...
LOOK, I'M A *CRAZY PERSON*.
I MAKE *IMPRUDENT* CHOICES, OFTENTIMES TO MY DETRIMENT.
NO-- *WAIT!*
THAT WAS A *GREAT* SETUP--LET'S DO IT AGAIN.
YOU ASK ME WHY I RISKED MY LIFE FOR ONE OF LOGAN'S *STUPID* MISSIONS.
SURE. WHY?
I DIDN'T WANT TO LET ANYONE DOWN...
"...BECAUSE THIS IS THE CLOSEST THING TO A *FAMILY* I'VE EVER HAD."
THIS IS CASTLE.
CABLE HERE.
FIND ANYTHING ON YOUR SIDE?
NO.

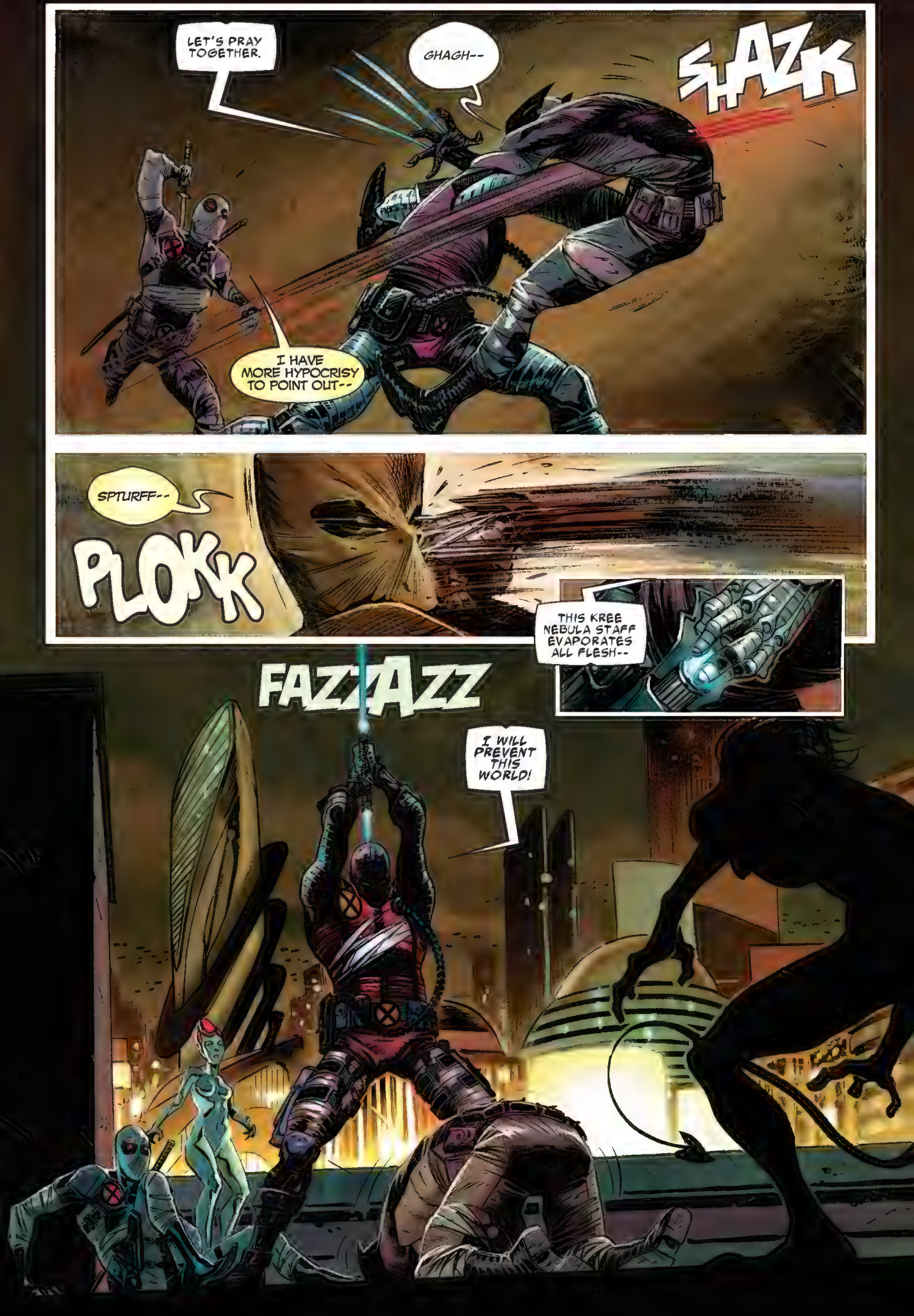

BUT I WILL.
WHY'S THE PUNISHER HUNTIN' US?
THEY WANT TO SEND YOU BACK-- BEFORE YOU SEE.
BEFORE YOU CHANGE.
THEY WHO?
COME.
WHATEVER THE LAW'S DONE 'ROUND HERE-- DON'T SEEM HALF BAD.
TOTALITARIAN FASCISM, PREEMPTIVE ASSASSINATIONS, PEACE BOUGHT THROUGH FEAR... IT IS HELL.
I FIGHT FOR TRUE LIBERTY.
I FIGHT FOR LOVE AND FORGIVENESS.
YOU SHOULD FIGHT THAT HIPPIE FUNGUS GROWIN' ABOUT YOUR HACKY SACK.

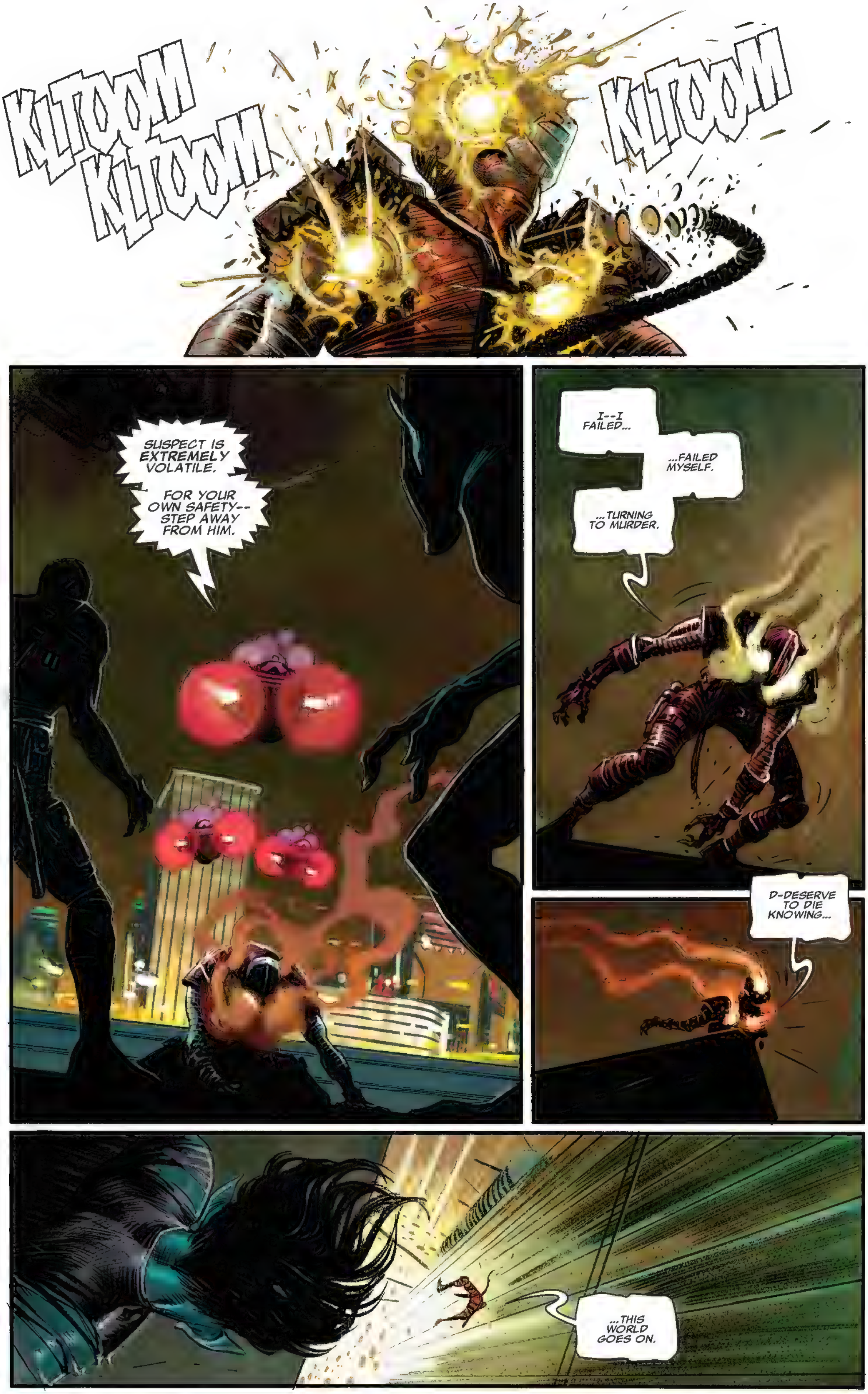

QUIET. WE'RE HERE.
NO-- STOP!
WHY WON'T YOU LISTEN!
HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING?!
NOT YET.
HE WON'T!
HE WON'T DO WHATEVER IT IS! I'LL STOP HIM! PLEASE!
WE HAVE CHILDREN!
I KNOW...
...X-FORCE JUST SAVED THEIR LIVES.
WHERE ARE THEY TAKING HIM?
PREVENTATIVE TERMINATION.
YOUR METHODOLOGY TAKEN TO ITS EXPONENTIAL CONCLUSION.
WHO?
WHO'S IN CHARGE OF THIS?

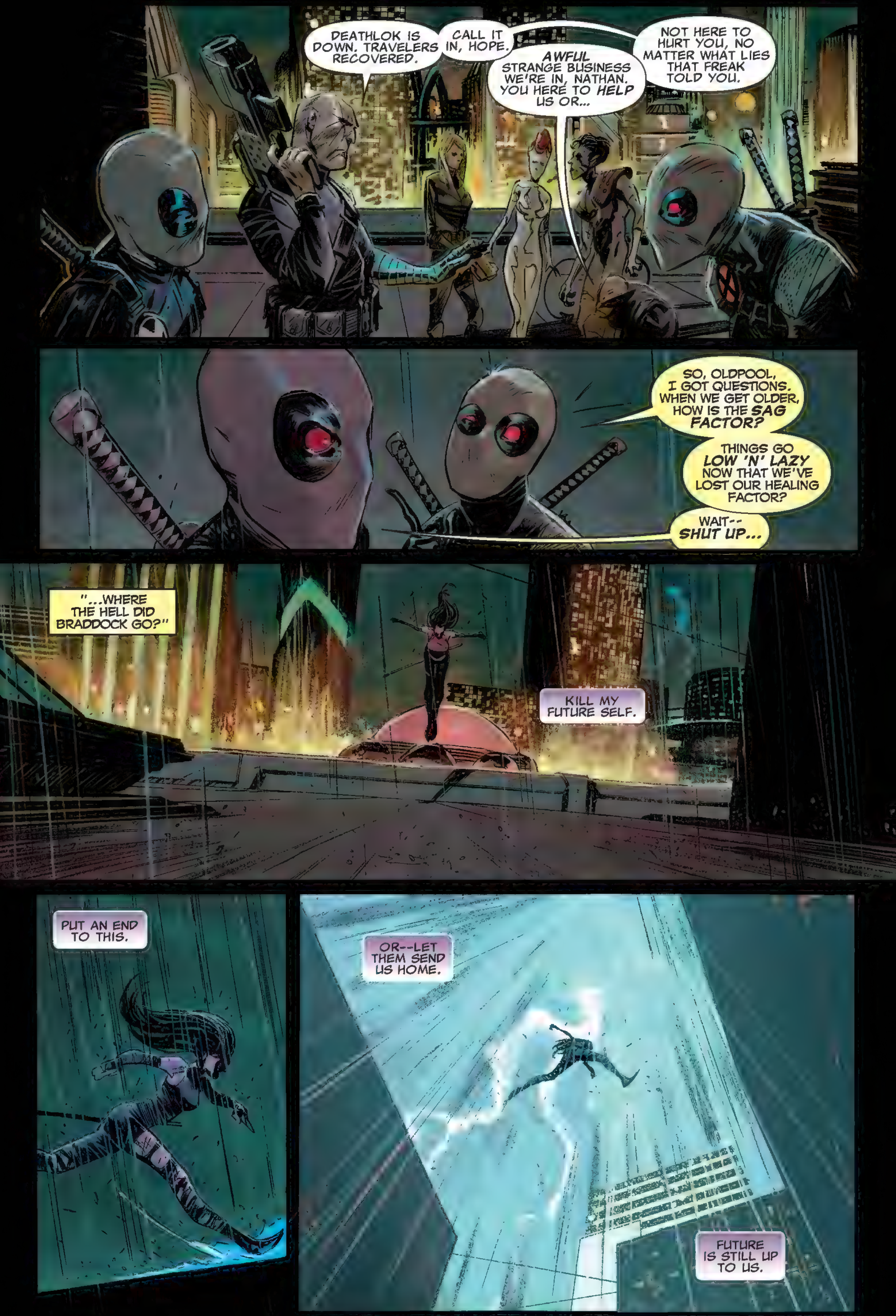

MAGISTRATE BRADDOCK.
NO.
THE BOY WE ALL SAVED--EVAN--HE ASCENDS AS APOCALYPSE.
OKAY, HOLD ON, I'M GONNA IMAGINE A KILLER FLASHBACK SEQUENCE TO ACCOMPANY THE BACK STORY--OKAY--GO!
EVAN BECAME THE WORST THREAT OUR WORLD HAD EVER KNOWN.
LOGAN GATHERED AN ARMY OF X-FORCE.
AN ARMY DEDICATED TO MURDERING THEIR OPPOSITION.

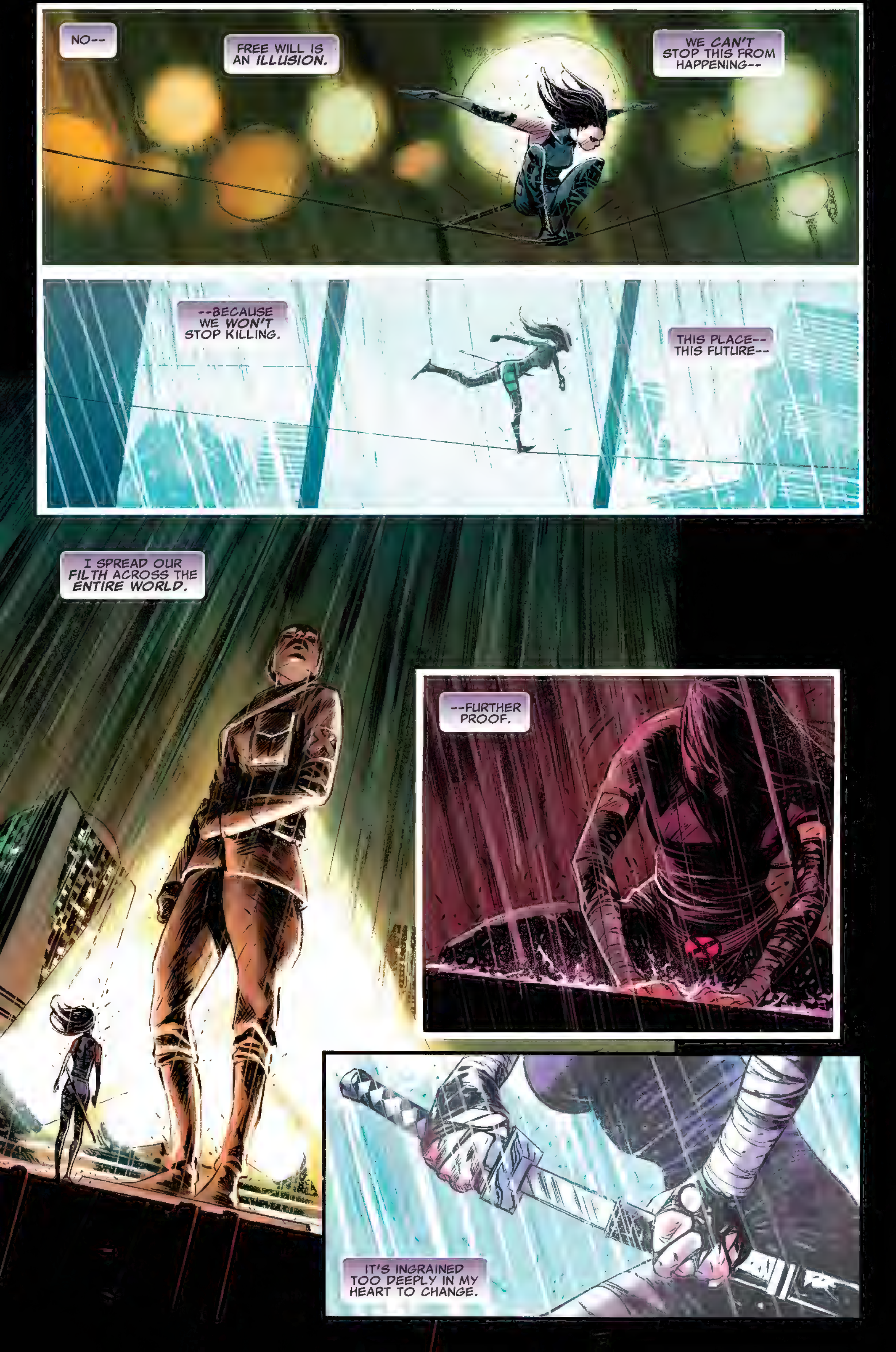

APOCALYPSE WAS KILLED, A TERRIFIED WORLD WAS LIBERATED, AND YOU BECAME CELEBRATED WAR HEROES.
YOU WERE ELECTED TO ENSURE SUCH MONSTERS NEVER AGAIN RISE TO THREATEN HUMANITY.
A FEW YEARS LATER YOU'D KILLED EVERY KNOWN CRIMINAL.
WHEN THERE WERE NO MORE CRIMINALS YOU BEGAN KILLING PREEMPTIVELY.
AS SOON AS SOMEONE MAKES UP THEIR MIND TO KILL, X-FORCE ELIMINATES THEM.
THIS IS YOUR BRIGHT UTOPIA. BUILT ON FEAR AND BLOOD.
STOPPIN' KILLERS BEFORE THEY KILL?
WHAT'S SO BAD?
MURDER FOR ANY REASON IS STILL MURDER!
TWUKK
SOMETIMES MURDER'S THE PRICE WE PAY TO PROTECT INNOCENTS.
SOMETIMES MURDER IS A NECESSARY SACRIFICE.
THERE IS DOUBT IN YOUR VOICE. YOU DON'T BELIEVE THAT.
MY ACTIONS SAY DIFFERENT, 'LOK.
THEN I DEFER TO THE SAVAGE LOGIC OF MY HUMAN HOST...
...AN' HE'S GONNA SAVE THE WORLD FROM YOU THE ONLY WAY YOU UNDERSTAND.
KLIK

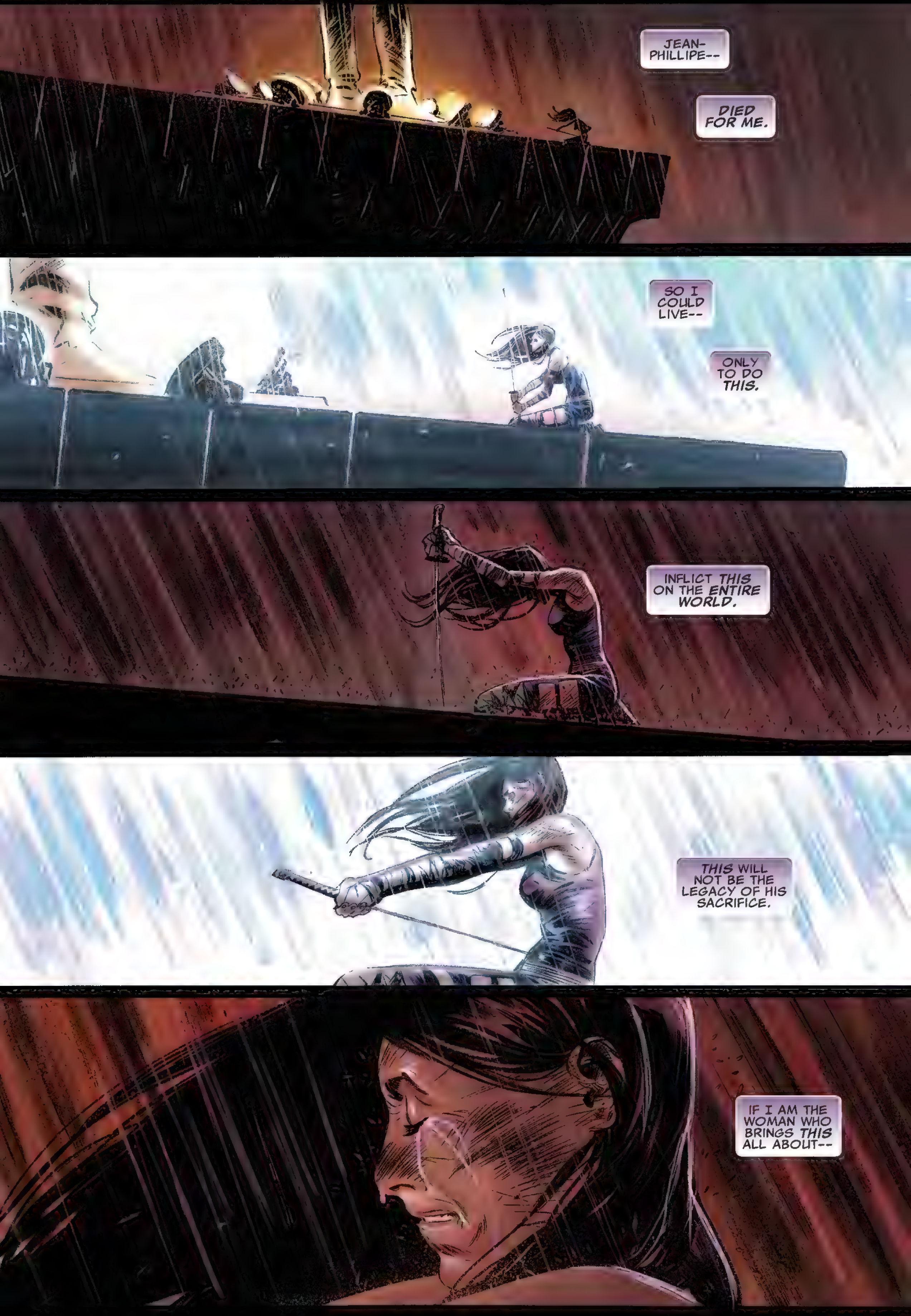

GLAZAT
BAMF!
WAIT--YOU'RE GONNA KILL US TO STOP US FROM CREATING A FUTURE WHERE WE KILL PEOPLE TO STOP THEM FROM--
OUCH!
FZZAASH
BAMF!
FUNNY KIND O' LOVE YOU WORSHIP, CYBORG.
SHRKK
TURNS OUT WE GO TO THE SAME CHURCH.

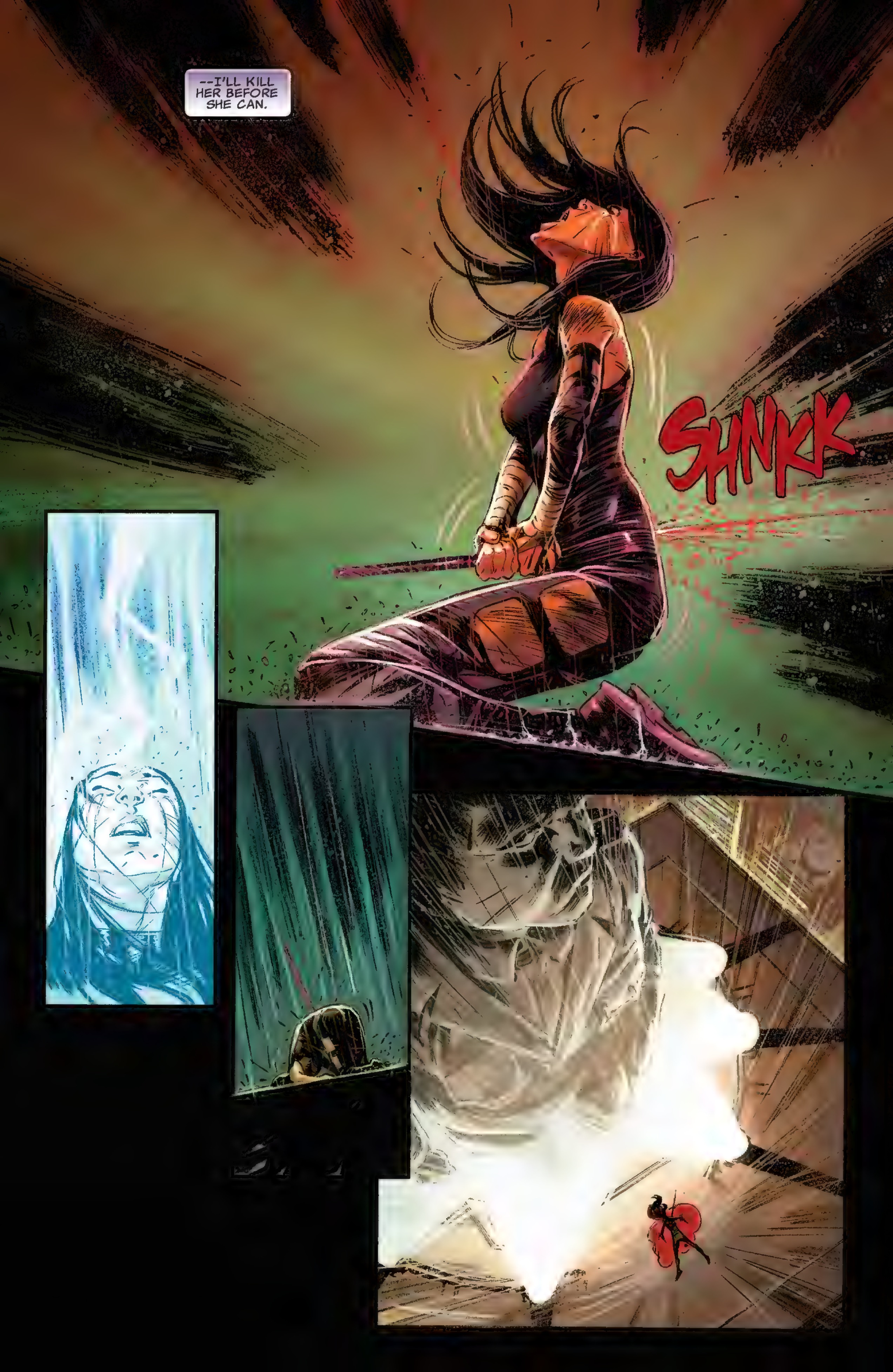

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER.
GHAGH--
SHAZK
I HAVE MORE HYPOCRISY TO POINT OUT--
SPTURFF--
PLOKK
THIS KREE NEBULA STAFF EVAPORATES ALL FLESH--
FAZZAZZ
I WILL PREVENT THIS WORLD!


KLTOOM
KLTOOM
KLTOOM
SUSPECT IS EXTREMELY VOLATILE.
FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY-- STEP AWAY FROM HIM.
I--I FAILED...
...FAILED MYSELF.
...TURNING TO MURDER.
D-DESERVE TO DIE KNOWING...
...THIS WORLD GOES ON.


DEATHLOK IS DOWN. TRAVELERS RECOVERED.
CALL IT IN, HOPE.
AWFUL STRANGE BUSINESS WE'RE IN, NATHAN. YOU HERE TO HELP US OR...
NOT HERE TO HURT YOU, NO MATTER WHAT LIES THAT FREAK TOLD YOU.
SO, OLDPOOL, I GOT QUESTIONS. WHEN WE GET OLDER, HOW IS THE SAG FACTOR?
THINGS GO LOW 'N' LAZY NOW THAT WE'VE LOST OUR HEALING FACTOR?
WAIT-- SHUT UP...
"...WHERE THE HELL DID BRADDOCK GO?"
KILL MY FUTURE SELF.
PUT AN END TO THIS.
OR--LET THEM SEND US HOME.
FUTURE IS STILL UP TO US.


NO--
FREE WILL IS AN *ILLUSION.*
WE *CAN'T* STOP THIS FROM HAPPENING--
--BECAUSE WE *WON'T* STOP KILLING.
THIS PLACE-- THIS FUTURE--
I SPREAD OUR FILTH ACROSS THE ENTIRE WORLD.
--FURTHER PROOF.
IT'S INGRAINED TOO DEEPLY IN MY HEART TO CHANGE.

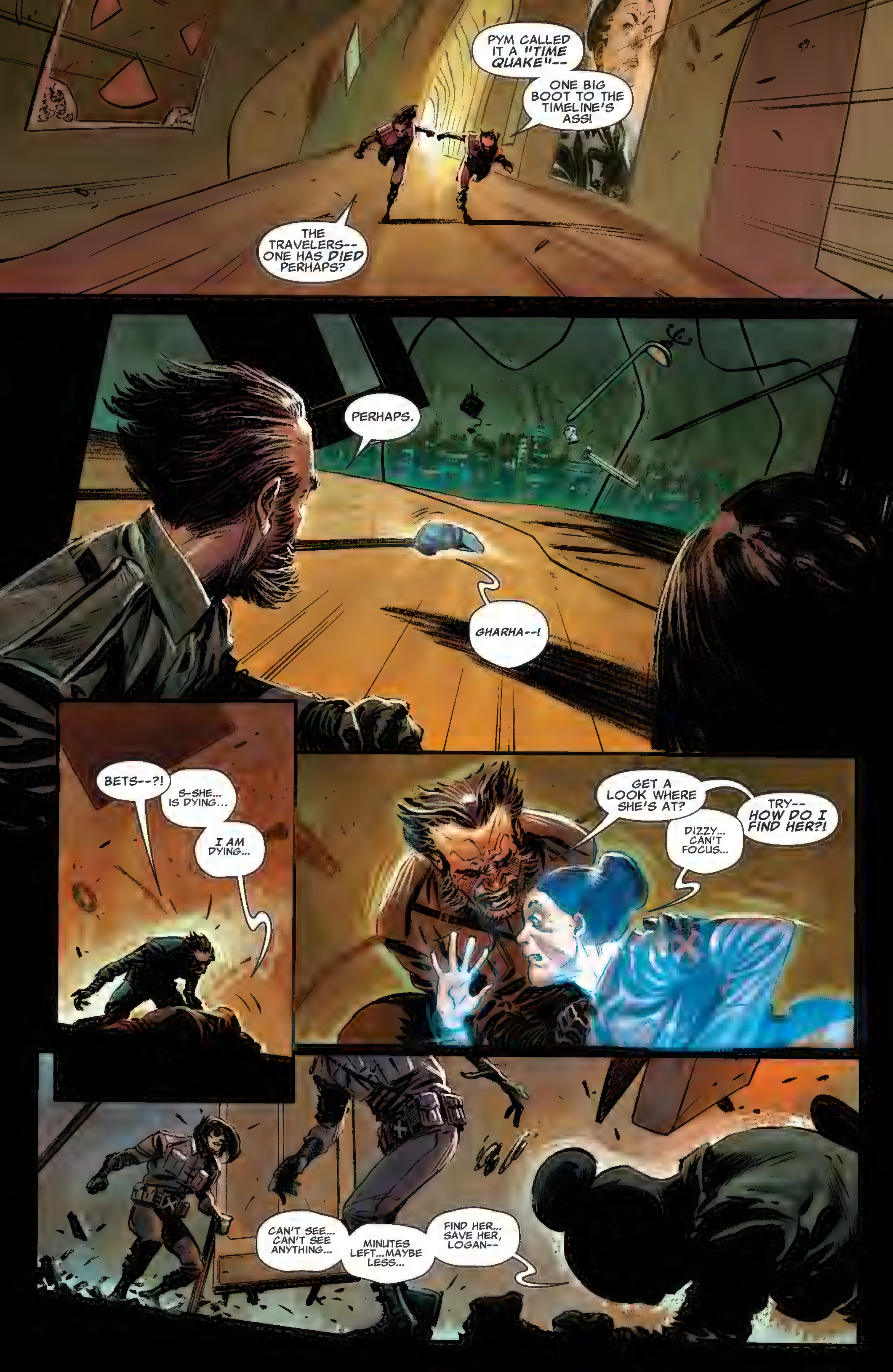

JEAN-PHILLIPE--
DIED FOR ME.
SO I COULD LIVE--
ONLY TO DO THIS.
INFLICT THIS ON THE ENTIRE WORLD.
THIS WILL NOT BE THE LEGACY OF HIS SACRIFICE.
IF I AM THE WOMAN WHO BRINGS THIS ALL ABOUT--

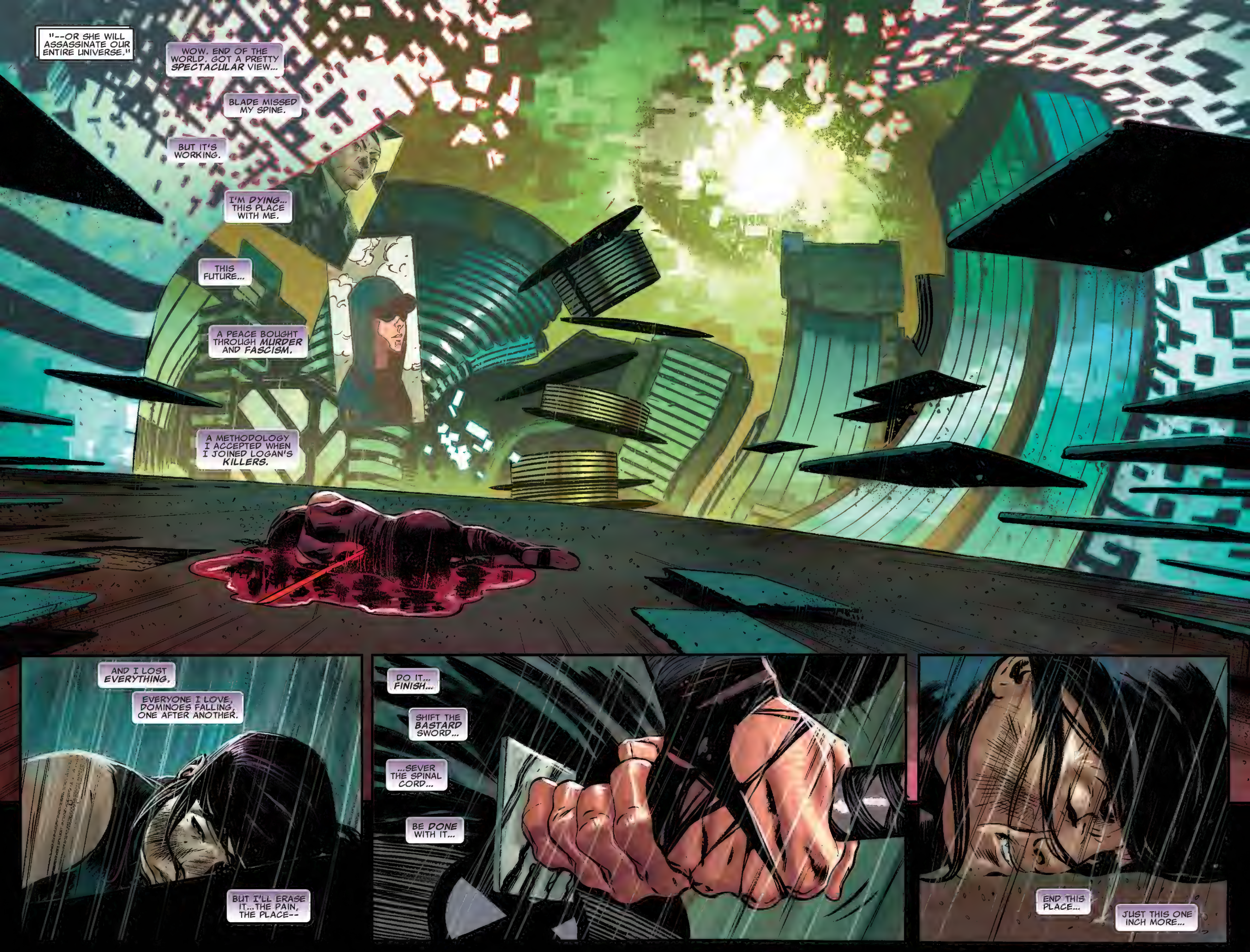

--I'LL KILL HER BEFORE SHE CAN.
SHNKK

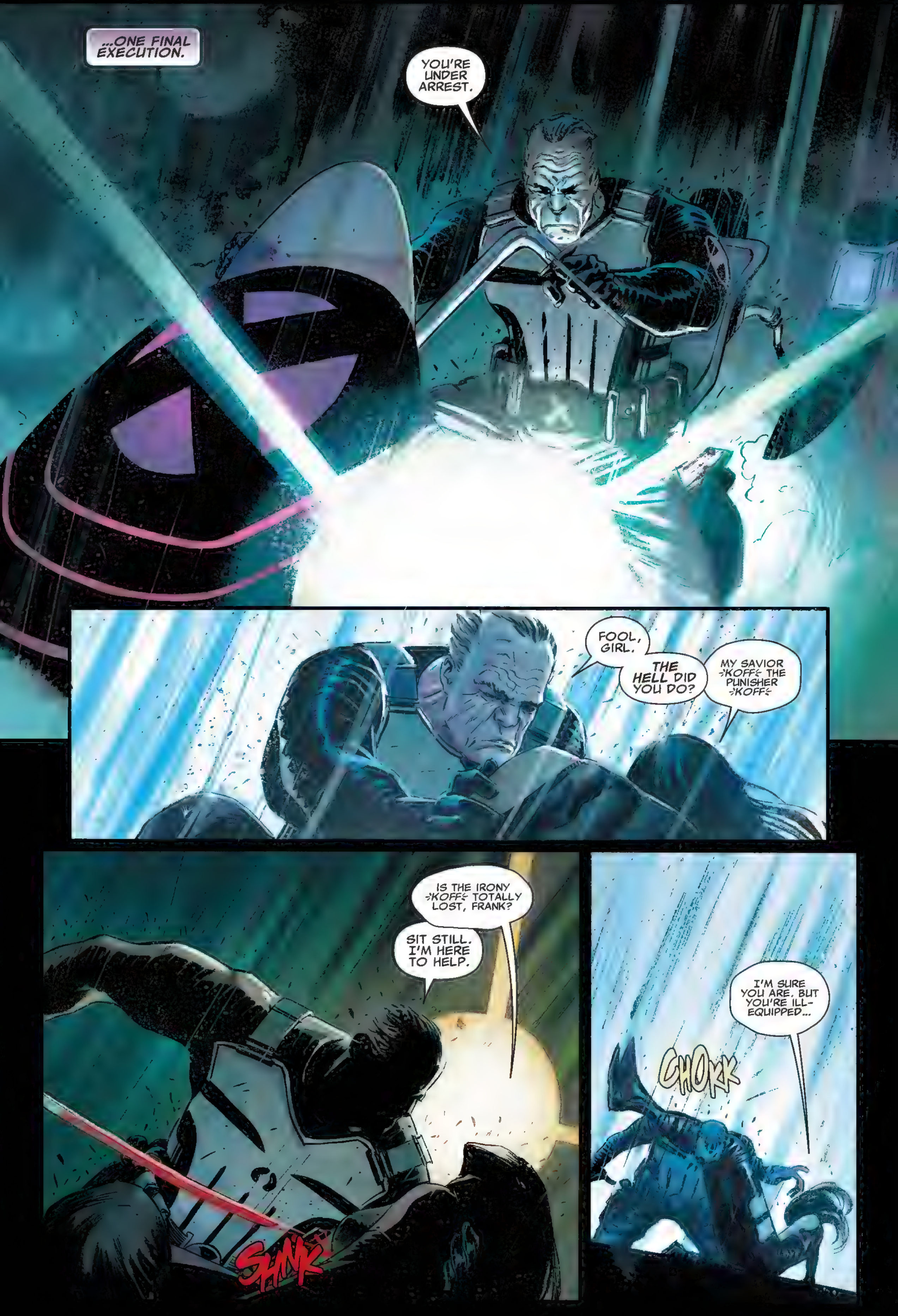
29

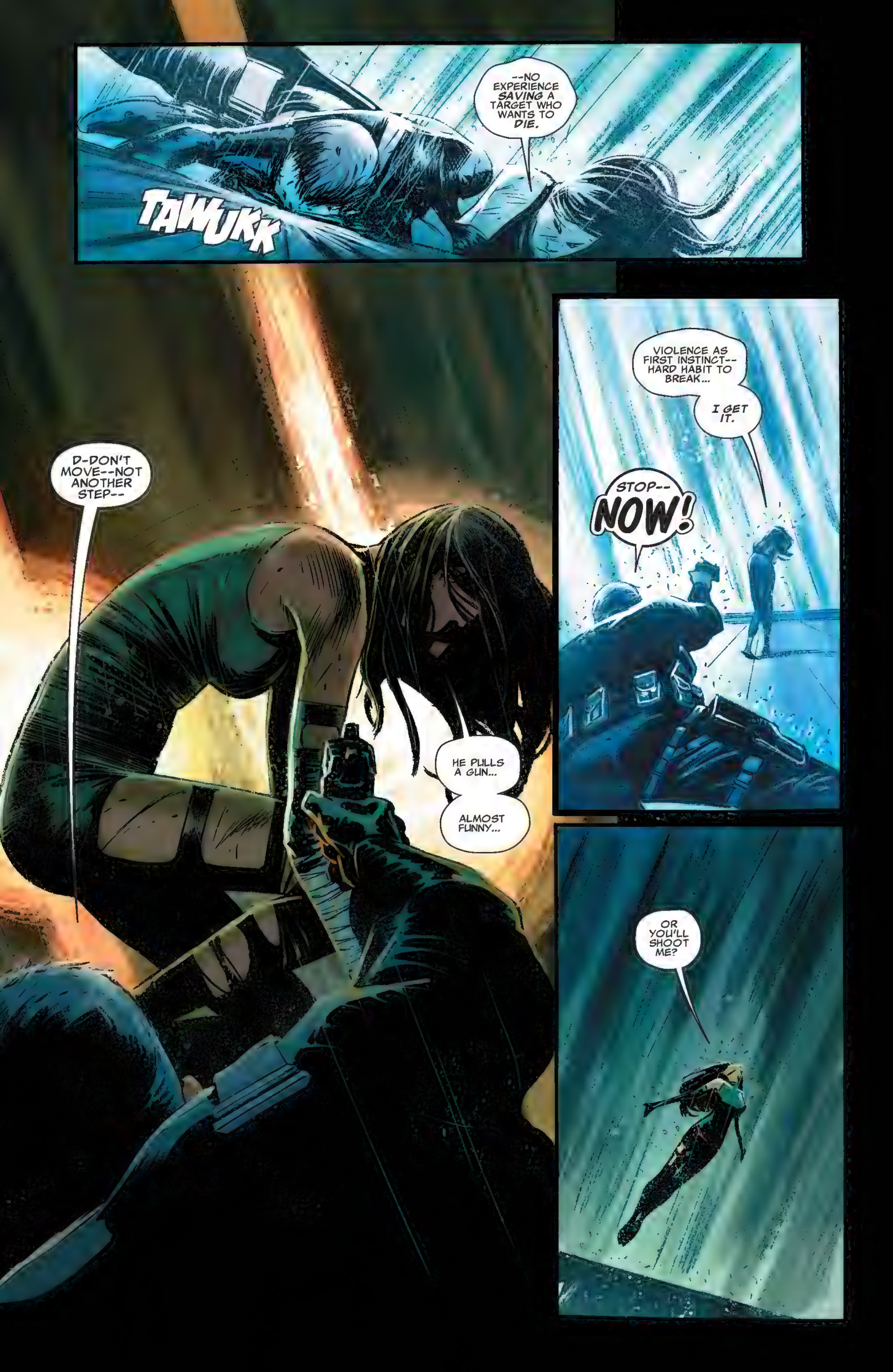
FINAL EXECUTION

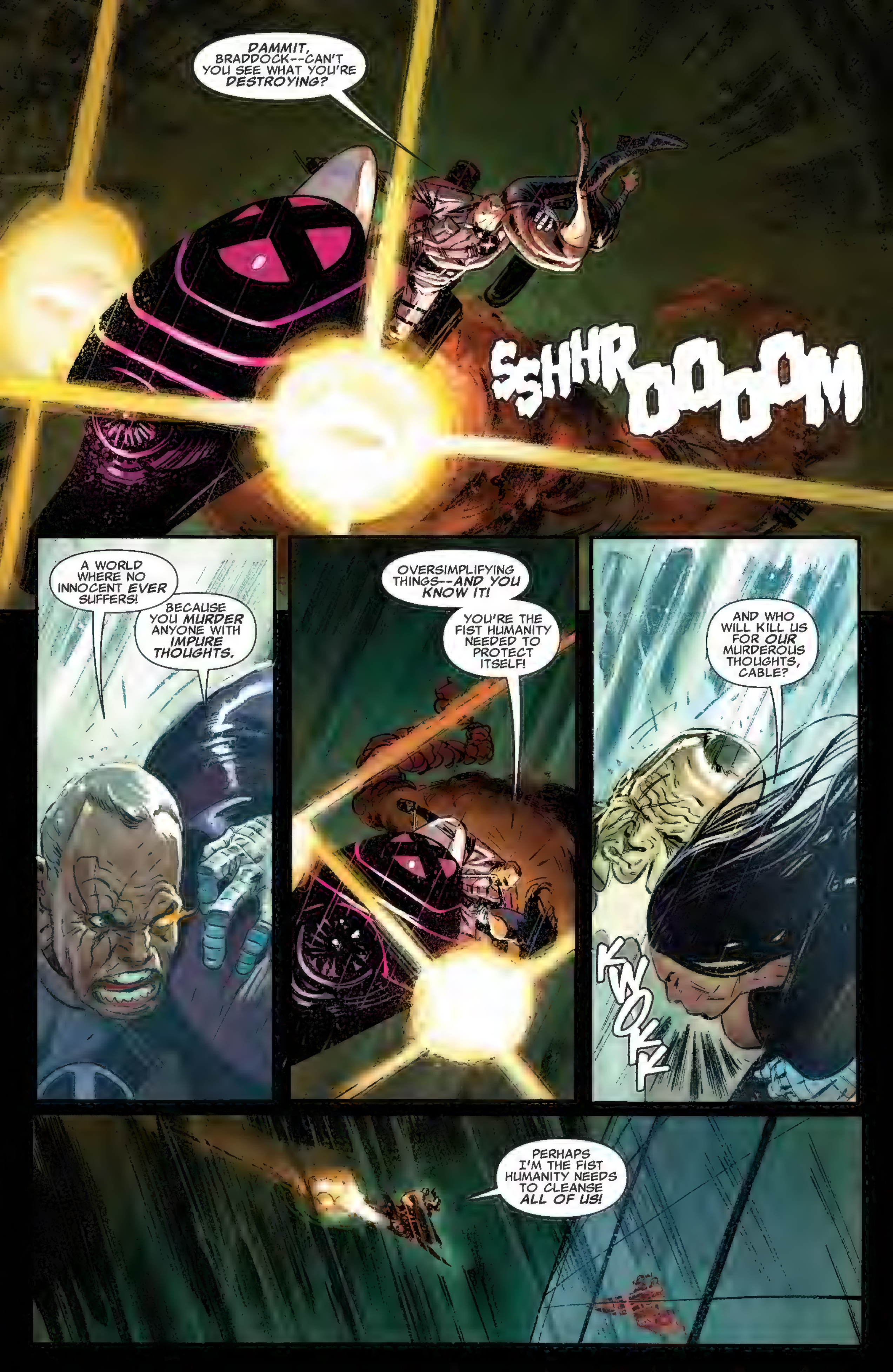
CHAPTER 5: NO TRUST IN TOMORROW

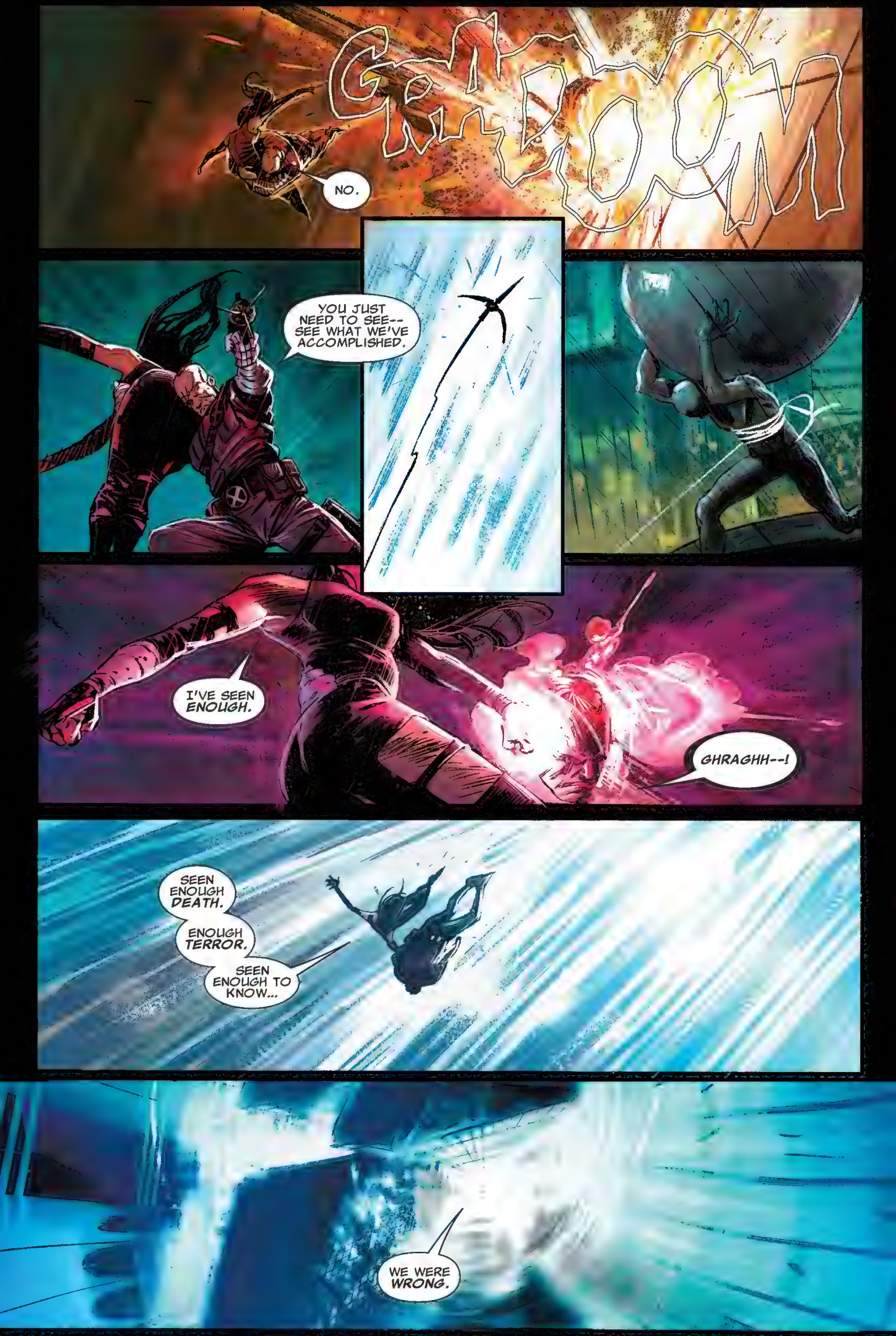

PYM CALLED IT A "TIME QUAKE"--
ONE BIG BOOT TO THE TIMELINE'S ASS!
THE TRAVELERS--ONE HAS *DIED* PERHAPS?
PERHAPS.
GHARHA--!
BETS--?!
S-SHE... IS DYING...
I AM DYING...
GET A LOOK WHERE SHE'S AT?
TRY-- *HOW DO I FIND HER?!*
DIZZY... CAN'T FOCUS...
CAN'T SEE... CAN'T SEE ANYTHING...
MINUTES LEFT...MAYBE LESS...
FIND HER... SAVE HER, LOGAN--

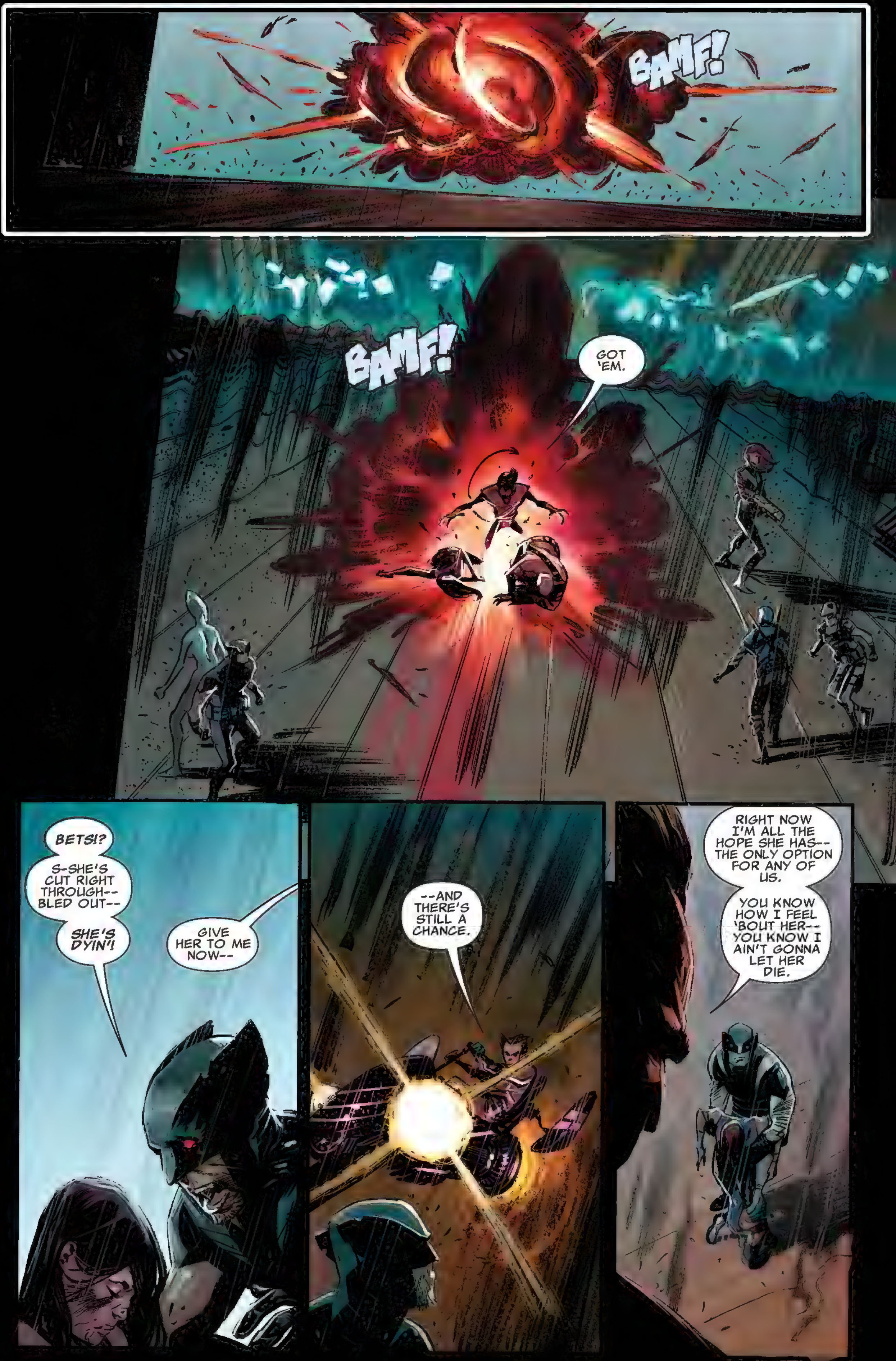

"--OR SHE WILL ASSASSINATE OUR ENTIRE UNIVERSE."
WOW. END OF THE WORLD. GOT A PRETTY *SPECTACULAR* VIEW...
BLADE MISSED MY SPINE.
BUT IT'S WORKING.
I'M *DYING*... THIS PLACE WITH ME.
THIS FUTURE...
A PEACE BOUGHT THROUGH *MURDER* AND *FASCISM*.
A METHODOLOGY I ACCEPTED WHEN I JOINED LOGAN'S *KILLERS*.
AND I LOST *EVERYTHING*.
EVERYONE I LOVE, DOMINOES FALLING, ONE AFTER ANOTHER.
BUT I'LL ERASE IT...THE PAIN, THE PLACE--
DO IT... *FINISH*...
SHIFT THE *BASTARD* SWORD...
...SEVER THE SPINAL CORD...
BE *DONE* WITH IT...
END THIS PLACE...
JUST THIS ONE INCH MORE...

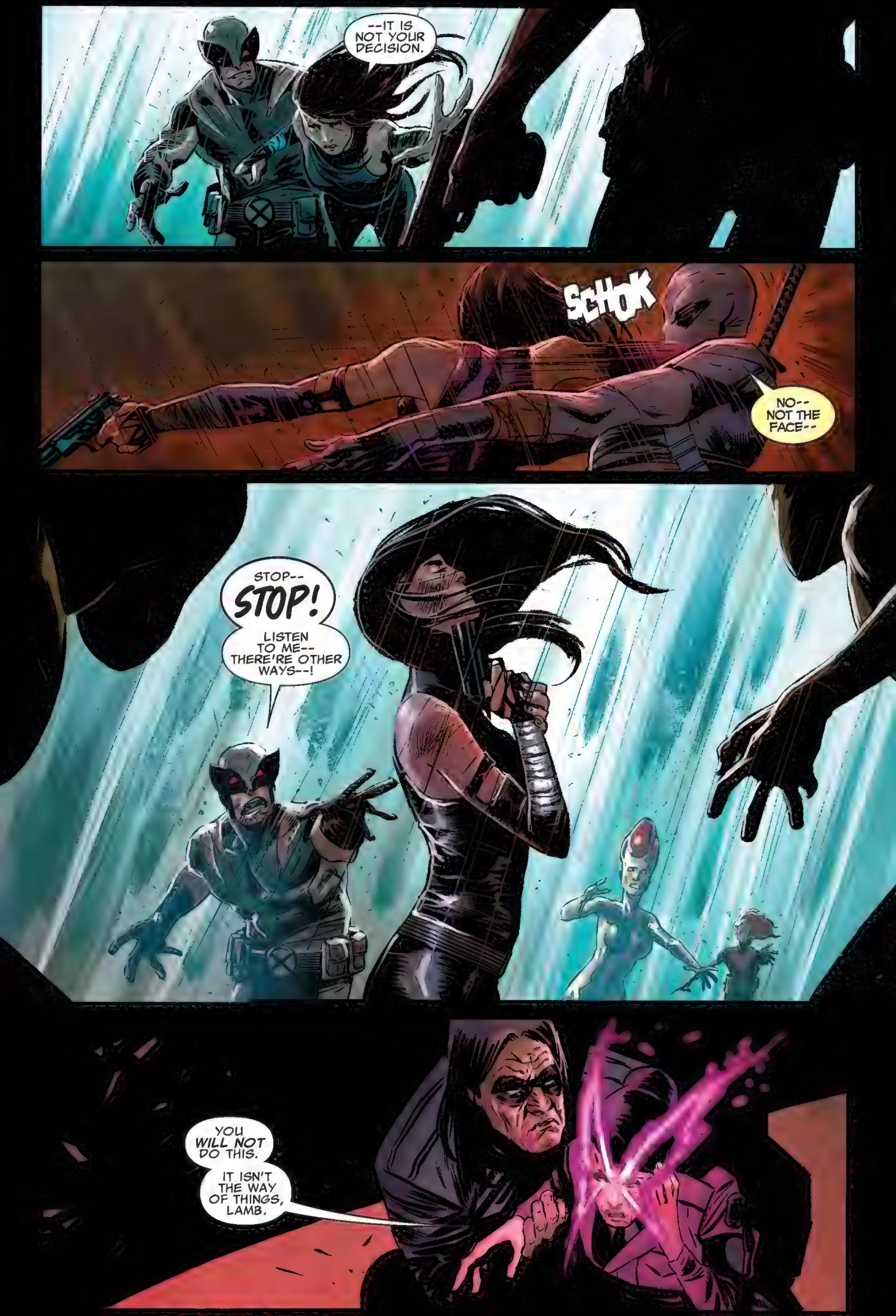

...ONE FINAL EXECUTION.
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.
FOOL, GIRL.
THE HELL DID YOU DO?
MY SAVIOR -KOFF- THE PUNISHER -KOFF-
IS THE IRONY -KOFF- TOTALLY LOST, FRANK?
SIT STILL. I'M HERE TO HELP.
SHNK
I'M SURE YOU ARE. BUT YOU'RE ILL-EQUIPPED...
CHOKK

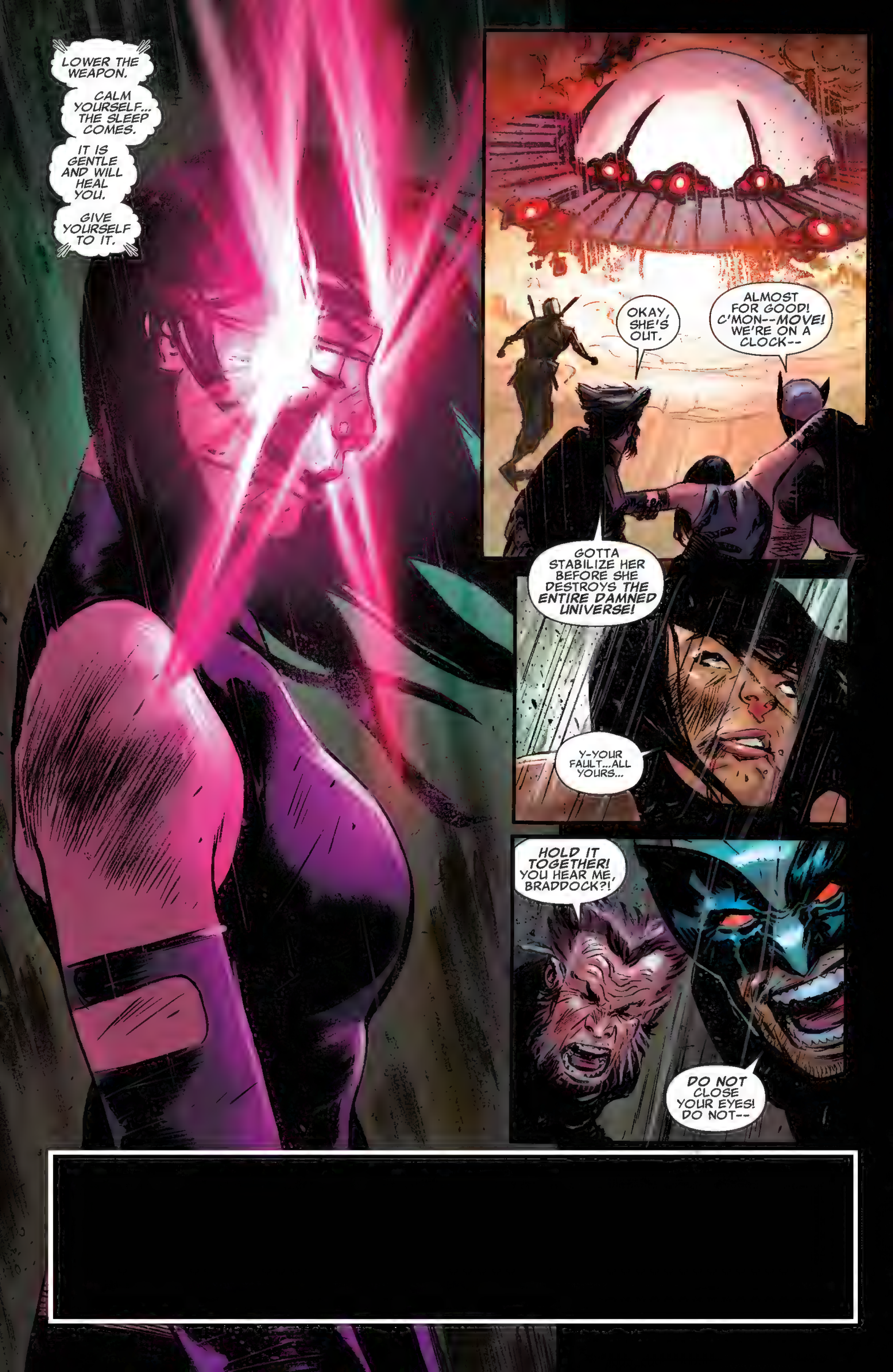

--NO EXPERIENCE *SAVING* A TARGET WHO WANTS TO *DIE*.
TAWUKK
VIOLENCE AS FIRST INSTINCT--HARD HABIT TO BREAK...
I GET IT.
STOP--NOW!
D-DON'T MOVE--NOT ANOTHER STEP--
HE PULLS A GUN...
ALMOST FUNNY...
OR YOU'LL SHOOT ME?

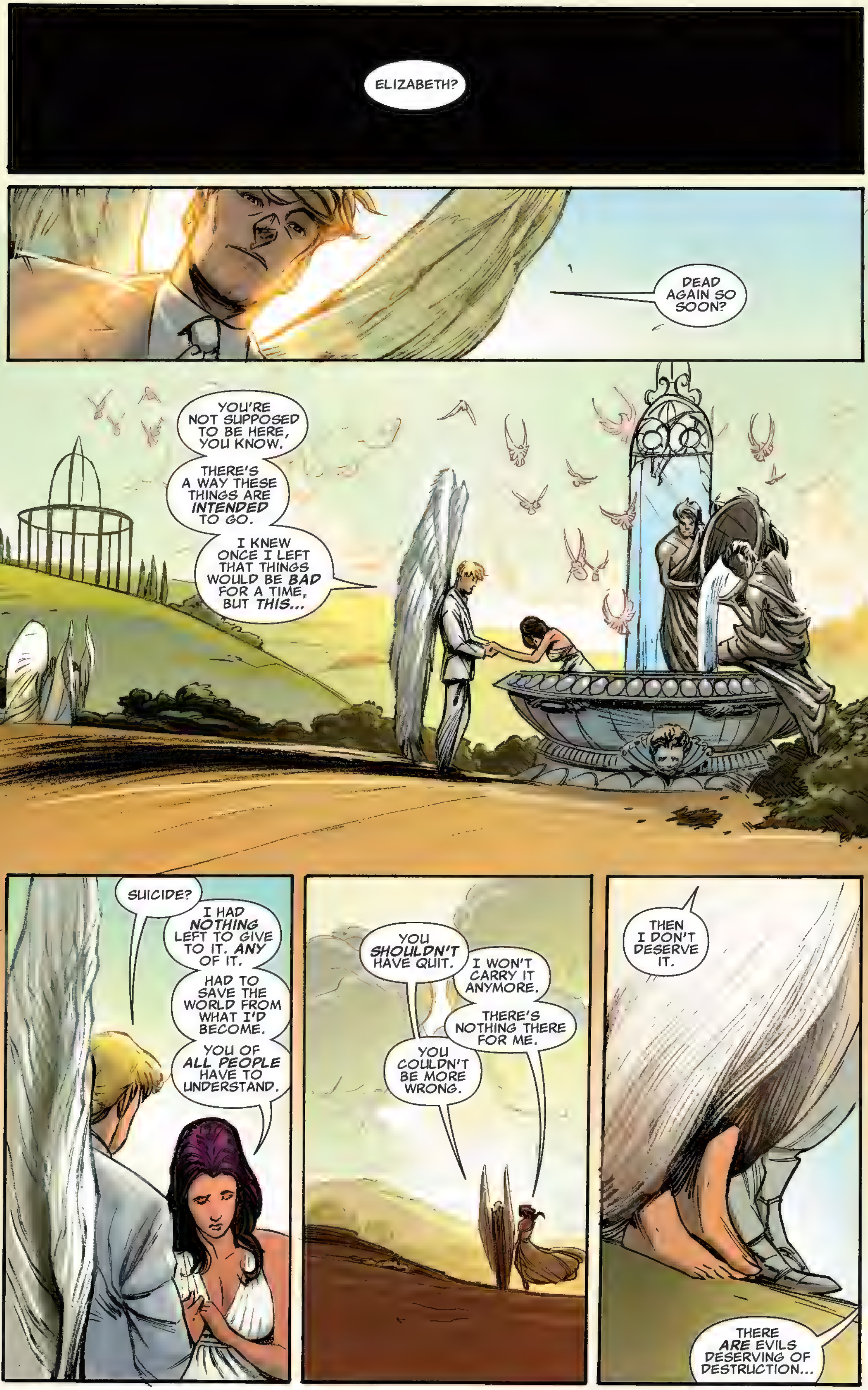

DAMMIT, BRADDOCK--CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT YOU'RE DESTROYING?
SSHHROOOOM
A WORLD WHERE NO INNOCENT EVER SUFFERS!
BECAUSE YOU MURDER ANYONE WITH IMPURE THOUGHTS.
OVERSIMPLIFYING THINGS--AND YOU KNOW IT!
YOU'RE THE FIST HUMANITY NEEDED TO PROTECT ITSELF!
AND WHO WILL KILL US FOR OUR MURDEROUS THOUGHTS, CABLE?
KWOKK
PERHAPS I'M THE FIST HUMANITY NEEDS TO CLEANSE ALL OF US!

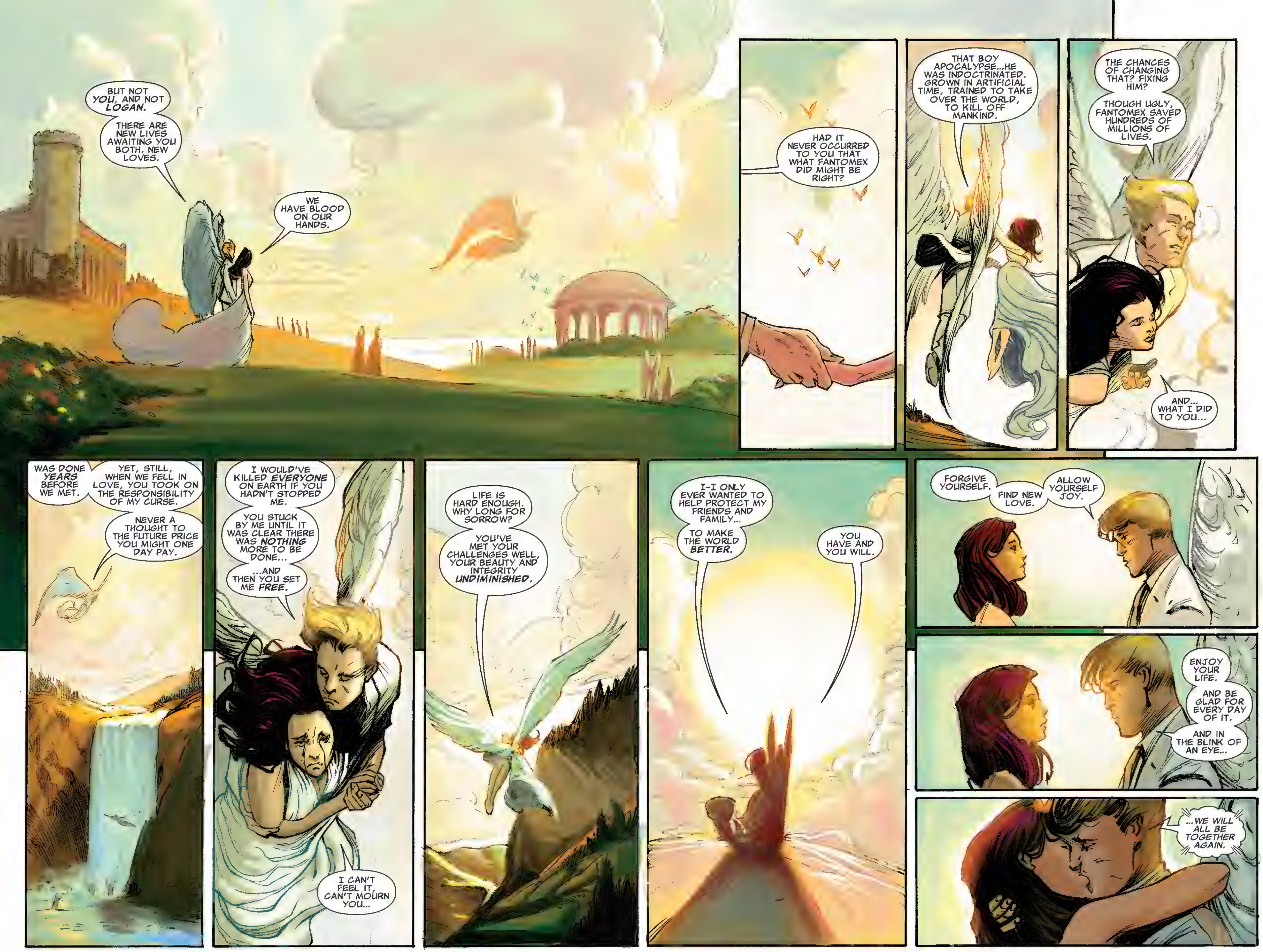

GRA-DOOM
NO.
YOU JUST NEED TO SEE-- SEE WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED.
I'VE SEEN *ENOUGH.*
GHRAGHH--!
SEEN ENOUGH *DEATH.*
ENOUGH *TERROR.*
SEEN ENOUGH TO KNOW...
WE WERE *WRONG.*

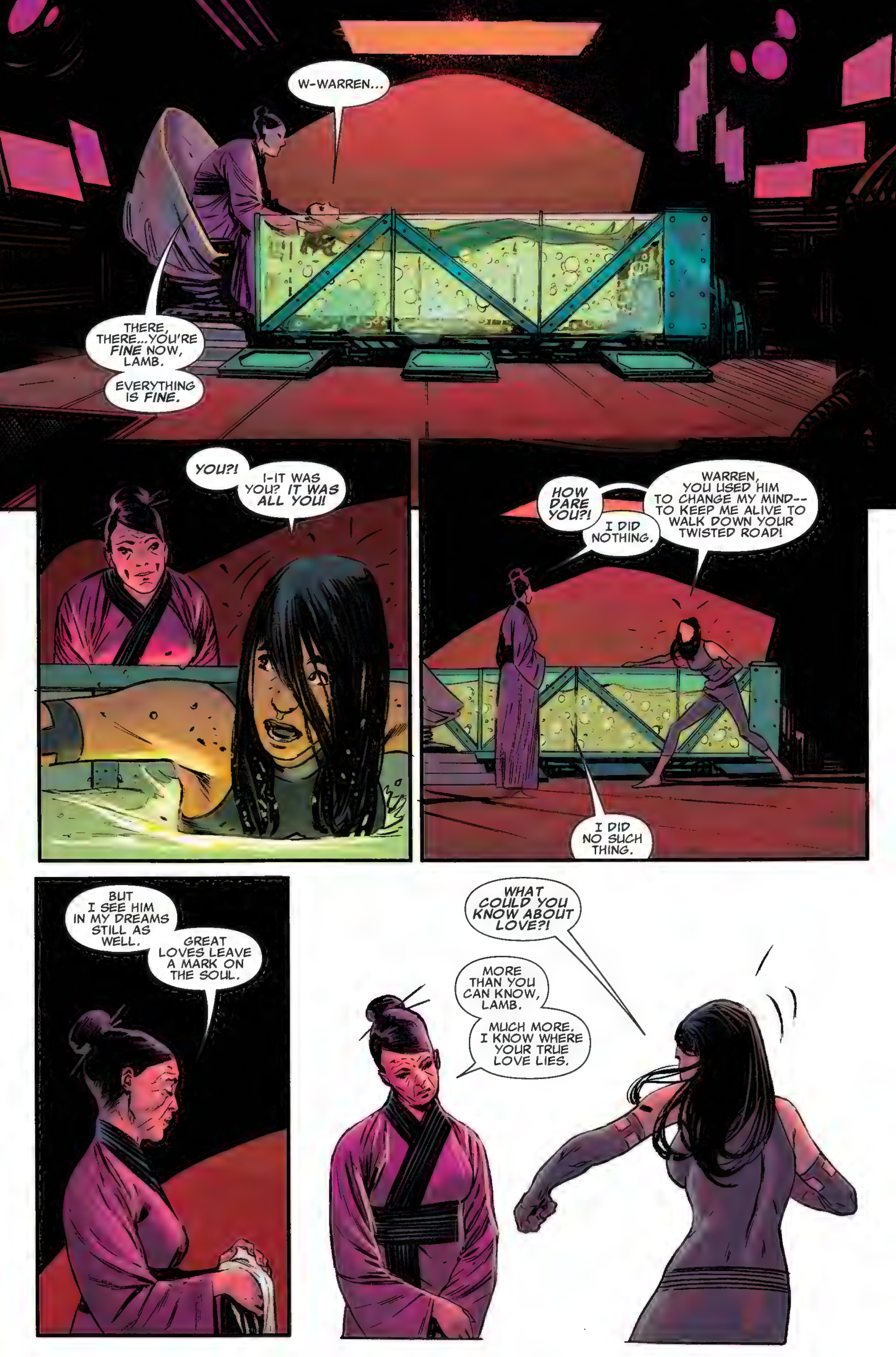

BAMF!
BAMF!
GOT 'EM.
BETS!?
S-SHE'S CUT RIGHT THROUGH-- BLED OUT--
SHE'S DYIN'!
GIVE HER TO ME NOW--
--AND THERE'S STILL A CHANCE.
RIGHT NOW I'M ALL THE HOPE SHE HAS-- THE ONLY OPTION FOR ANY OF US.
YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL 'BOUT HER-- YOU KNOW I AIN'T GONNA LET HER DIE.

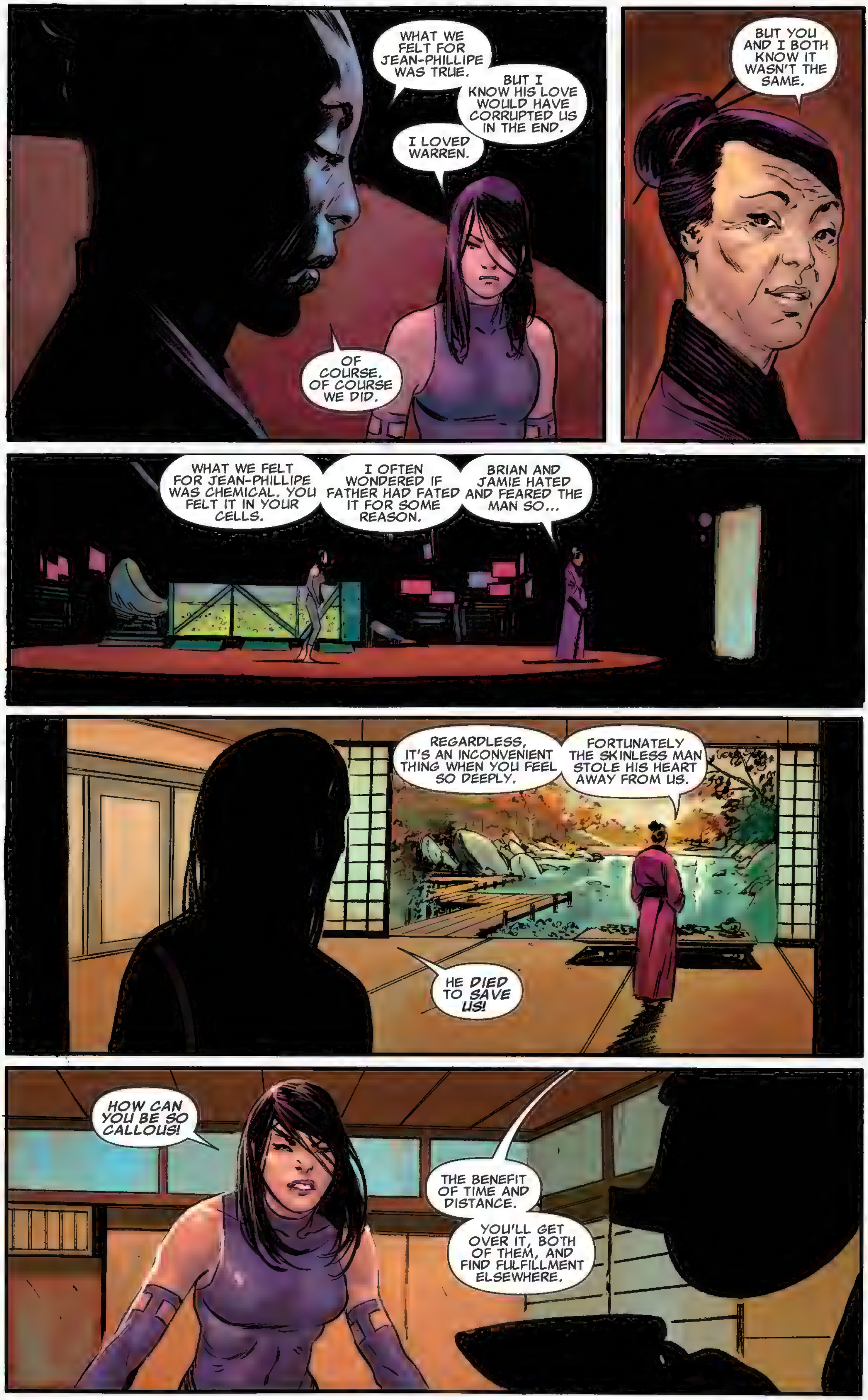

--IT IS NOT YOUR DECISION.
SCHOK
NO-- NOT THE FACE--
STOP-- STOP!
LISTEN TO ME-- THERE'RE OTHER WAYS--!
YOU WILL NOT DO THIS.
IT ISN'T THE WAY OF THINGS, LAMB.

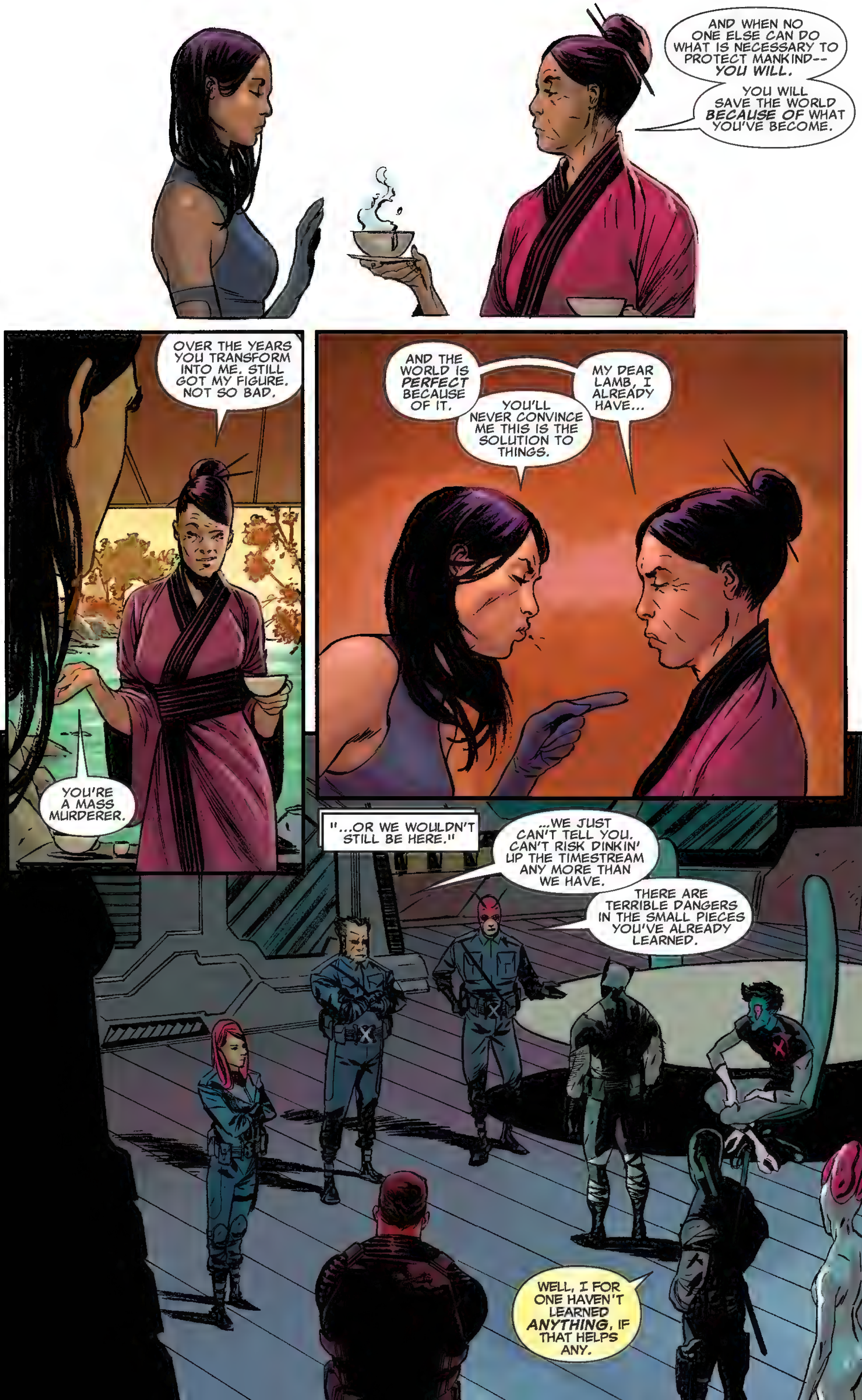

LOWER THE WEAPON.
CALM YOURSELF... THE SLEEP COMES.
IT IS GENTLE AND WILL HEAL YOU.
GIVE YOURSELF TO IT.
OKAY, SHE'S OUT.
ALMOST FOR GOOD! C'MON--MOVE! WE'RE ON A CLOCK--
GOTTA STABILIZE HER BEFORE SHE DESTROYS THE ENTIRE DAMNED UNIVERSE!
Y-YOUR FAULT...ALL YOURS...
HOLD IT TOGETHER! YOU HEAR ME, BRADDOCK?!
DO NOT CLOSE YOUR EYES! DO NOT--

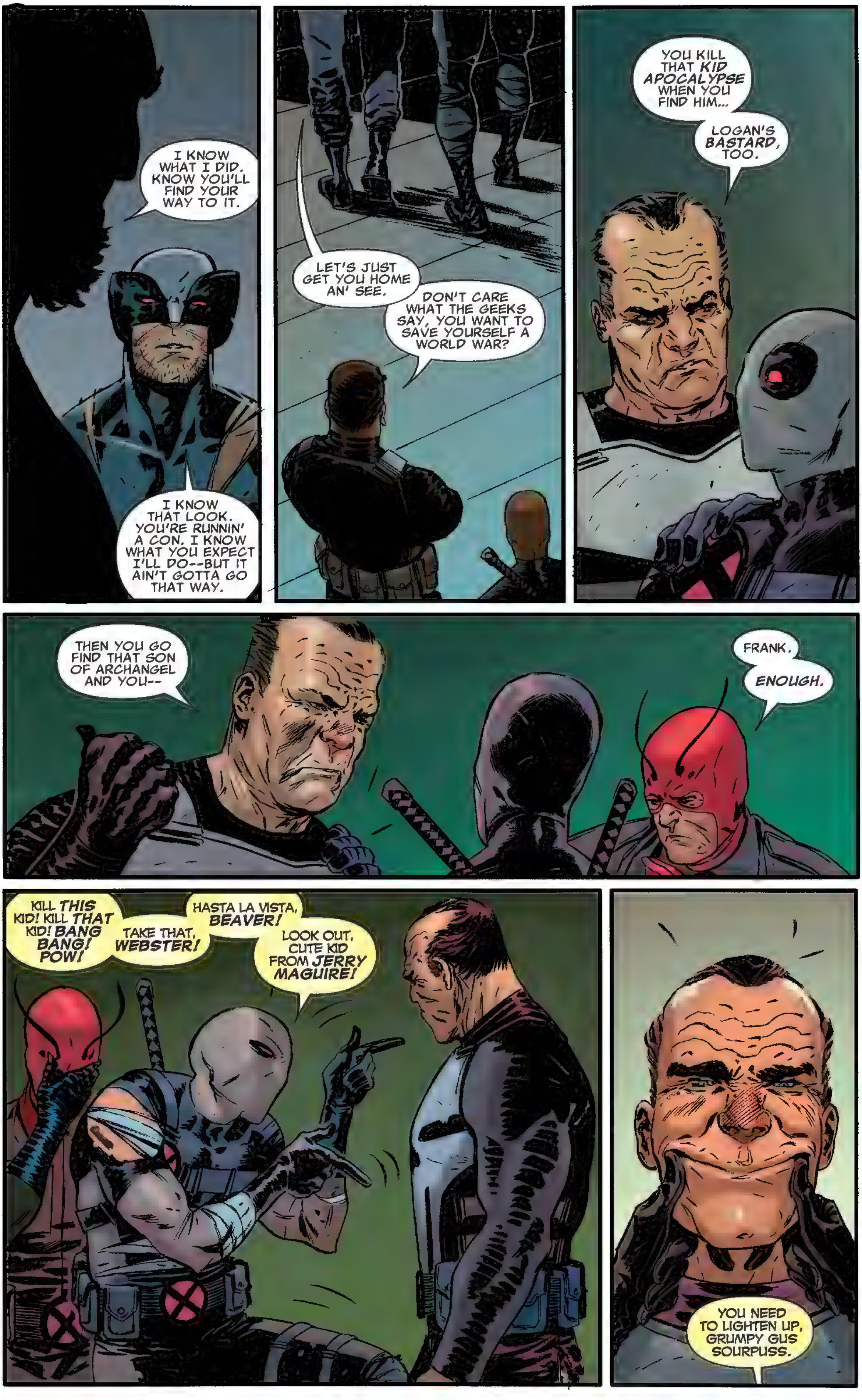

ELIZABETH?
DEAD AGAIN SO SOON?
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE, YOU KNOW.
THERE'S A WAY THESE THINGS ARE INTENDED TO GO.
I KNEW ONCE I LEFT THAT THINGS WOULD BE BAD FOR A TIME, BUT THIS...
SUICIDE?
I HAD NOTHING LEFT TO GIVE TO IT. ANY OF IT.
HAD TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM WHAT I'D BECOME.
YOU OF ALL PEOPLE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE QUIT.
I WON'T CARRY IT ANYMORE.
THERE'S NOTHING THERE FOR ME.
YOU COULDN'T BE MORE WRONG.
THEN I DON'T DESERVE IT.
THERE ARE EVILS DESERVING OF DESTRUCTION...

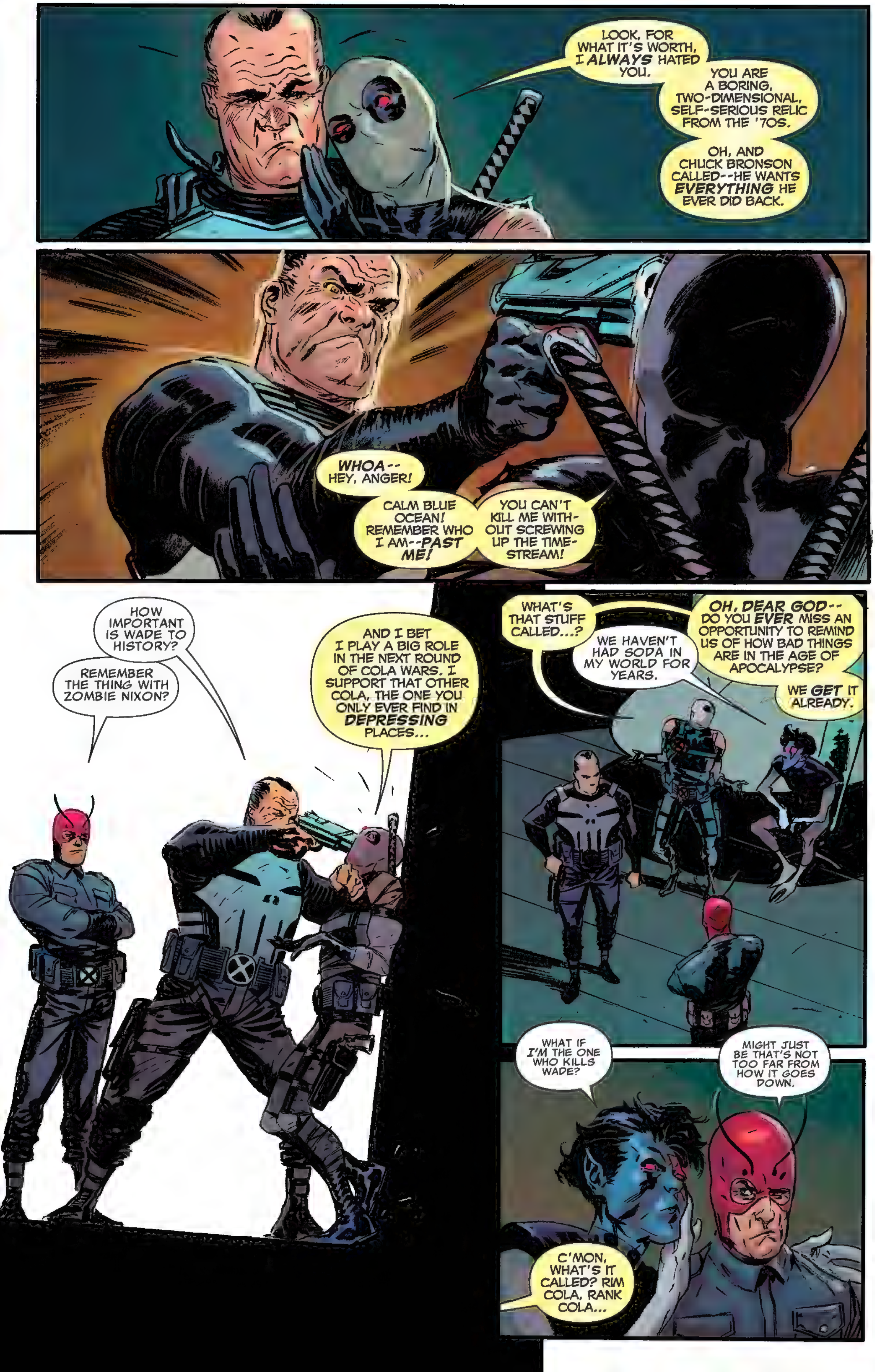

BUT NOT **YOU**, AND NOT **LOGAN.**
THERE ARE NEW LIVES AWAITING YOU BOTH. NEW LOVES.
WE HAVE BLOOD ON OUR HANDS.
HAD IT NEVER OCCURRED TO YOU THAT WHAT FANTOMEX DID MIGHT BE RIGHT?
THAT BOY APOCALYPSE...HE WAS INDOCTRINATED. GROWN IN ARTIFICIAL TIME, TRAINED TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD, TO KILL OFF MANKIND.
THE CHANCES OF CHANGING THAT? FIXING HIM?
THOUGH UGLY, FANTOMEX SAVED HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF LIVES.
AND... WHAT I DID TO YOU...
WAS DONE **YEARS** BEFORE WE MET.
YET, STILL, WHEN WE FELL IN LOVE, YOU TOOK ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CURSE.
NEVER A THOUGHT TO THE FUTURE PRICE YOU MIGHT ONE DAY PAY.
I WOULD'VE KILLED **EVERYONE** ON EARTH IF YOU HADN'T STOPPED ME.
YOU STUCK BY ME UNTIL IT WAS CLEAR THERE WAS **NOTHING** MORE TO BE DONE...
...AND THEN YOU SET ME **FREE.**
I CAN'T FEEL IT, CAN'T MOURN YOU...
LIFE IS HARD ENOUGH. WHY LONG FOR SORROW?
YOU'VE MET YOUR CHALLENGES WELL, YOUR BEAUTY AND INTEGRITY **UNDIMINISHED.**
I-I ONLY EVER WANTED TO HELP PROTECT MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY...
TO MAKE THE WORLD **BETTER.**
YOU HAVE AND YOU WILL.
FORGIVE YOURSELF.
FIND NEW LOVE.
ALLOW YOURSELF JOY.
ENJOY YOUR LIFE.
AND BE GLAD FOR EVERY DAY OF IT.
AND IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE...
...WE WILL ALL BE TOGETHER AGAIN.

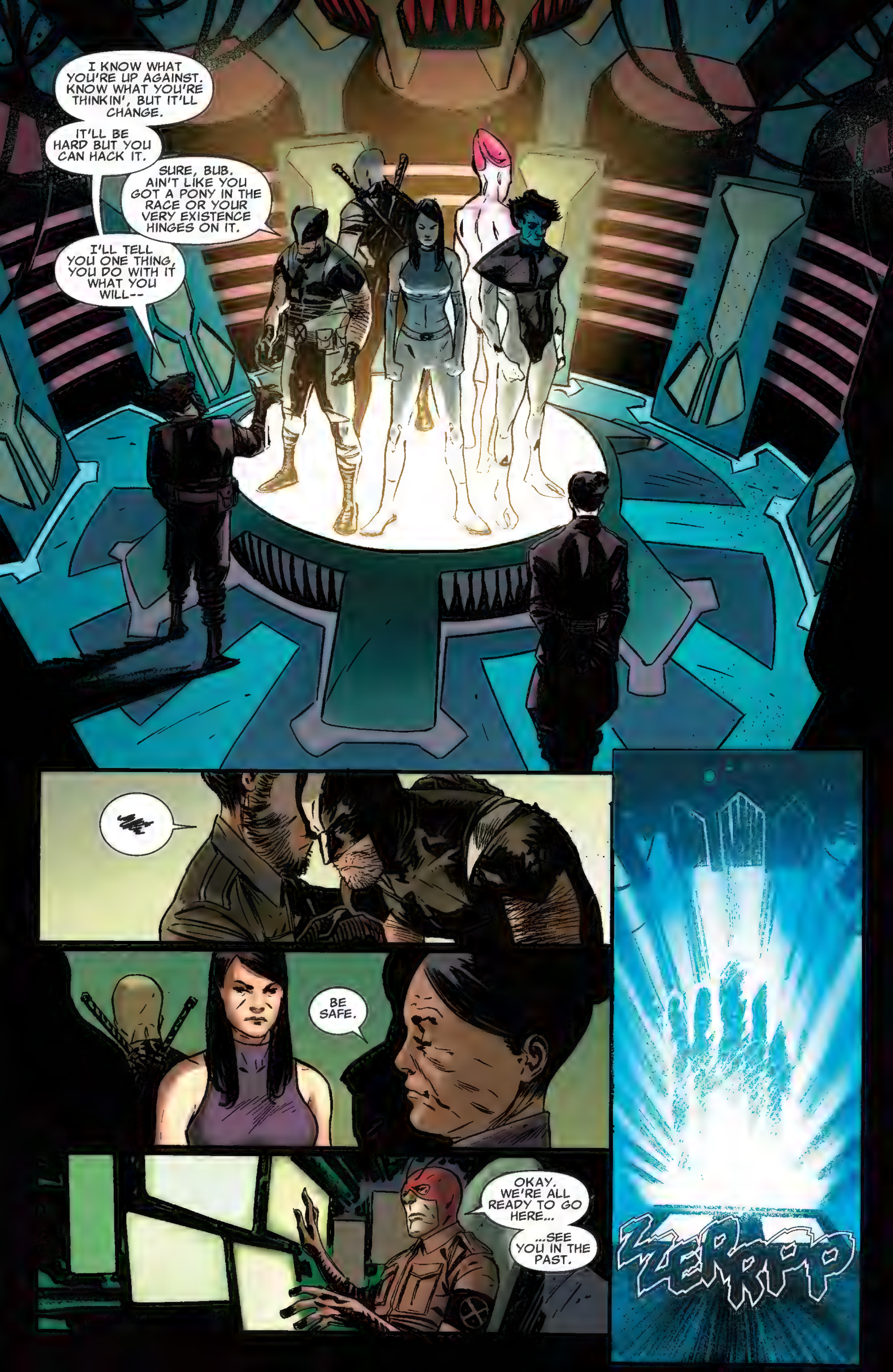

W-WARREN...
THERE, THERE...YOU'RE *FINE* NOW, LAMB.
EVERYTHING IS *FINE.*
YOU?!
I-IT WAS YOU? *IT WAS ALL YOU!*
HOW DARE YOU?!
WARREN, YOU USED HIM TO CHANGE MY MIND--TO KEEP ME ALIVE TO WALK DOWN YOUR TWISTED ROAD!
I DID NOTHING.
I DID NO SUCH THING.
BUT I SEE HIM IN MY DREAMS STILL AS WELL.
GREAT LOVES LEAVE A MARK ON THE SOUL.
WHAT COULD YOU KNOW ABOUT LOVE?!
MORE THAN YOU CAN KNOW, LAMB.
MUCH MORE. I KNOW WHERE YOUR TRUE LOVE LIES.

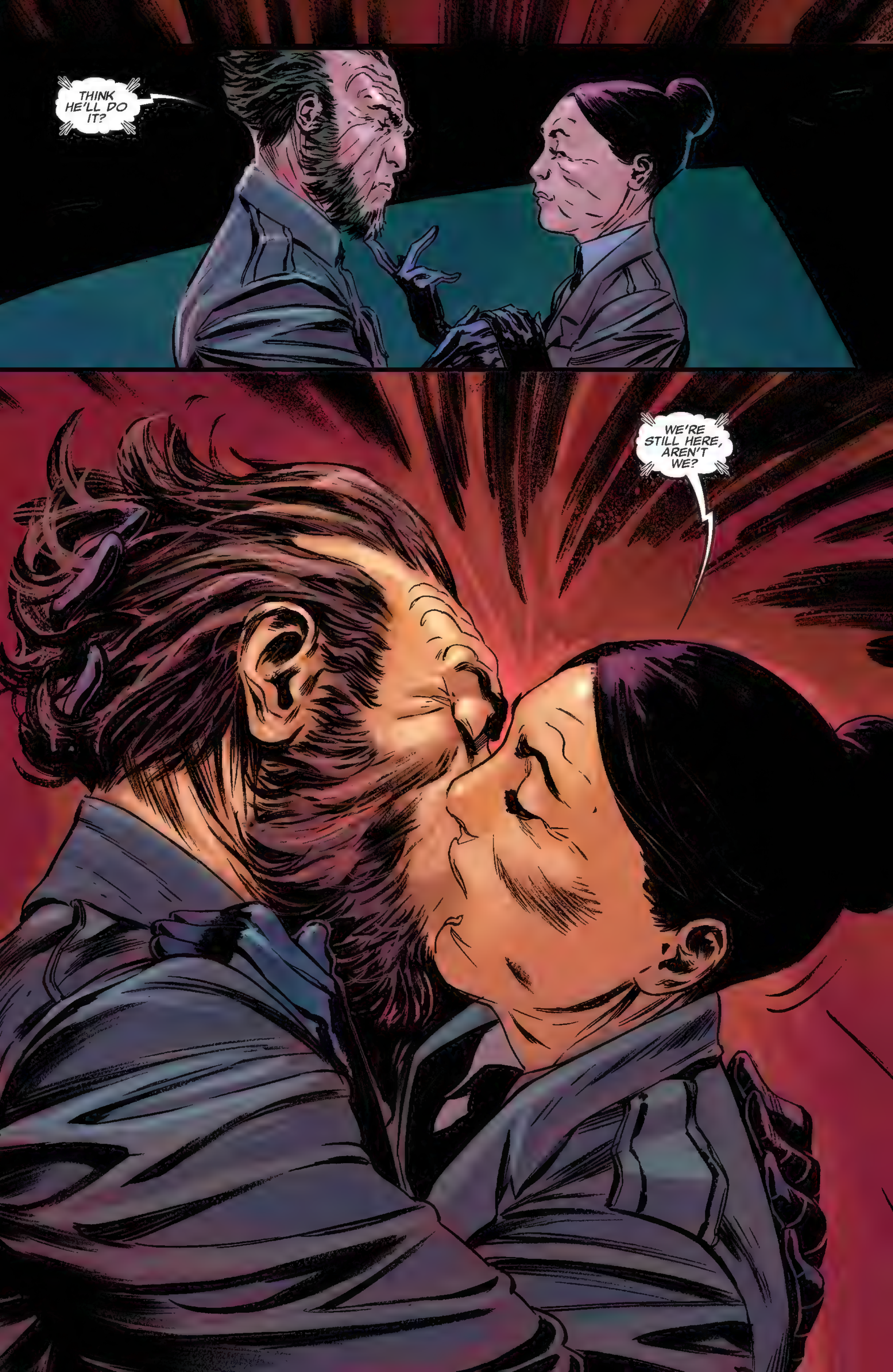

WHAT WE FELT FOR JEAN-PHILLIPE WAS TRUE.
BUT I KNOW HIS LOVE WOULD HAVE CORRUPTED US IN THE END.
I LOVED WARREN.
OF COURSE. OF COURSE WE DID.
BUT YOU AND I BOTH KNOW IT WASN'T THE SAME.
WHAT WE FELT FOR JEAN-PHILLIPE WAS CHEMICAL. YOU FELT IT IN YOUR CELLS.
I OFTEN WONDERED IF FATHER HAD FATED IT FOR SOME REASON.
BRIAN AND JAMIE HATED AND FEARED THE MAN SO...
REGARDLESS, IT'S AN INCONVENIENT THING WHEN YOU FEEL SO DEEPLY.
FORTUNATELY THE SKINLESS MAN STOLE HIS HEART AWAY FROM US.
HE DIED TO SAVE US!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALLOUS!
THE BENEFIT OF TIME AND DISTANCE.
YOU'LL GET OVER IT, BOTH OF THEM, AND FIND FULFILLMENT ELSEWHERE.


AND WHEN NO ONE ELSE CAN DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO PROTECT MANKIND-- ***YOU WILL.***
YOU WILL SAVE THE WORLD ***BECAUSE OF*** WHAT YOU'VE BECOME.
OVER THE YEARS YOU TRANSFORM INTO ME. STILL GOT MY FIGURE. NOT SO BAD.
YOU'RE A MASS MURDERER.
AND THE WORLD IS ***PERFECT*** BECAUSE OF IT.
MY DEAR LAMB, I ALREADY HAVE...
YOU'LL NEVER CONVINCE ME THIS IS THE SOLUTION TO THINGS.
"...OR WE WOULDN'T STILL BE HERE."
...WE JUST CAN'T TELL YOU. CAN'T RISK DINKIN' UP THE TIMESTREAM ANY MORE THAN WE HAVE.
THERE ARE TERRIBLE DANGERS IN THE SMALL PIECES YOU'VE ALREADY LEARNED.
WELL, I FOR ONE HAVEN'T LEARNED ***ANYTHING***, IF THAT HELPS ANY.


I KNOW WHAT I DID. KNOW YOU'LL FIND YOUR WAY TO IT.
I KNOW THAT LOOK. YOU'RE RUNNIN' A CON. I KNOW WHAT YOU EXPECT I'LL DO--BUT IT AIN'T GOTTA GO THAT WAY.
LET'S JUST GET YOU HOME AN' SEE.
DON'T CARE WHAT THE GEEKS SAY, YOU WANT TO SAVE YOURSELF A WORLD WAR?
YOU KILL THAT KID APOCALYPSE WHEN YOU FIND HIM...
LOGAN'S BASTARD, TOO.
THEN YOU GO FIND THAT SON OF ARCHANGEL AND YOU--
FRANK.
ENOUGH.
KILL THIS KID! KILL THAT KID! BANG BANG! POW!
TAKE THAT, WEBSTER!
HASTA LA VISTA, BEAVER!
LOOK OUT, CUTE KID FROM JERRY MAGUIRE!
YOU NEED TO LIGHTEN UP, GRUMPY GUS SOURPUSS.

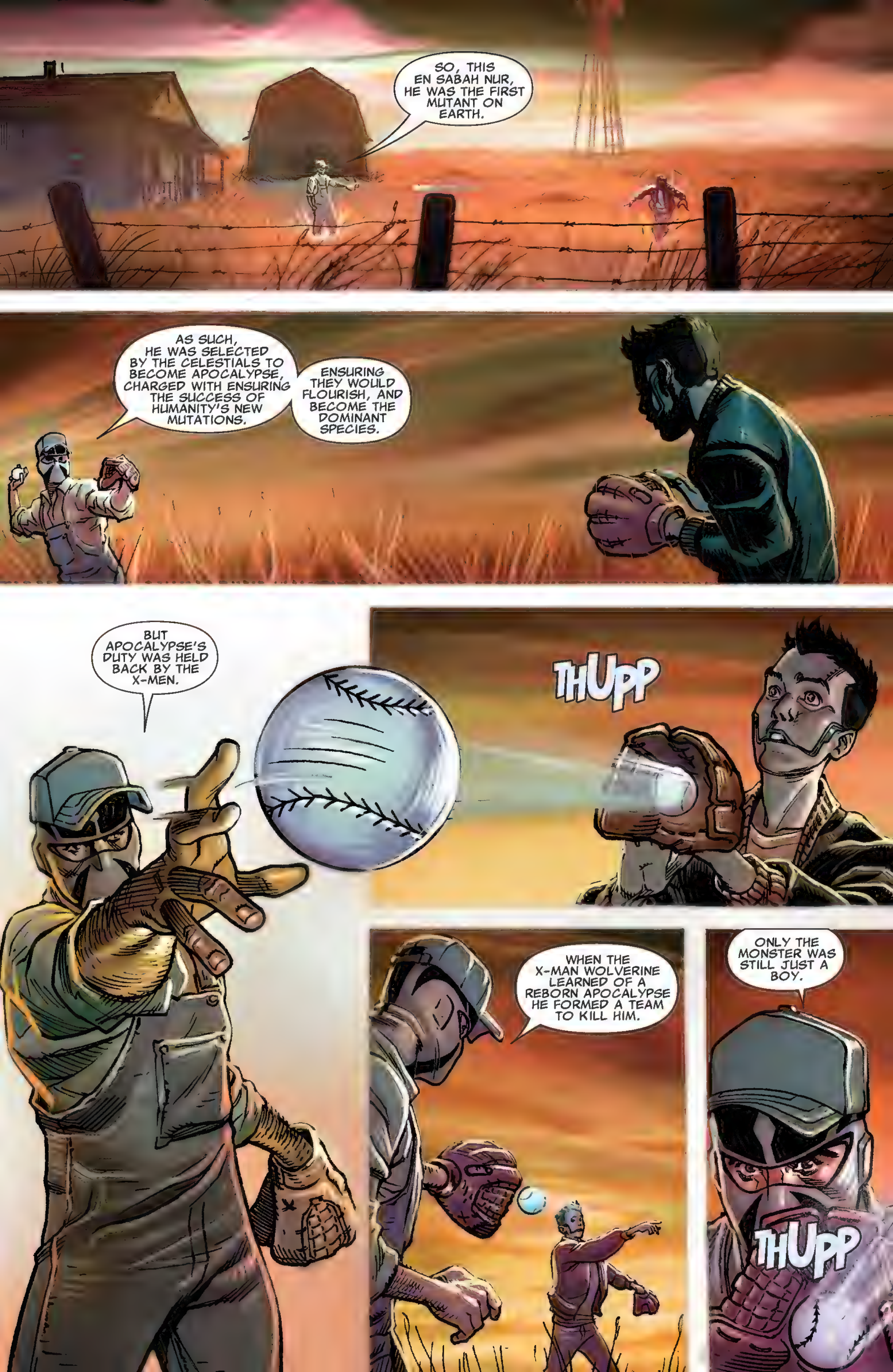

LOOK, FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I *ALWAYS* HATED YOU.
YOU ARE A BORING, TWO-DIMENSIONAL, SELF-SERIOUS RELIC FROM THE '70S.
OH, AND CHUCK BRONSON CALLED--HE WANTS *EVERYTHING* HE EVER DID BACK.
WHOA-- HEY, ANGER!
CALM BLUE OCEAN! REMEMBER WHO I AM--*PAST ME!*
YOU CAN'T KILL ME WITHOUT SCREWING UP THE TIME-STREAM!
HOW IMPORTANT IS WADE TO HISTORY?
REMEMBER THE THING WITH ZOMBIE NIXON?
AND I BET I PLAY A BIG ROLE IN THE NEXT ROUND OF COLA WARS. I SUPPORT THAT OTHER COLA, THE ONE YOU ONLY EVER FIND IN *DEPRESSING* PLACES...
WHAT'S THAT STUFF CALLED...?
WE HAVEN'T HAD SODA IN MY WORLD FOR YEARS.
OH, DEAR GOD-- DO YOU *EVER* MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND US OF HOW BAD THINGS ARE IN THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE?
WE *GET* IT ALREADY.
WHAT IF *I'M* THE ONE WHO KILLS WADE?
MIGHT JUST BE THAT'S NOT TOO FAR FROM HOW IT GOES DOWN.
C'MON, WHAT'S IT CALLED? RIM COLA, RANK COLA...

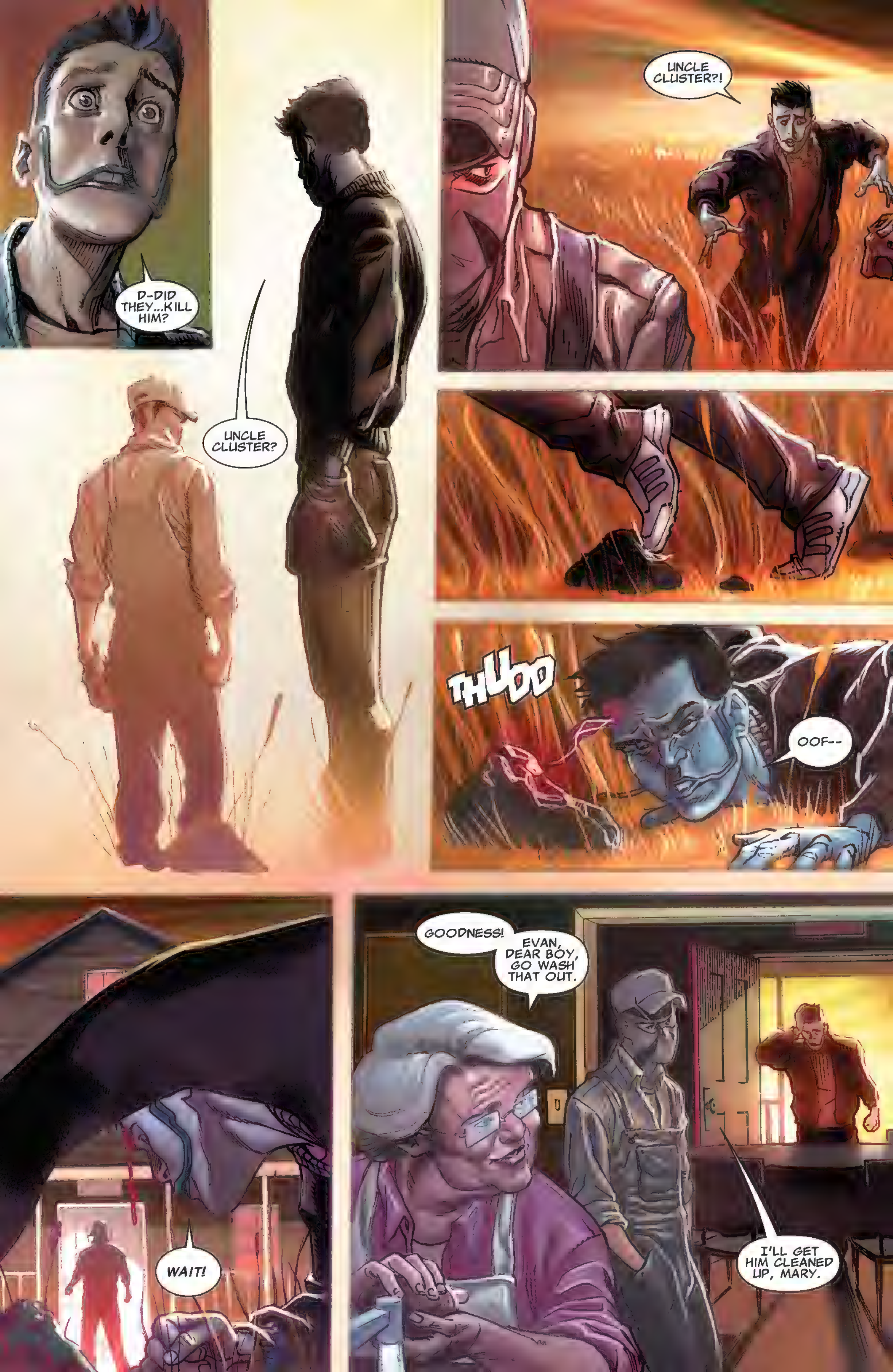

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST. KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKIN', BUT IT'LL CHANGE.
IT'LL BE HARD BUT YOU CAN HACK IT.
SURE, BUB. AIN'T LIKE YOU GOT A PONY IN THE RACE OR YOUR VERY EXISTENCE HINGES ON IT.
I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING, YOU DO WITH IT WHAT YOU WILL--
BE SAFE.
OKAY. WE'RE ALL READY TO GO HERE...
...SEE YOU IN THE PAST.
ZZERRPP

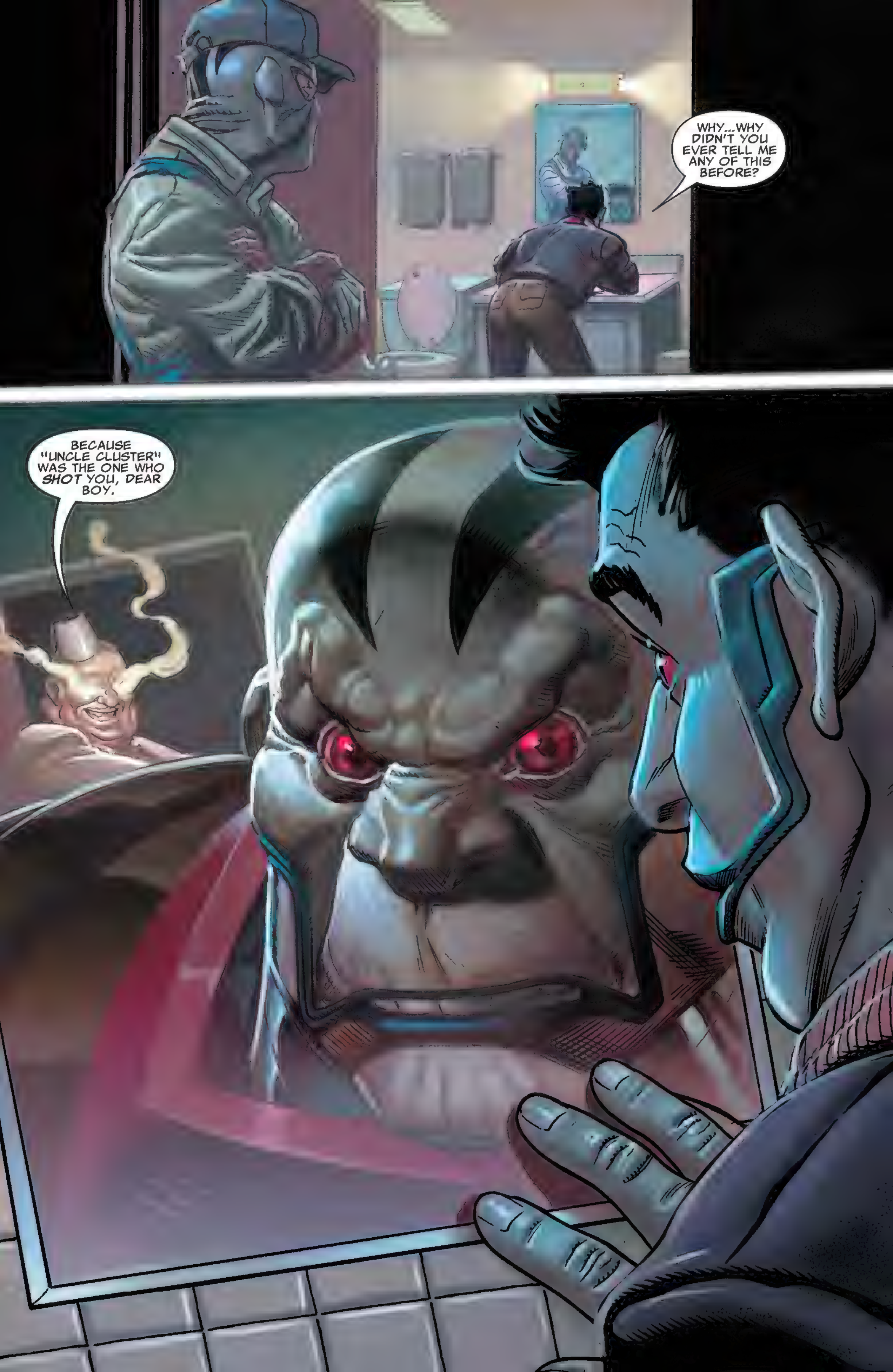

THINK HE'LL DO IT?
WE'RE STILL HERE, AREN'T WE?

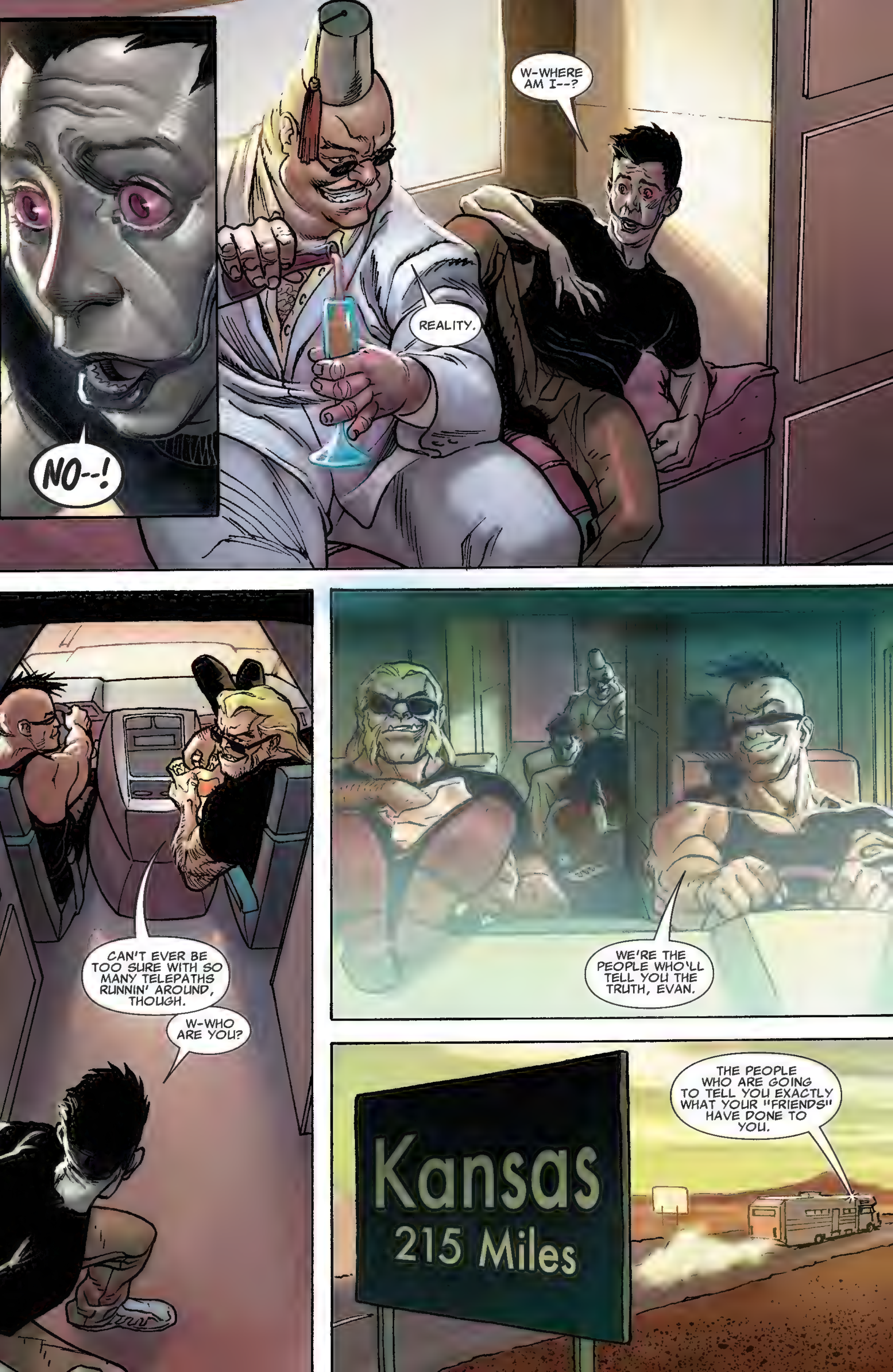
30 FINAL EXECUTION

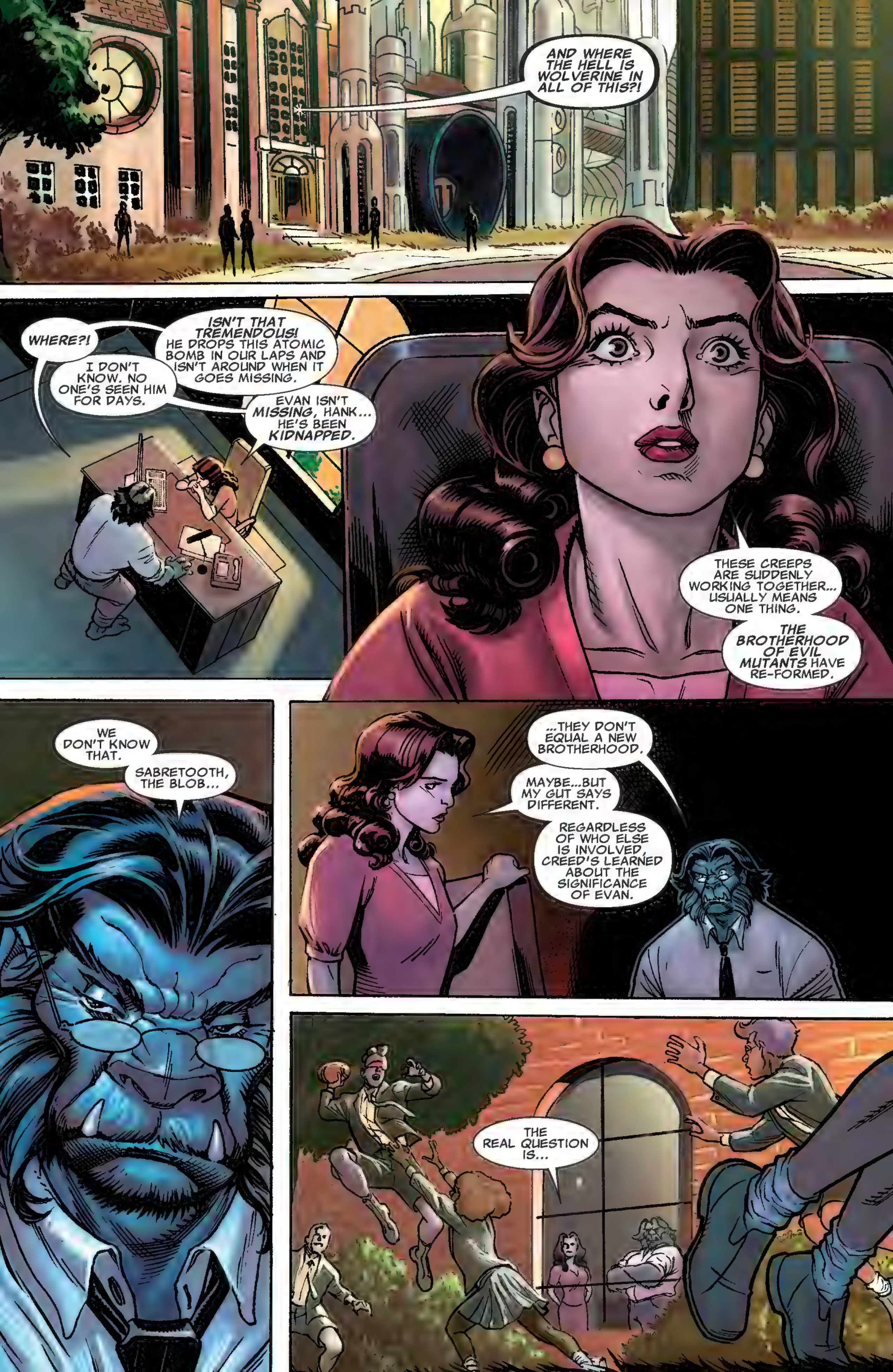
CHAPTER 6: WHILE YOU WERE AWAY

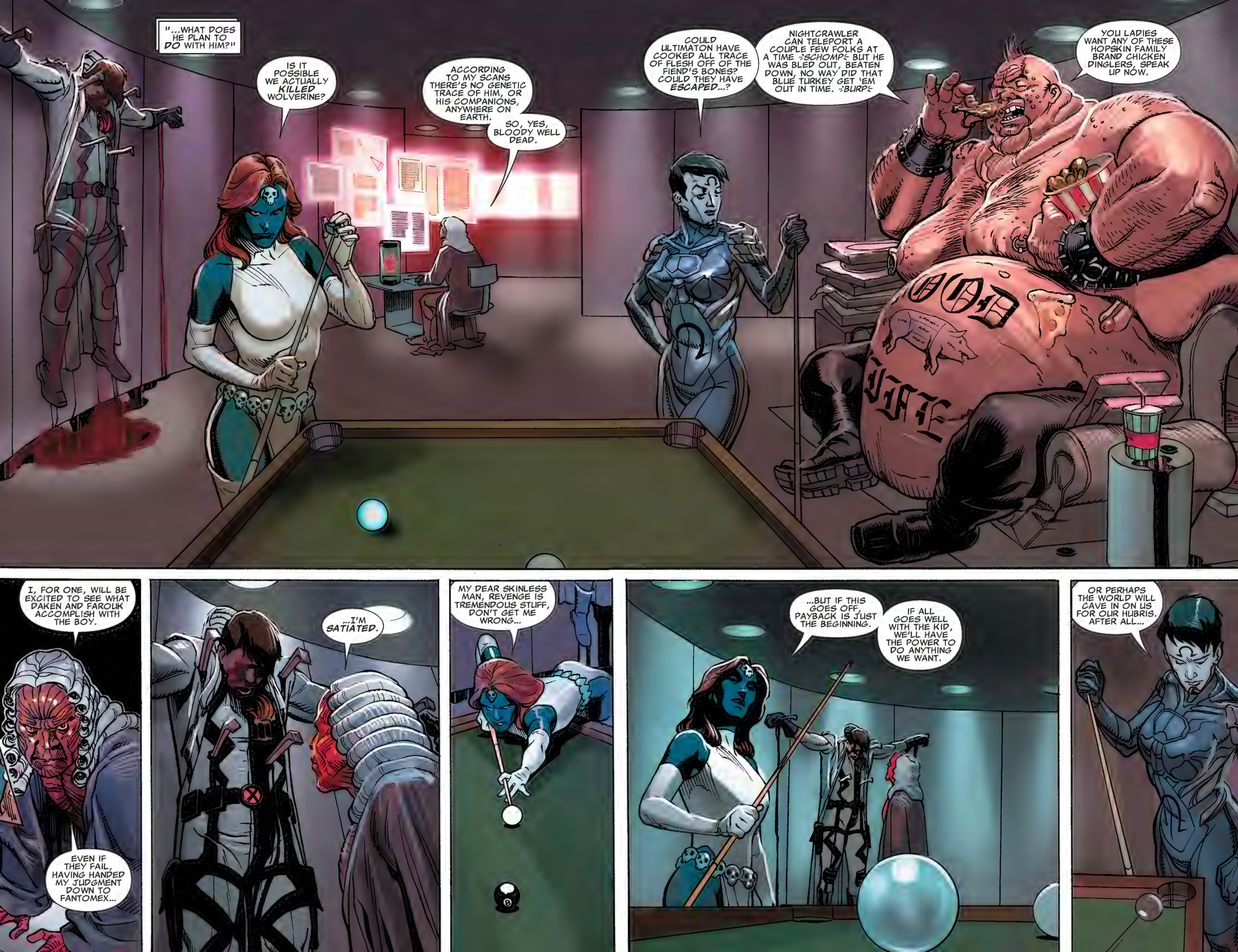

SO, THIS EN SABAH NUR, HE WAS THE FIRST MUTANT ON EARTH.
AS SUCH, HE WAS SELECTED BY THE CELESTIALS TO BECOME APOCALYPSE, CHARGED WITH ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF HUMANITY'S NEW MUTATIONS.
ENSURING THEY WOULD FLOURISH, AND BECOME THE DOMINANT SPECIES.
BUT APOCALYPSE'S DUTY WAS HELD BACK BY THE X-MEN.
THUPP
WHEN THE X-MAN WOLVERINE LEARNED OF A REBORN APOCALYPSE HE FORMED A TEAM TO KILL HIM.
ONLY THE MONSTER WAS STILL JUST A BOY.
THUPP

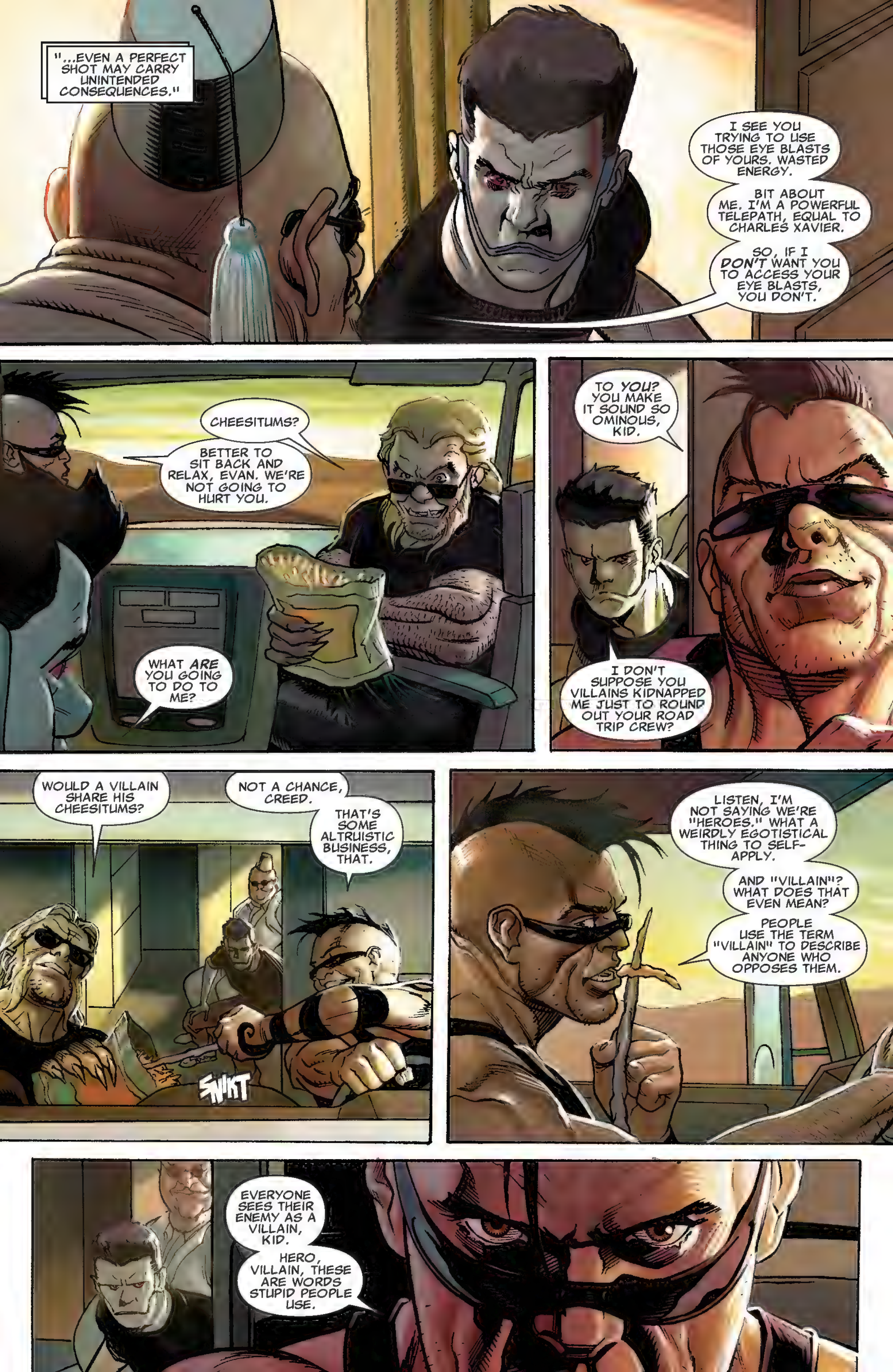

D-DID THEY...KILL HIM?
UNCLE CLUSTER?
UNCLE CLUSTER?!
THUDD
OOF--
WAIT!
GOODNESS!
EVAN, DEAR BOY, GO WASH THAT OUT.
I'LL GET HIM CLEANED UP, MARY.

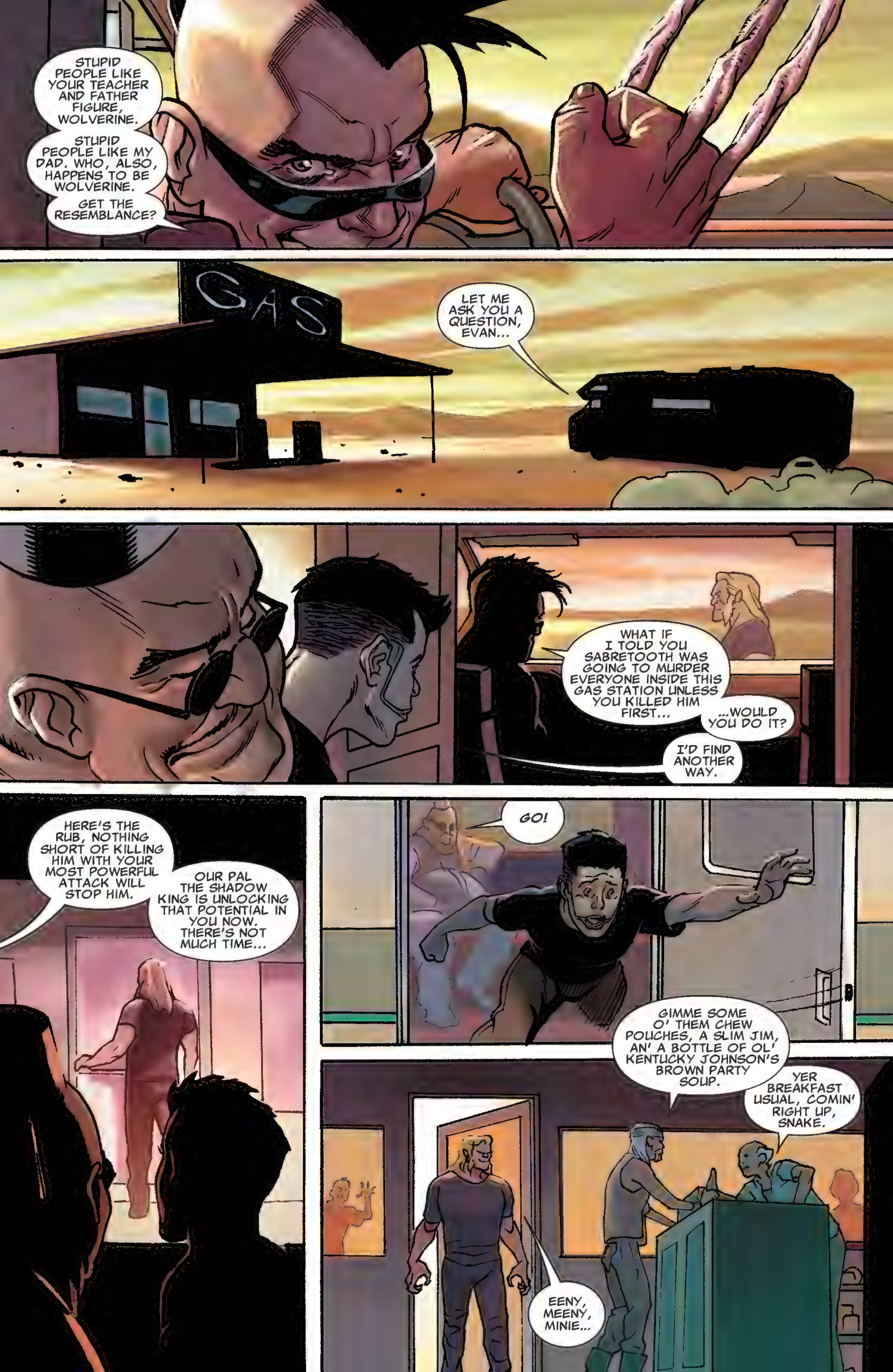

WHY...WHY DIDN'T YOU EVER TELL ME ANY OF THIS BEFORE?
BECAUSE "UNCLE CLUSTER" WAS THE ONE WHO *SHOT* YOU, DEAR BOY.

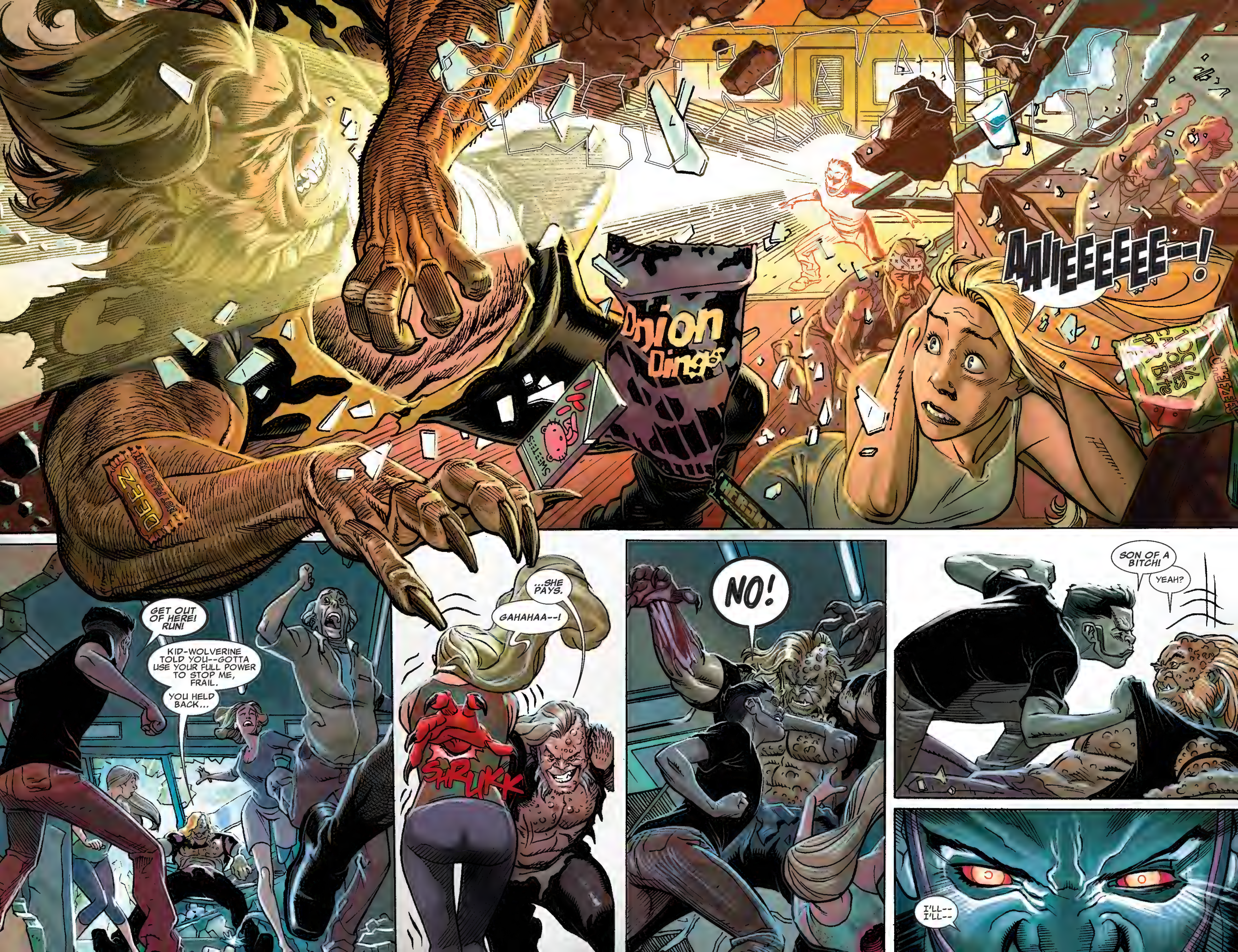

NO--!
W-WHERE AM I--?
REALITY.
CAN'T EVER BE TOO SURE WITH SO MANY TELEPATHS RUNNIN' AROUND, THOUGH.
W-WHO ARE YOU?
WE'RE THE PEOPLE WHO'LL TELL YOU THE TRUTH, EVAN.
Kansas
215 Miles
THE PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING TO TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT YOUR "FRIENDS" HAVE DONE TO YOU.

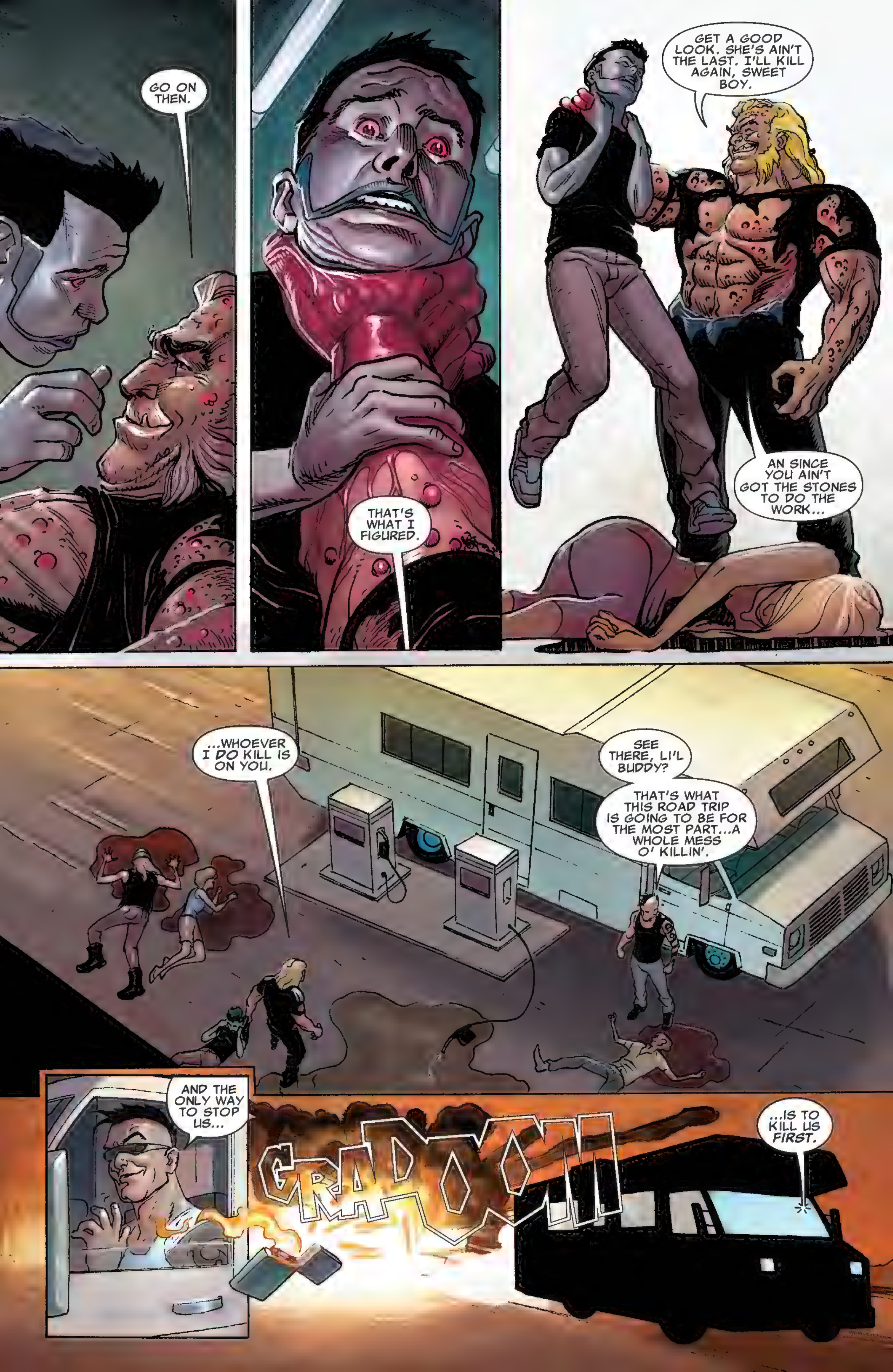

AND WHERE THE HELL IS WOLVERINE IN ALL OF THIS?!
WHERE?!
ISN'T THAT TREMENDOUS! HE DROPS THIS ATOMIC BOMB IN OUR LAPS AND ISN'T AROUND WHEN IT GOES MISSING.
I DON'T KNOW. NO ONE'S SEEN HIM FOR DAYS.
EVAN ISN'T MISSING, HANK... HE'S BEEN KIDNAPPED.
THESE CREEPS ARE SUDDENLY WORKING TOGETHER... USUALLY MEANS ONE THING.
THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS HAVE RE-FORMED.
WE DON'T KNOW THAT.
SABRETOOTH, THE BLOB...
...THEY DON'T EQUAL A NEW BROTHERHOOD.
MAYBE...BUT MY GUT SAYS DIFFERENT.
REGARDLESS OF WHO ELSE IS INVOLVED, CREED'S LEARNED ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EVAN.
THE REAL QUESTION IS...

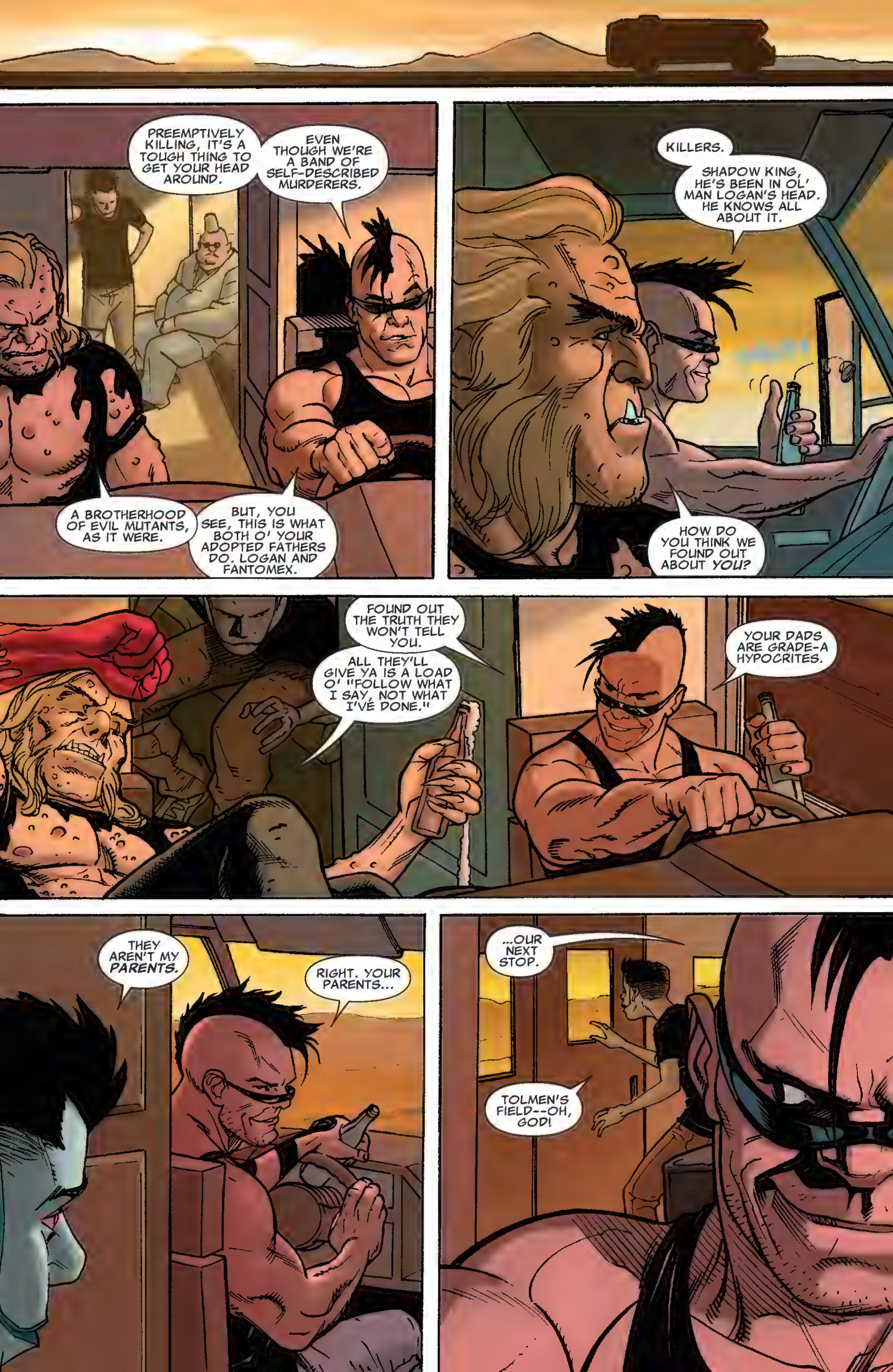

"...WHAT DOES HE PLAN TO *DO* WITH HIM?"
IS IT POSSIBLE WE ACTUALLY *KILLED* WOLVERINE?
ACCORDING TO MY SCANS THERE'S NO GENETIC TRACE OF HIM, OR HIS COMPANIONS, ANYWHERE ON EARTH.
SO, YES, BLOODY WELL DEAD.
COULD ULTIMATON HAVE COOKED ALL TRACE OF FLESH OFF OF THE FIEND'S BONES? COULD THEY HAVE *ESCAPED*...?
NIGHTCRAWLER CAN TELEPORT A COUPLE FEW FOLKS AT A TIME *SCHOMP* BUT HE WAS BLED OUT, BEATEN DOWN, NO WAY DID THAT BLUE TURKEY GET 'EM OUT IN TIME. *BURP*
YOU LADIES WANT ANY OF THESE HOPSKIN FAMILY BRAND CHICKEN DINGLERS, SPEAK UP NOW.
I, FOR ONE, WILL BE EXCITED TO SEE WHAT DAKEN AND FAROUK ACCOMPLISH WITH THE BOY.
EVEN IF THEY FAIL, HAVING HANDED MY JUDGMENT DOWN TO FANTOMEX...
...I'M *SATIATED*.
MY DEAR SKINLESS MAN, REVENGE IS TREMENDOUS STUFF, DON'T GET ME WRONG...
...BUT IF THIS GOES OFF, PAYBACK IS JUST THE BEGINNING.
IF ALL GOES WELL WITH THE KID, WE'LL HAVE THE POWER TO DO ANYTHING WE WANT.
OR PERHAPS THE WORLD WILL CAVE IN ON US FOR OUR HUBRIS. AFTER ALL...

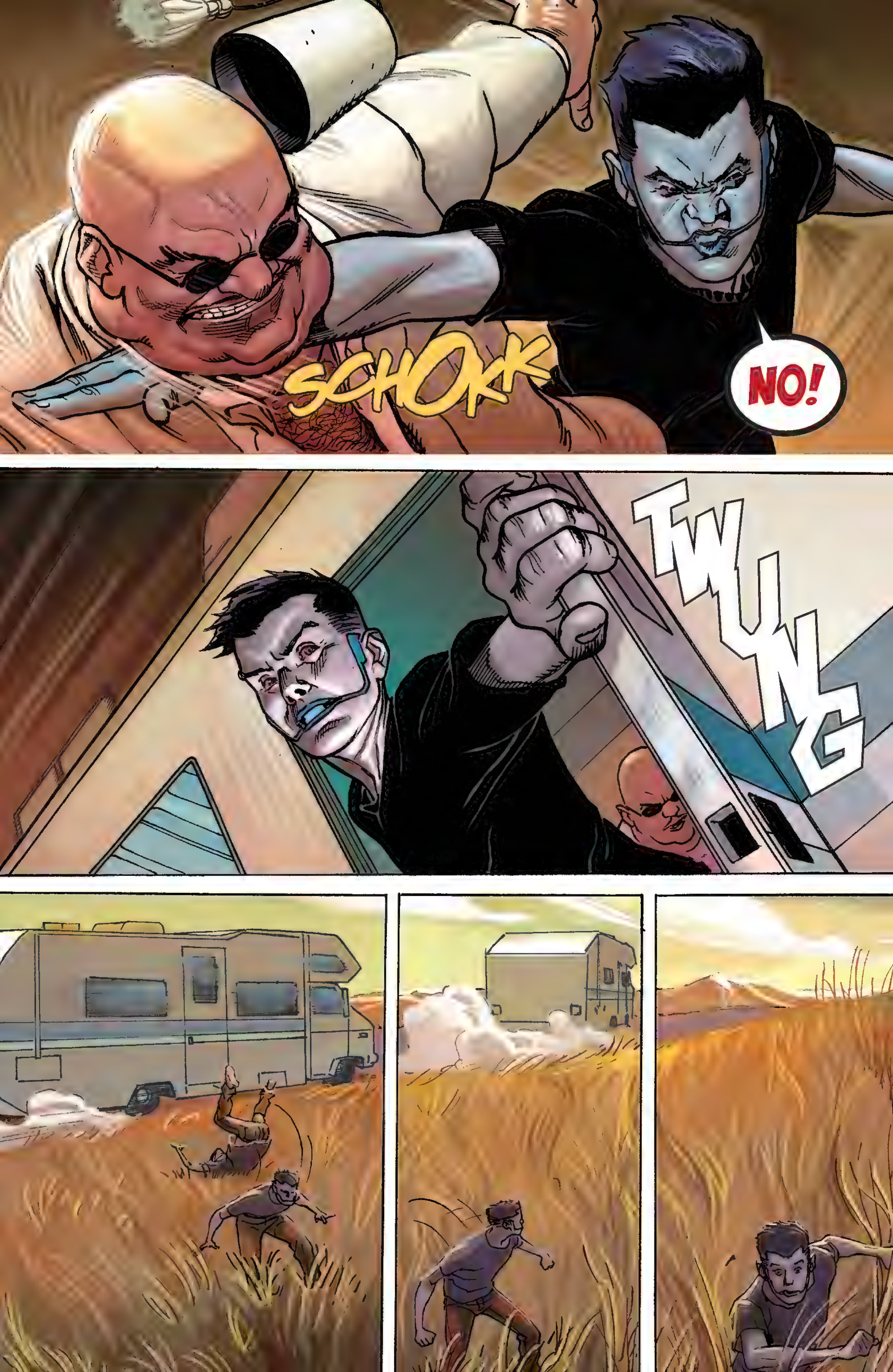

"...EVEN A PERFECT SHOT MAY CARRY UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES."
I SEE YOU TRYING TO USE THOSE EYE BLASTS OF YOURS. WASTED ENERGY.
BIT ABOUT ME. I'M A POWERFUL TELEPATH, EQUAL TO CHARLES XAVIER.
SO, IF I *DON'T* WANT YOU TO ACCESS YOUR EYE BLASTS, YOU DON'T.
CHEESITUMS?
BETTER TO SIT BACK AND RELAX, EVAN. WE'RE NOT GOING TO HURT YOU.
WHAT *ARE* YOU GOING TO DO TO ME?
TO *YOU?* YOU MAKE IT SOUND SO OMINOUS, KID.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU VILLAINS KIDNAPPED ME JUST TO ROUND OUT YOUR ROAD TRIP CREW?
WOULD A VILLAIN SHARE HIS CHEESITUMS?
NOT A CHANCE, CREED.
THAT'S SOME ALTRUISTIC BUSINESS, THAT.
SNIKT
LISTEN, I'M NOT SAYING WE'RE "HEROES." WHAT A WEIRDLY EGOTISTICAL THING TO SELF-APPLY.
AND "VILLAIN"? WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?
PEOPLE USE THE TERM "VILLAIN" TO DESCRIBE ANYONE WHO OPPOSES THEM.
EVERYONE SEES THEIR ENEMY AS A VILLAIN, KID.
HERO, VILLAIN, THESE ARE WORDS STUPID PEOPLE USE.

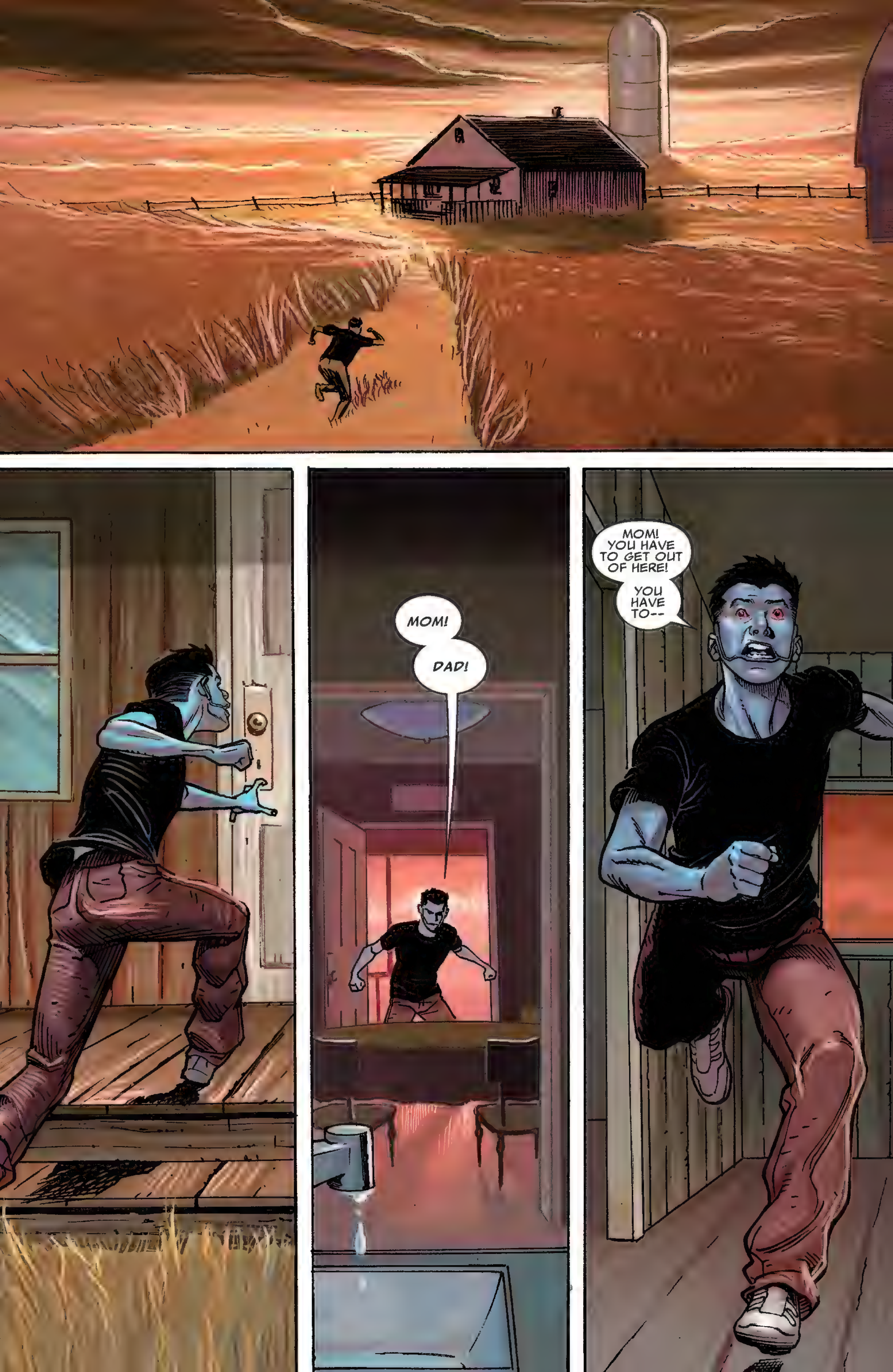

STUPID PEOPLE LIKE YOUR TEACHER AND FATHER FIGURE, WOLVERINE.
STUPID PEOPLE LIKE MY DAD. WHO, ALSO, HAPPENS TO BE WOLVERINE.
GET THE RESEMBLANCE?
GAS
LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION, EVAN...
WHAT IF I TOLD YOU SABRETOOTH WAS GOING TO MURDER EVERYONE INSIDE THIS GAS STATION UNLESS YOU KILLED HIM FIRST...
...WOULD YOU DO IT?
I'D FIND ANOTHER WAY.
HERE'S THE RUB, NOTHING SHORT OF KILLING HIM WITH YOUR MOST POWERFUL ATTACK WILL STOP HIM.
OUR PAL THE SHADOW KING IS UNLOCKING THAT POTENTIAL IN YOU NOW. THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME...
GO!
GIMME SOME O' THEM CHEW POUCHES, A SLIM JIM, AN' A BOTTLE OF OL' KENTUCKY JOHNSON'S BROWN PARTY SOUP.
YER BREAKFAST USUAL, COMIN' RIGHT UP, SNAKE.
EENY, MEENY, MINIE...

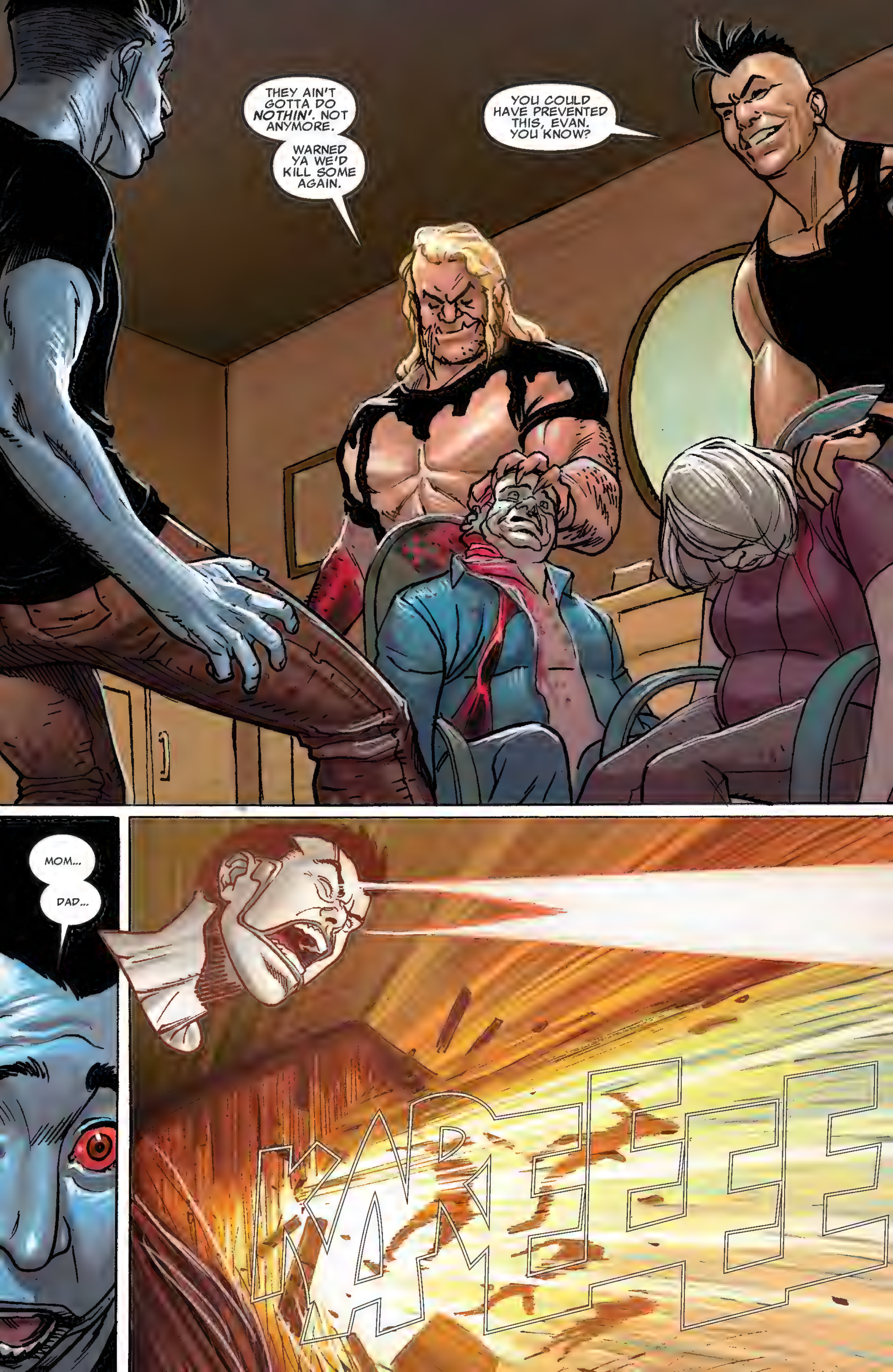

AAIIEEEEEE--!
Onion Dingers
SWEETIES
GET OUT OF HERE! RUN!
KID-WOLVERINE TOLD YOU--GOTTA USE YOUR FULL POWER TO STOP ME, FRAIL.
YOU HELD BACK...
...SHE PAYS.
GAHAHAA--!
SHRUKK
NO!
SON OF A BITCH!
YEAH?
I'LL-- I'LL--

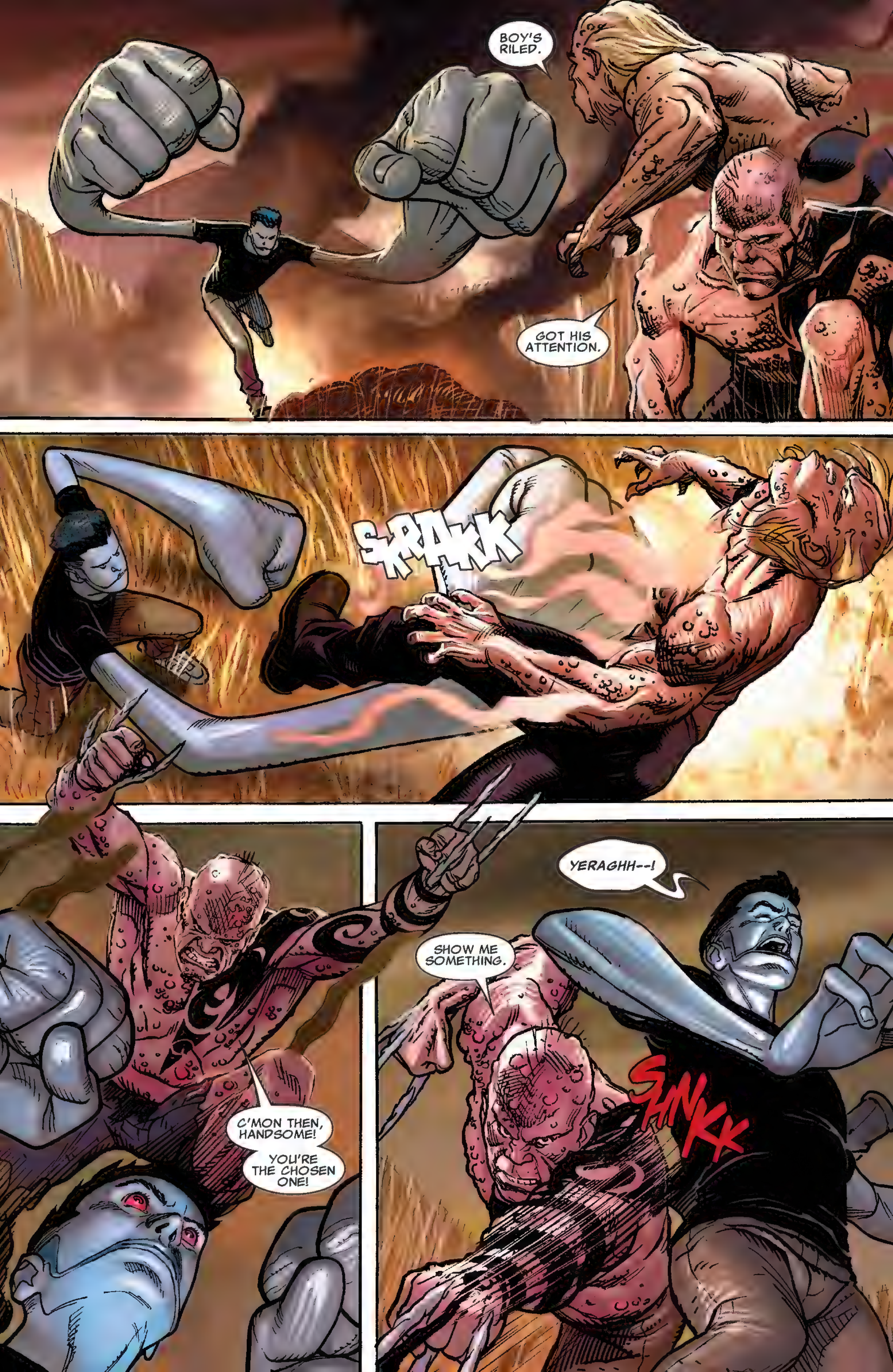

GO ON THEN.
THAT'S WHAT I FIGURED.
GET A GOOD LOOK. SHE'S AIN'T THE LAST. I'LL KILL AGAIN, SWEET BOY.
AN SINCE YOU AIN'T GOT THE STONES TO DO THE WORK...
...WHOEVER I *DO* KILL IS ON YOU.
SEE THERE, LI'L BUDDY?
THAT'S WHAT THIS ROAD TRIP IS GOING TO BE FOR THE MOST PART...A WHOLE MESS O' KILLIN'.
AND THE ONLY WAY TO STOP US...
GRADOOM
...IS TO KILL US *FIRST*.

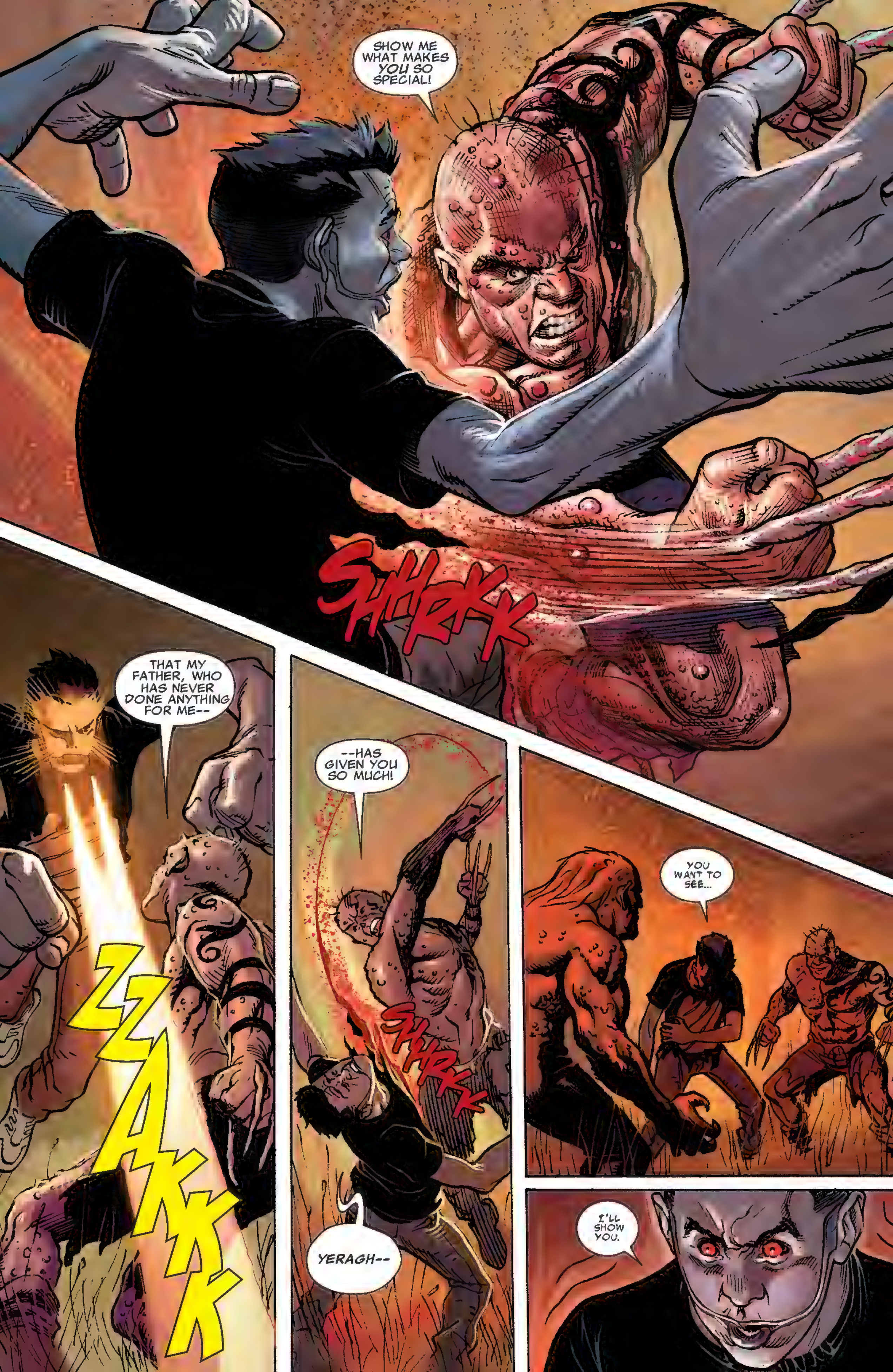

PREEMPTIVELY KILLING, IT'S A TOUGH THING TO GET YOUR HEAD AROUND.
EVEN THOUGH WE'RE A BAND OF SELF-DESCRIBED MURDERERS.
A BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS, AS IT WERE.
BUT, YOU SEE, THIS IS WHAT BOTH O' YOUR ADOPTED FATHERS DO. LOGAN AND FANTOMEX.
KILLERS.
SHADOW KING, HE'S BEEN IN OL' MAN LOGAN'S HEAD. HE KNOWS ALL ABOUT IT.
HOW DO YOU THINK WE FOUND OUT ABOUT *YOU?*
FOUND OUT THE TRUTH THEY WON'T TELL YOU.
ALL THEY'LL GIVE YA IS A LOAD O' "FOLLOW WHAT I SAY, NOT WHAT I'VE DONE."
YOUR DADS ARE GRADE-A HYPOCRITES.
THEY AREN'T MY *PARENTS.*
RIGHT. YOUR PARENTS...
...OUR NEXT STOP.
TOLMEN'S FIELD--OH, GOD!

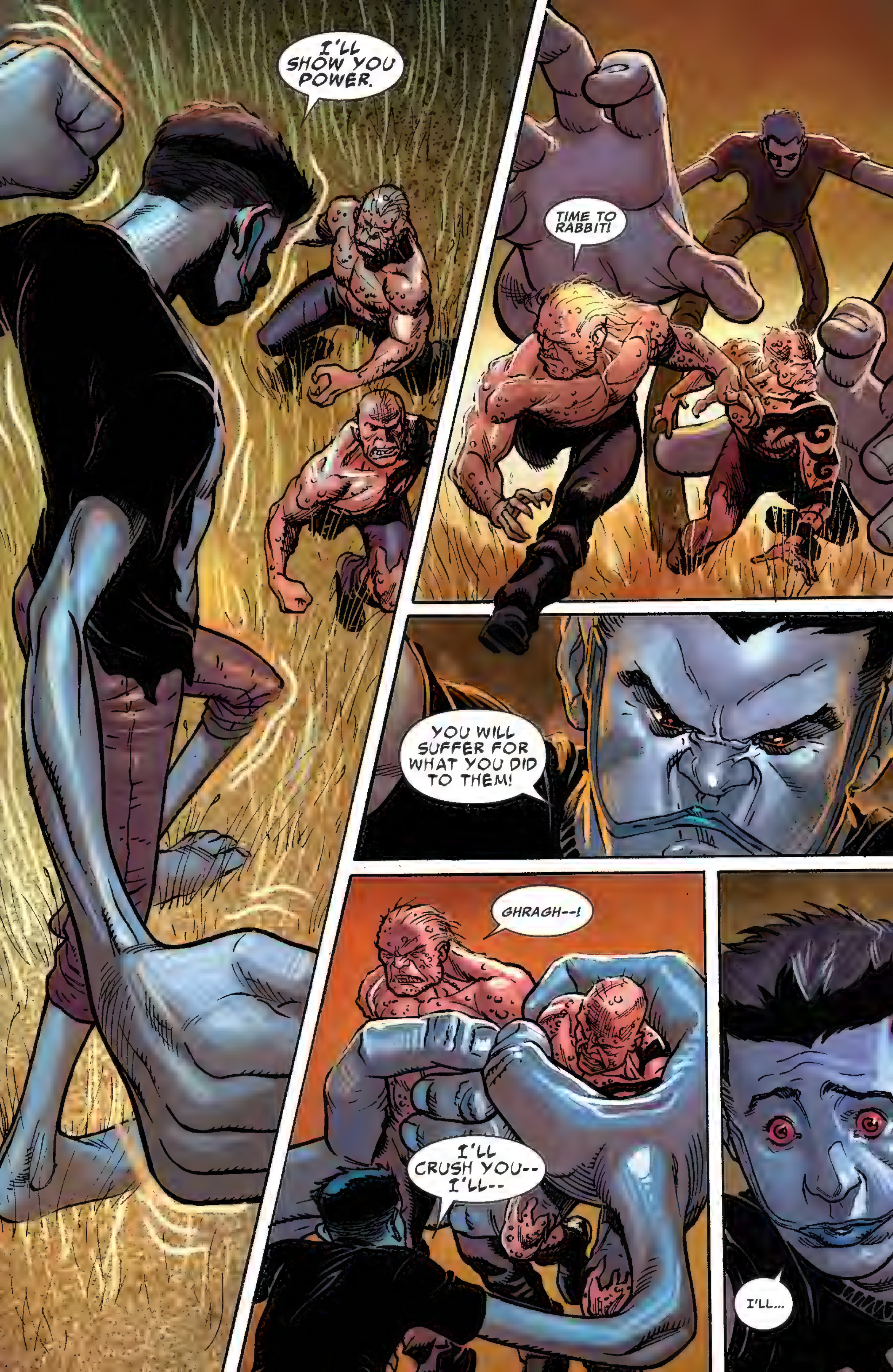

SCHOKK
NO!
TWUNG

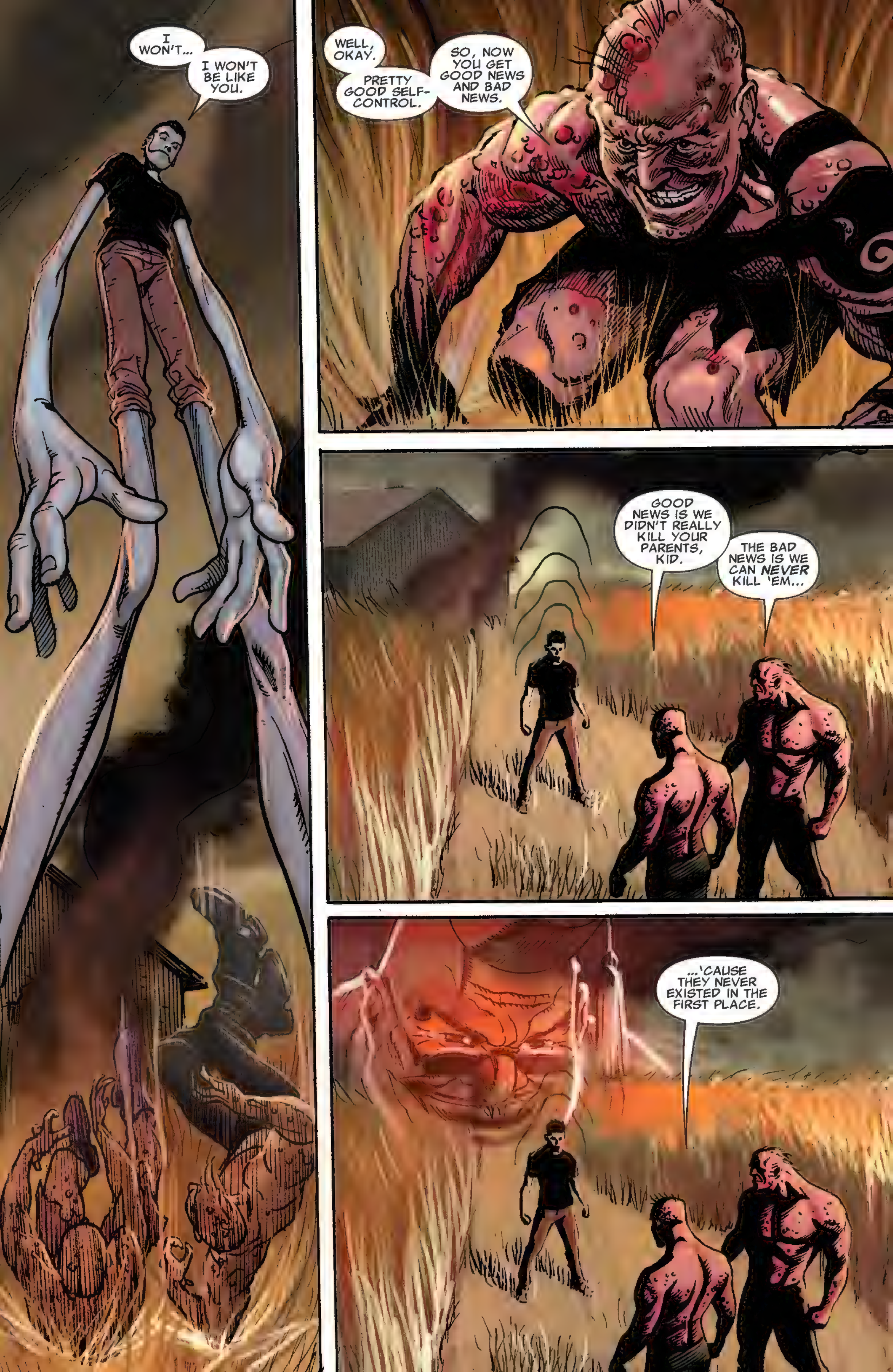

MOM!
DAD!
MOM! YOU HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!
YOU HAVE TO--


THEY AIN'T GOTTA DO *NOTHIN'*. NOT ANYMORE.
WARNED YA WE'D KILL SOME AGAIN.
YOU COULD HAVE PREVENTED THIS, EVAN. YOU KNOW?
MOM...
DAD...
KAREEEEE


BOY'S RILED.
GOT HIS ATTENTION.
SKRAKK
C'MON THEN, HANDSOME!
YOU'RE THE CHOSEN ONE!
SHOW ME SOMETHING.
YERAGHH--!
SNIKK


SHOW ME WHAT MAKES YOU SO SPECIAL!
SHHRKK
THAT MY FATHER, WHO HAS NEVER DONE ANYTHING FOR ME--
ZZAKKK
--HAS GIVEN YOU SO MUCH!
SHHRKK
YERAGH--
YOU WANT TO SEE...
I'LL SHOW YOU.

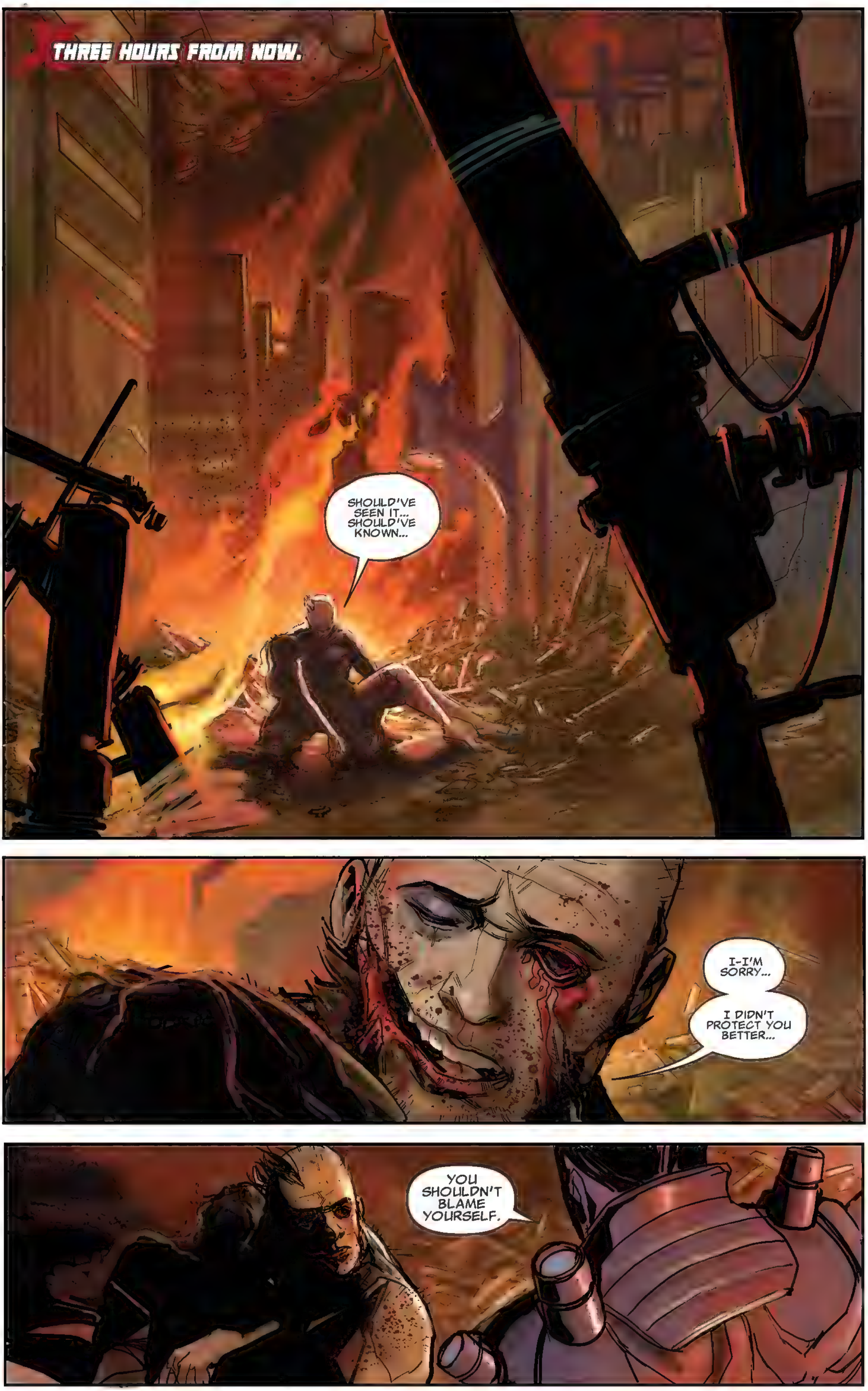

I'LL SHOW YOU POWER.
TIME TO RABBIT!
YOU WILL SUFFER FOR WHAT YOU DID TO THEM!
GHRAGH--!
I'LL CRUSH YOU-- I'LL--
I'LL...

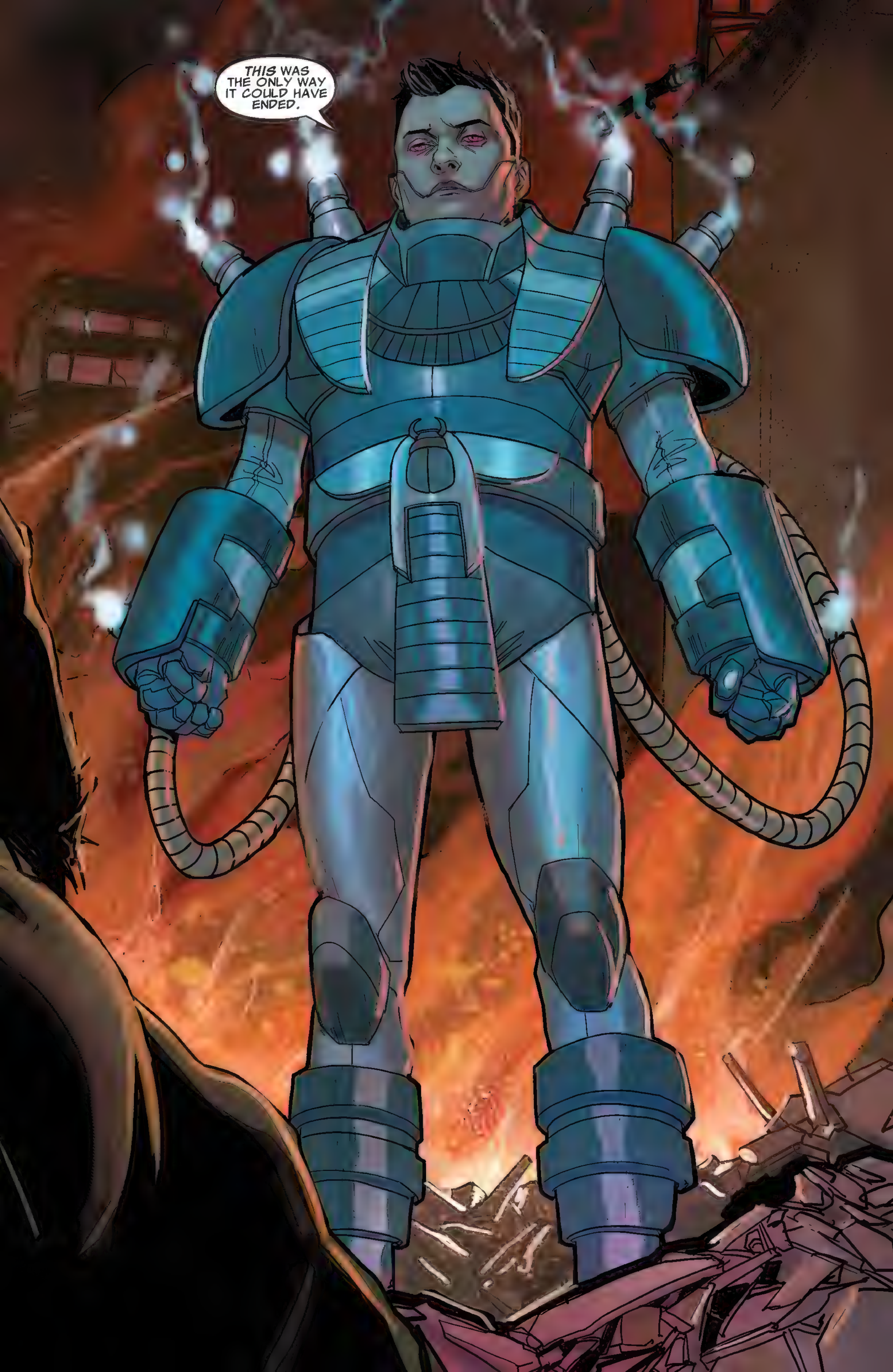

I WON'T...
I WON'T BE LIKE YOU.
WELL, OKAY.
PRETTY GOOD SELF-CONTROL.
SO, NOW YOU GET GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS.
GOOD NEWS IS WE DIDN'T REALLY KILL YOUR PARENTS, KID.
THE BAD NEWS IS WE CAN **NEVER** KILL 'EM...
...'CAUSE THEY NEVER EXISTED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

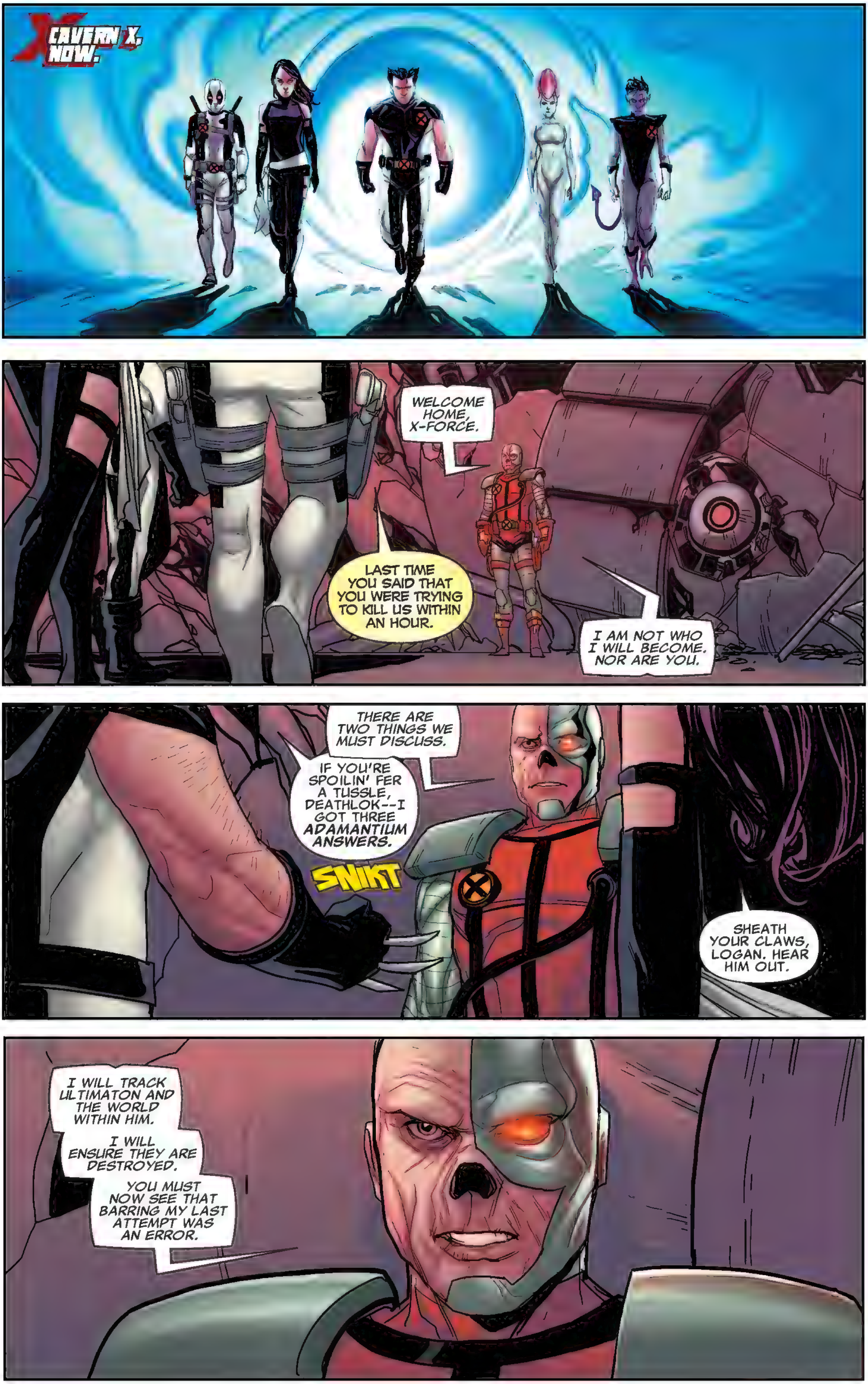
31

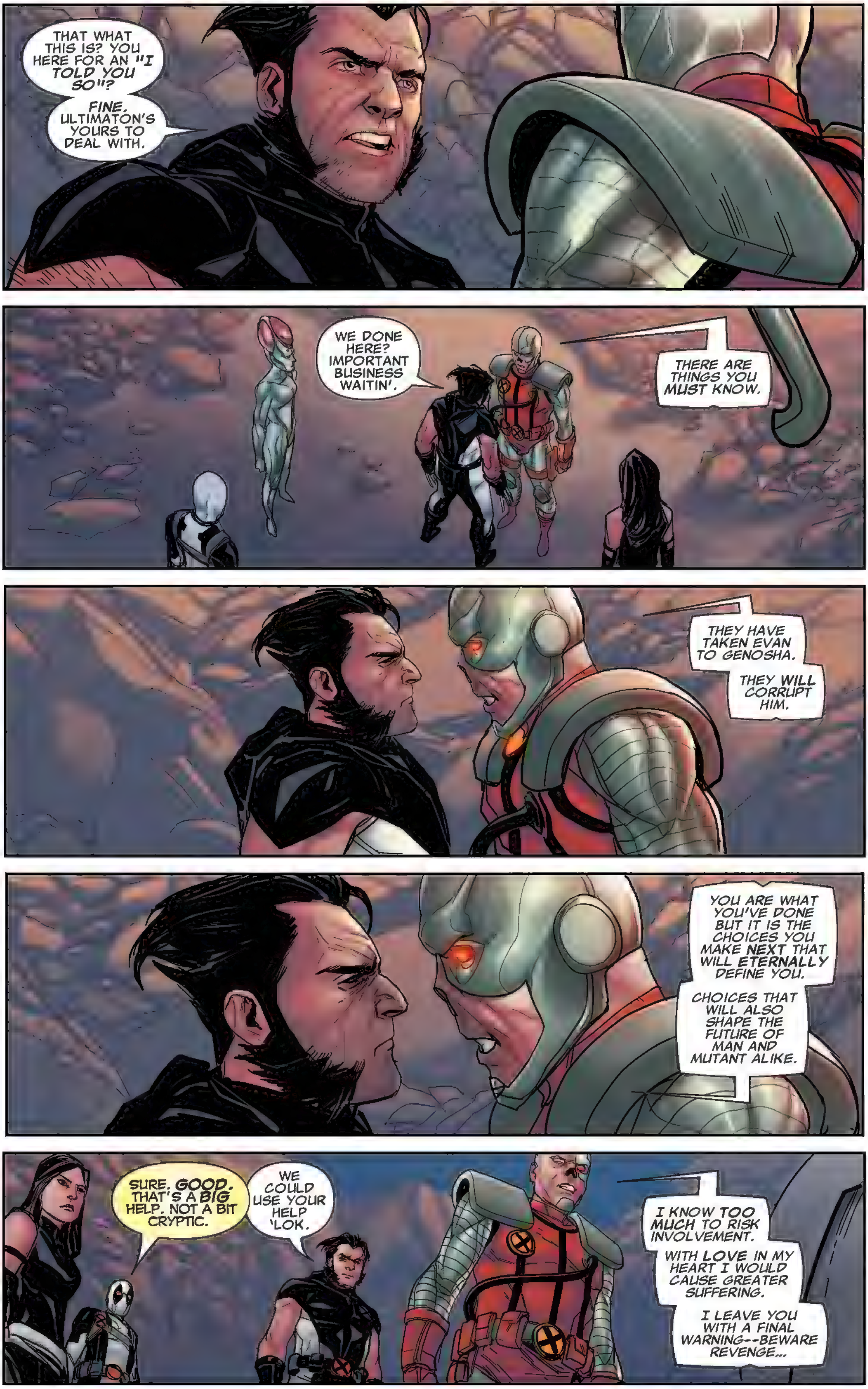
FINAL EXECUTION

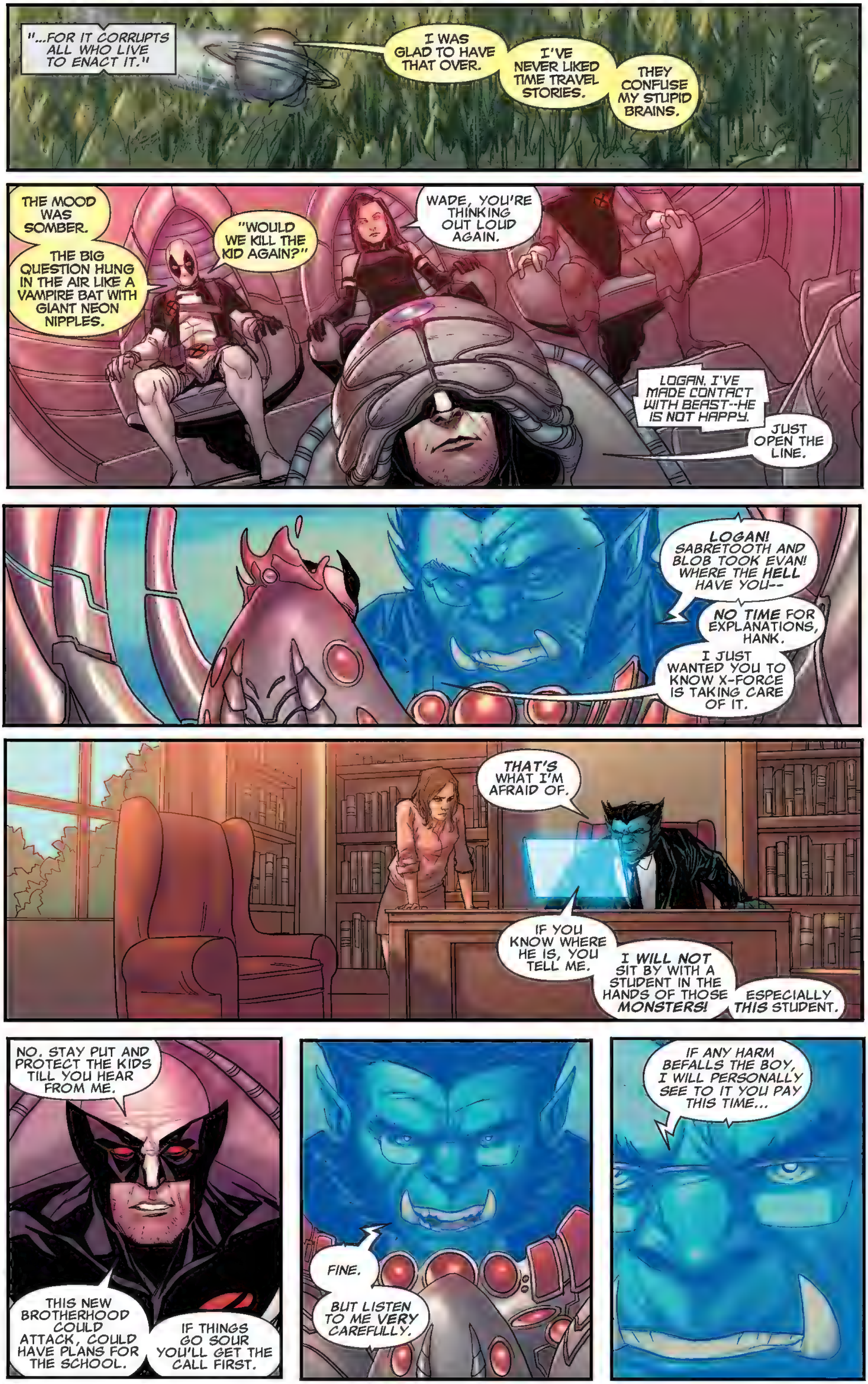
CHAPTER 7: TOMORROW IS AN EXCUSE FOR TODAY

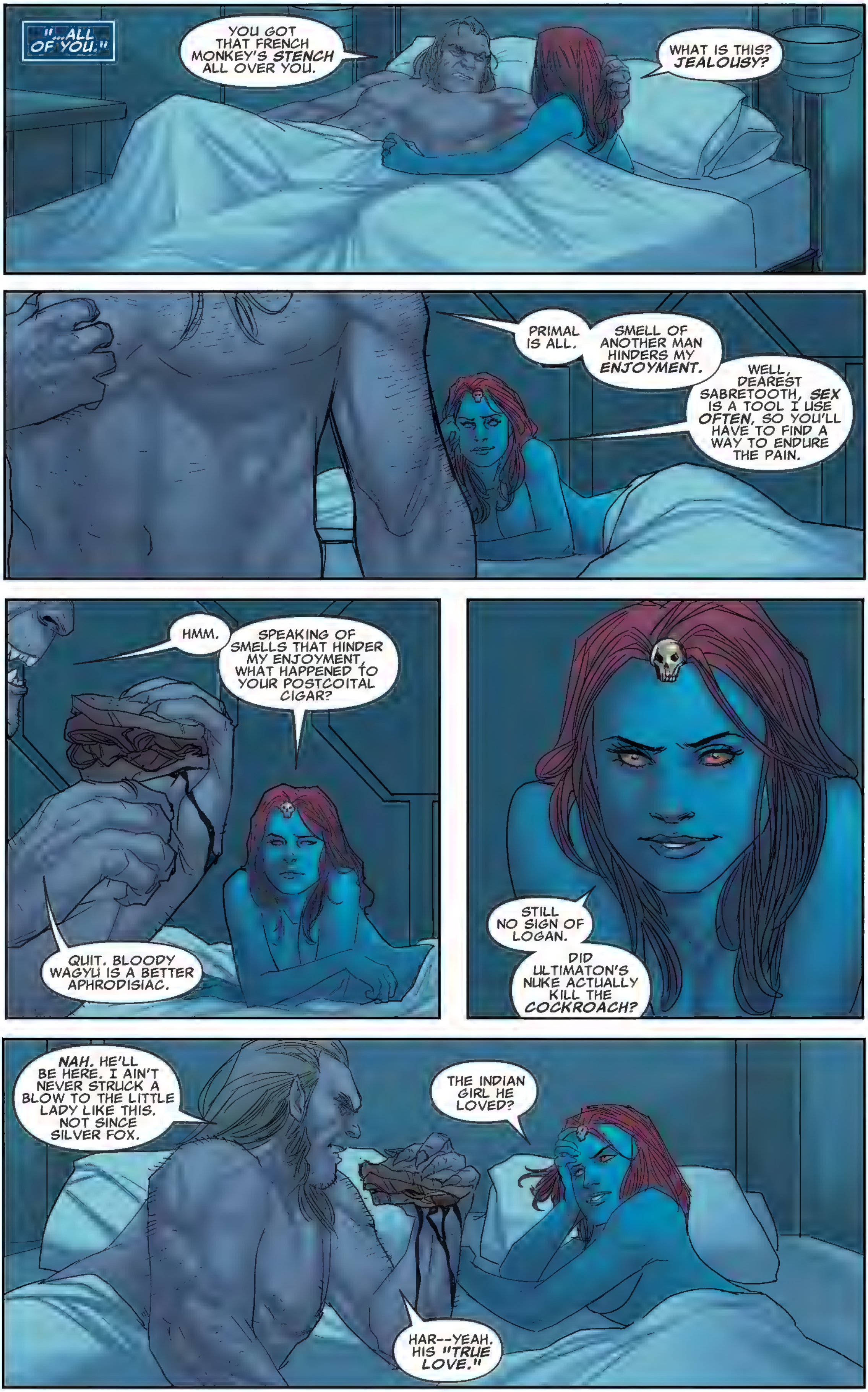

THREE HOURS FROM NOW.
SHOULD'VE SEEN IT... SHOULD'VE KNOWN...
I-I'M SORRY...
I DIDN'T PROTECT YOU BETTER...
YOU SHOULDN'T BLAME YOURSELF.

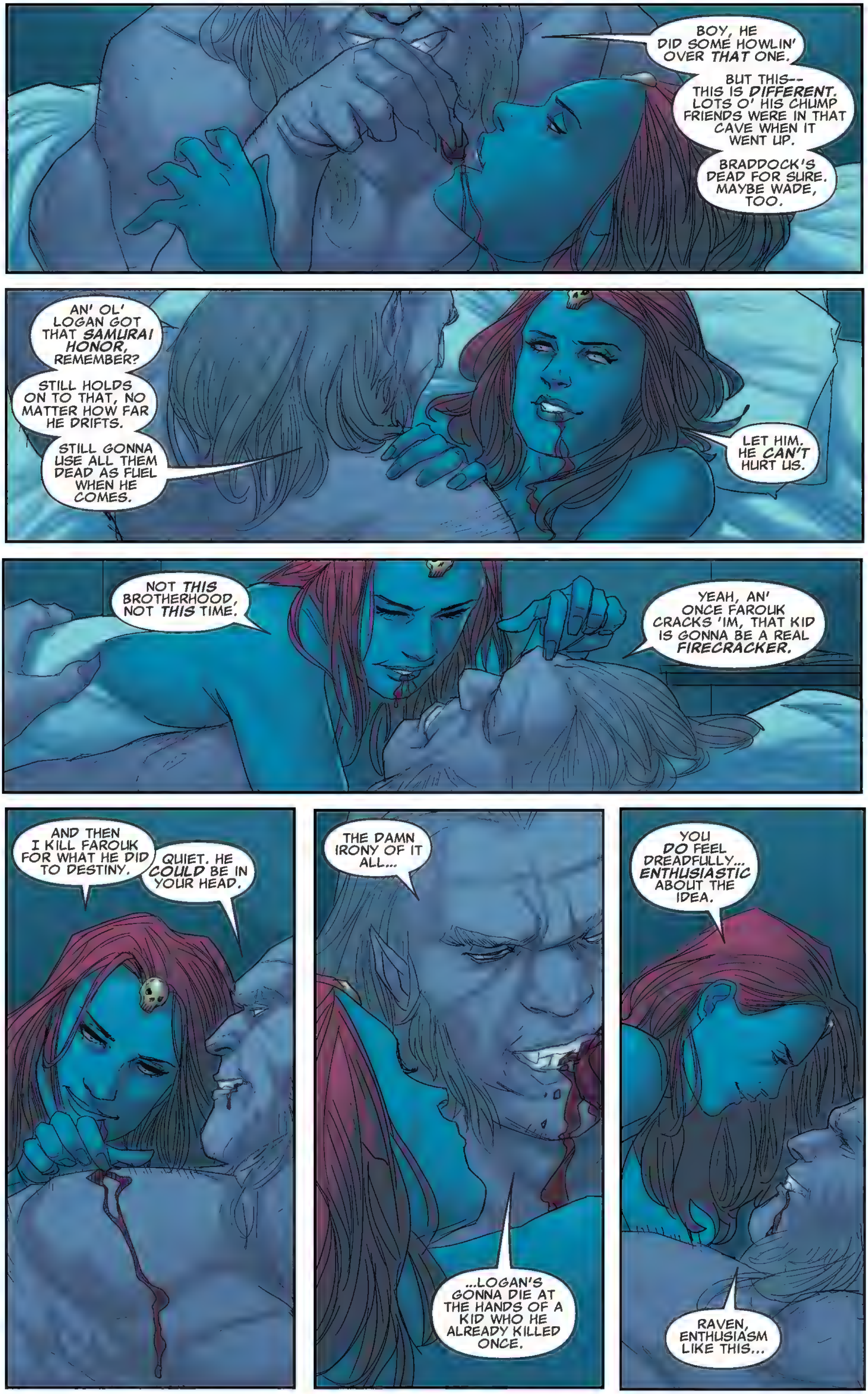

THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY IT COULD HAVE ENDED.

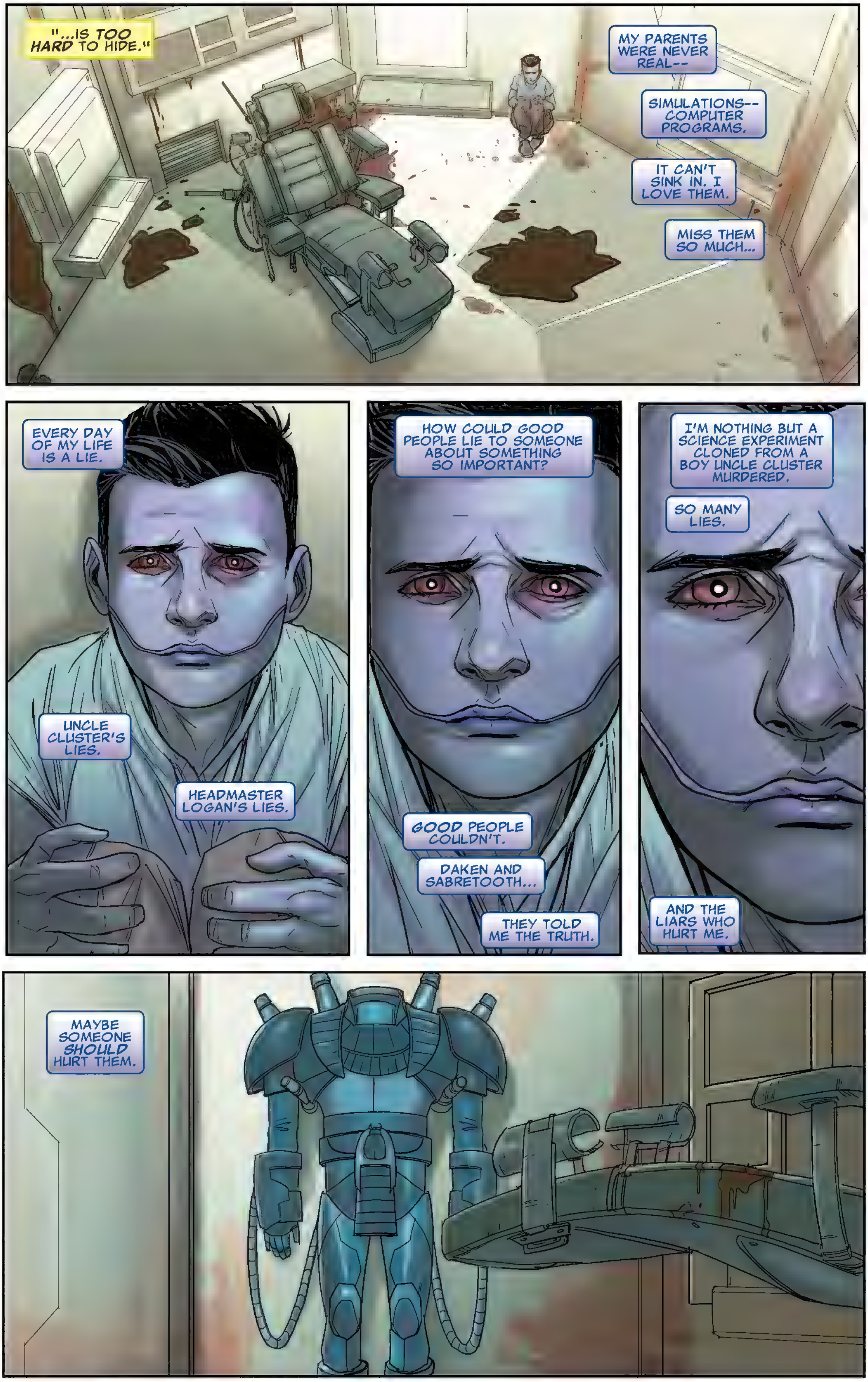

CAVERN X, NOW.
WELCOME HOME, X-FORCE.
LAST TIME YOU SAID THAT YOU WERE TRYING TO KILL US WITHIN AN HOUR.
I AM NOT WHO I WILL BECOME. NOR ARE YOU.
THERE ARE TWO THINGS WE MUST DISCUSS.
IF YOU'RE SPOILIN' FER A TUSSLE, DEATHLOK--I GOT THREE ADAMANTIUM ANSWERS.
SNIKT
SHEATH YOUR CLAWS, LOGAN. HEAR HIM OUT.
I WILL TRACK ULTIMATON AND THE WORLD WITHIN HIM.
I WILL ENSURE THEY ARE DESTROYED.
YOU MUST NOW SEE THAT BARRING MY LAST ATTEMPT WAS AN ERROR.

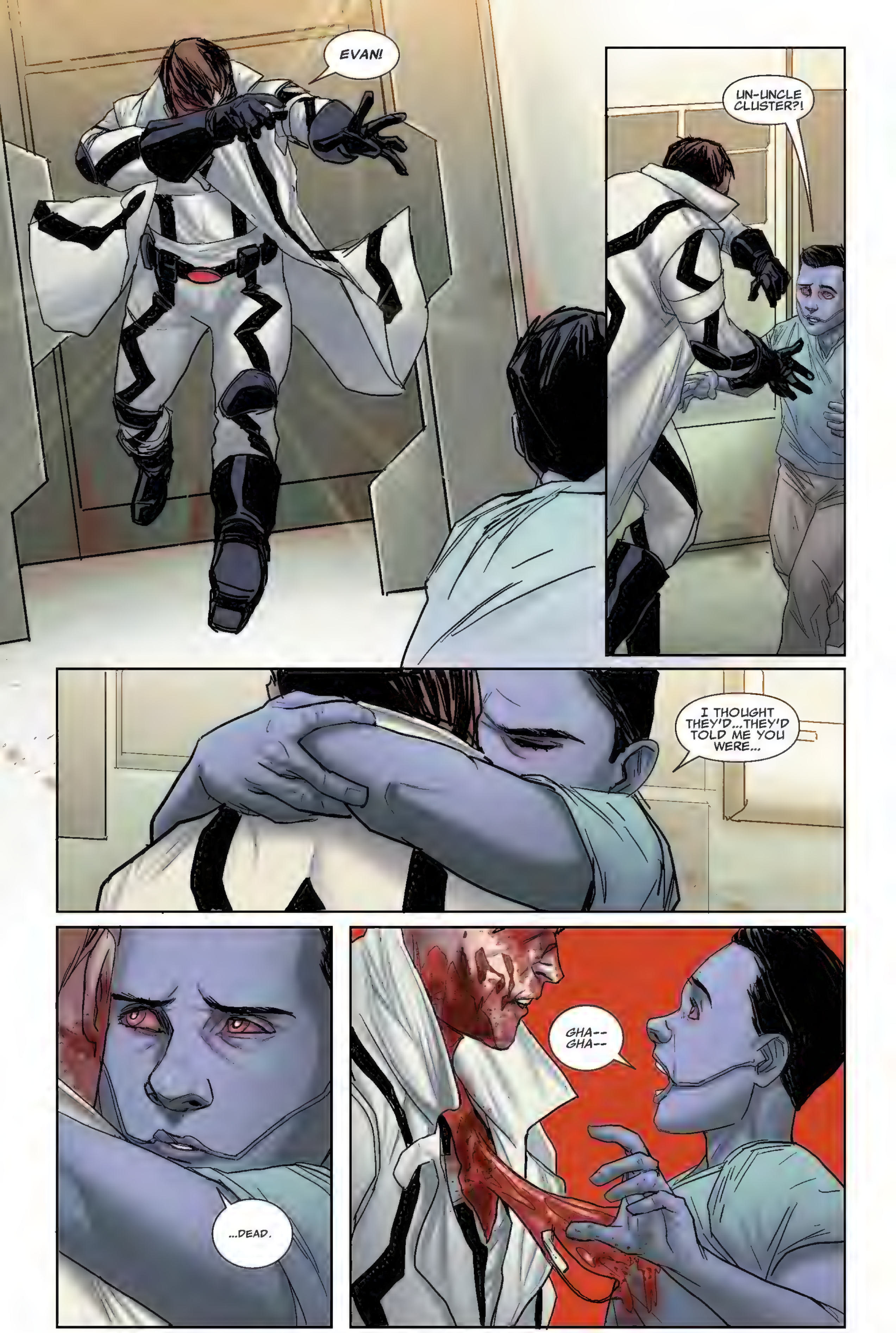

THAT WHAT THIS IS? YOU HERE FOR AN "I TOLD YOU SO"?
FINE. ULTIMATON'S YOURS TO DEAL WITH.
WE DONE HERE? IMPORTANT BUSINESS WAITIN'.
THERE ARE THINGS YOU MUST KNOW.
THEY HAVE TAKEN EVAN TO GENOSHA.
THEY WILL CORRUPT HIM.
YOU ARE WHAT YOU'VE DONE BUT IT IS THE CHOICES YOU MAKE NEXT THAT WILL ETERNALLY DEFINE YOU.
CHOICES THAT WILL ALSO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF MAN AND MUTANT ALIKE.
WE COULD USE YOUR HELP 'LOK.
SURE. GOOD. THAT'S A BIG HELP. NOT A BIT CRYPTIC.
I KNOW TOO MUCH TO RISK INVOLVEMENT.
WITH LOVE IN MY HEART I WOULD CAUSE GREATER SUFFERING.
I LEAVE YOU WITH A FINAL WARNING--BEWARE REVENGE...

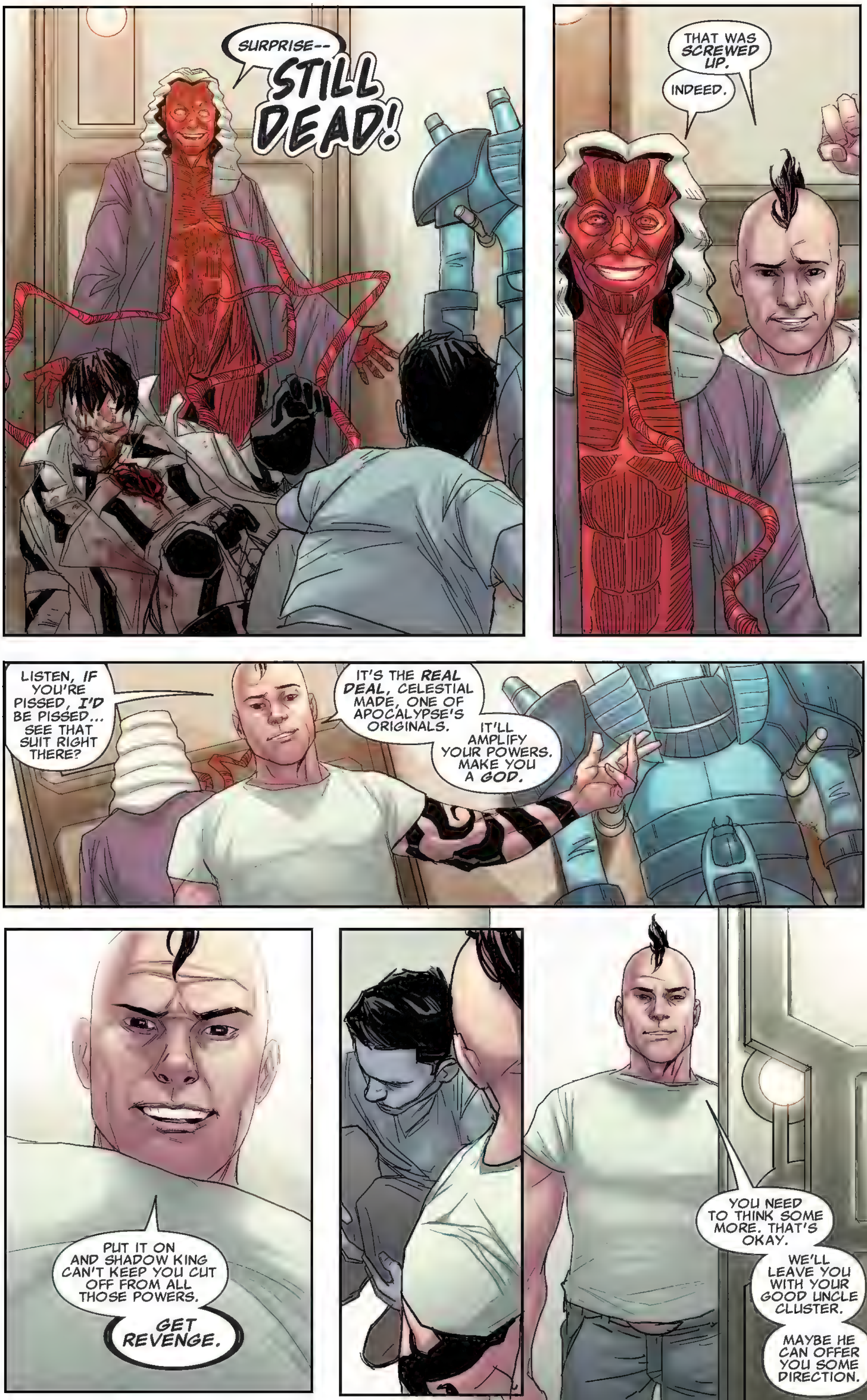

"...FOR IT CORRUPTS ALL WHO LIVE TO ENACT IT."
I WAS GLAD TO HAVE THAT OVER.
I'VE NEVER LIKED TIME TRAVEL STORIES.
THEY CONFUSE MY STUPID BRAINS.
THE MOOD WAS SOMBER.
THE BIG QUESTION HUNG IN THE AIR LIKE A VAMPIRE BAT WITH GIANT NEON NIPPLES.
"WOULD WE KILL THE KID AGAIN?"
WADE, YOU'RE THINKING OUT LOUD AGAIN.
LOGAN, I'VE MADE CONTACT WITH BEAST--HE IS NOT HAPPY.
JUST OPEN THE LINE.
LOGAN! SABRETOOTH AND BLOB TOOK EVAN! WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU--
NO TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS, HANK.
I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW X-FORCE IS TAKING CARE OF IT.
THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID OF.
IF YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS, YOU TELL ME.
I WILL NOT SIT BY WITH A STUDENT IN THE HANDS OF THOSE MONSTERS!
ESPECIALLY THIS STUDENT.
NO. STAY PUT AND PROTECT THE KIDS TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME.
THIS NEW BROTHERHOOD COULD ATTACK, COULD HAVE PLANS FOR THE SCHOOL.
IF THINGS GO SOUR YOU'LL GET THE CALL FIRST.
FINE.
BUT LISTEN TO ME VERY CAREFULLY.
IF ANY HARM BEFALLS THE BOY, I WILL PERSONALLY SEE TO IT YOU PAY THIS TIME...

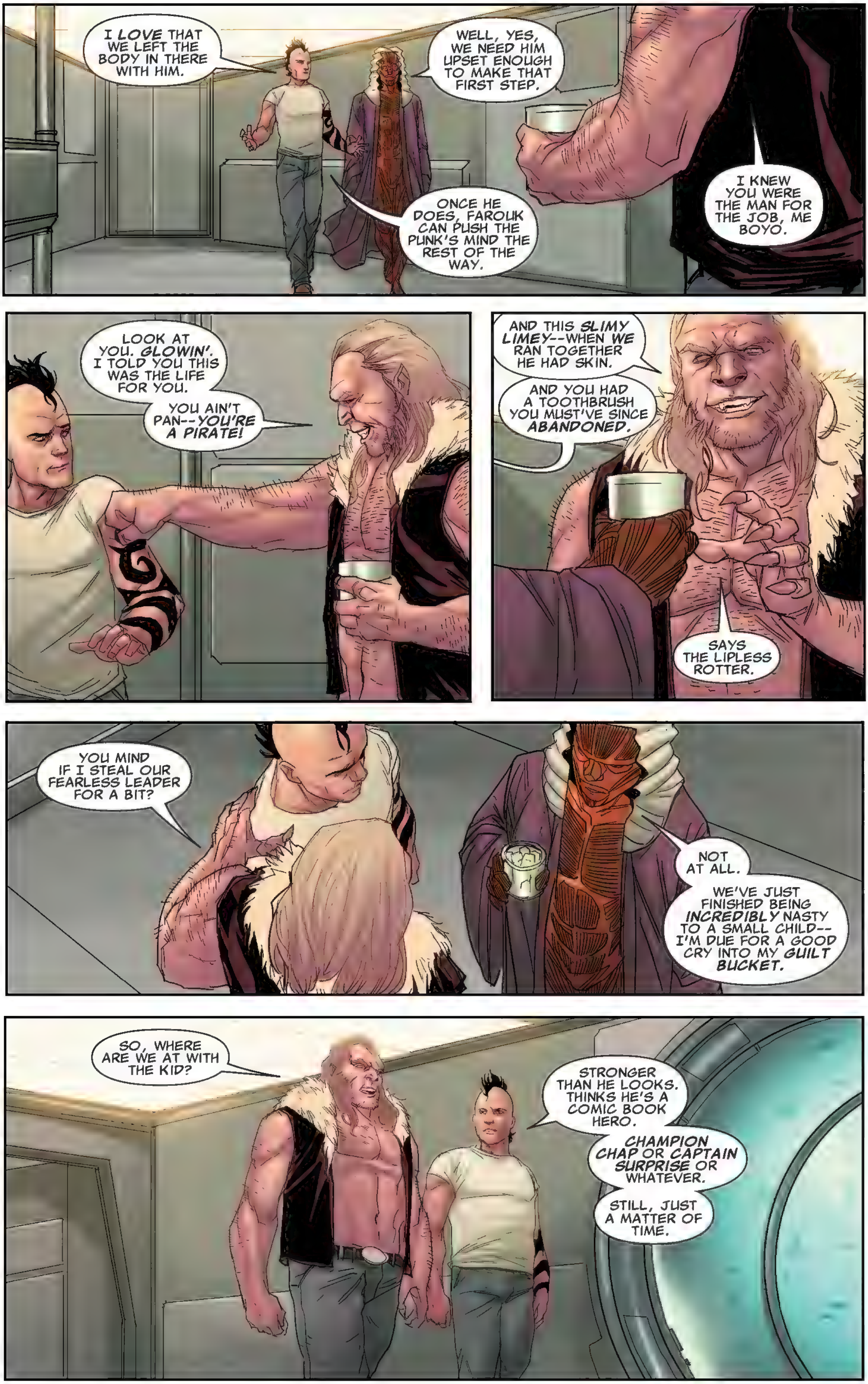

"...ALL OF YOU."
YOU GOT THAT FRENCH MONKEY'S **STENCH** ALL OVER YOU.
WHAT IS THIS? ***JEALOUSY?***
PRIMAL IS ALL.
SMELL OF ANOTHER MAN HINDERS MY ***ENJOYMENT.***
WELL, DEAREST SABRETOOTH, ***SEX*** IS A TOOL I USE ***OFTEN,*** SO YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO ENDURE THE PAIN.
HMM.
SPEAKING OF SMELLS THAT HINDER MY ENJOYMENT, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR POSTCOITAL CIGAR?
QUIT. BLOODY WAGYU IS A BETTER APHRODISIAC.
STILL NO SIGN OF LOGAN.
DID ULTIMATON'S NUKE ACTUALLY KILL THE ***COCKROACH?***
NAH. HE'LL BE HERE. I AIN'T NEVER STRUCK A BLOW TO THE LITTLE LADY LIKE THIS. NOT SINCE SILVER FOX.
THE INDIAN GIRL HE LOVED?
HAR--YEAH. HIS ***"TRUE LOVE."***

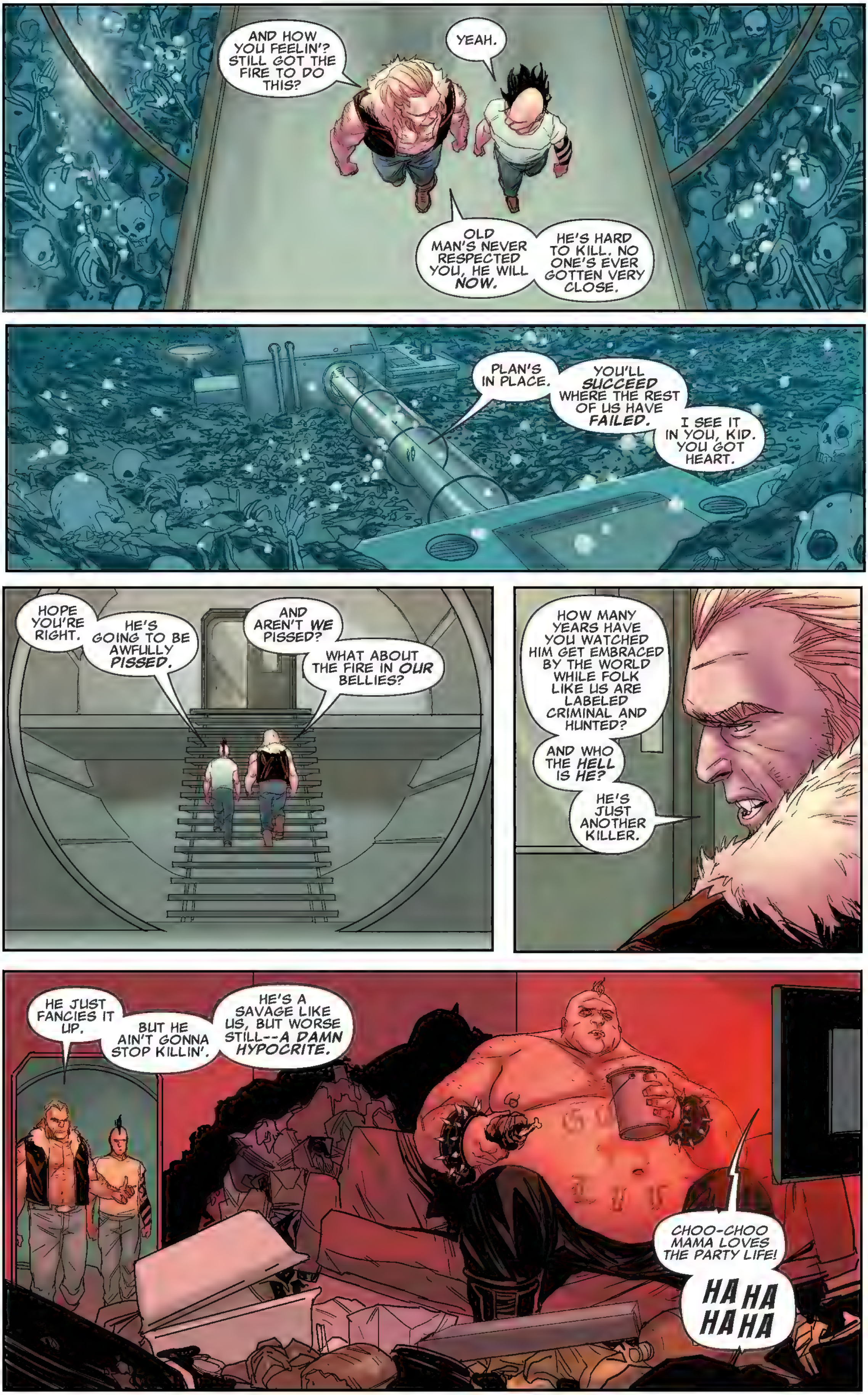

BOY, HE DID SOME HOWLIN' OVER *THAT* ONE.
BUT THIS-- THIS IS *DIFFERENT*. LOTS O' HIS CHUMP FRIENDS WERE IN THAT CAVE WHEN IT WENT UP.
BRADDOCK'S DEAD FOR SURE. MAYBE WADE, TOO.
AN' OL' LOGAN GOT THAT *SAMURAI HONOR*, REMEMBER?
STILL HOLDS ON TO THAT, NO MATTER HOW FAR HE DRIFTS.
STILL GONNA USE ALL THEM DEAD AS FUEL WHEN HE COMES.
LET HIM. HE *CAN'T* HURT US.
NOT *THIS* BROTHERHOOD, NOT *THIS* TIME.
YEAH, AN' ONCE FAROUK CRACKS 'IM, THAT KID IS GONNA BE A REAL *FIRECRACKER*.
AND THEN I KILL FAROUK FOR WHAT HE DID TO DESTINY.
QUIET. HE *COULD* BE IN YOUR HEAD.
THE DAMN IRONY OF IT ALL...
...LOGAN'S GONNA DIE AT THE HANDS OF A KID WHO HE ALREADY KILLED ONCE.
YOU *DO* FEEL DREADFULLY... *ENTHUSIASTIC* ABOUT THE IDEA.
RAVEN, ENTHUSIASM LIKE THIS...

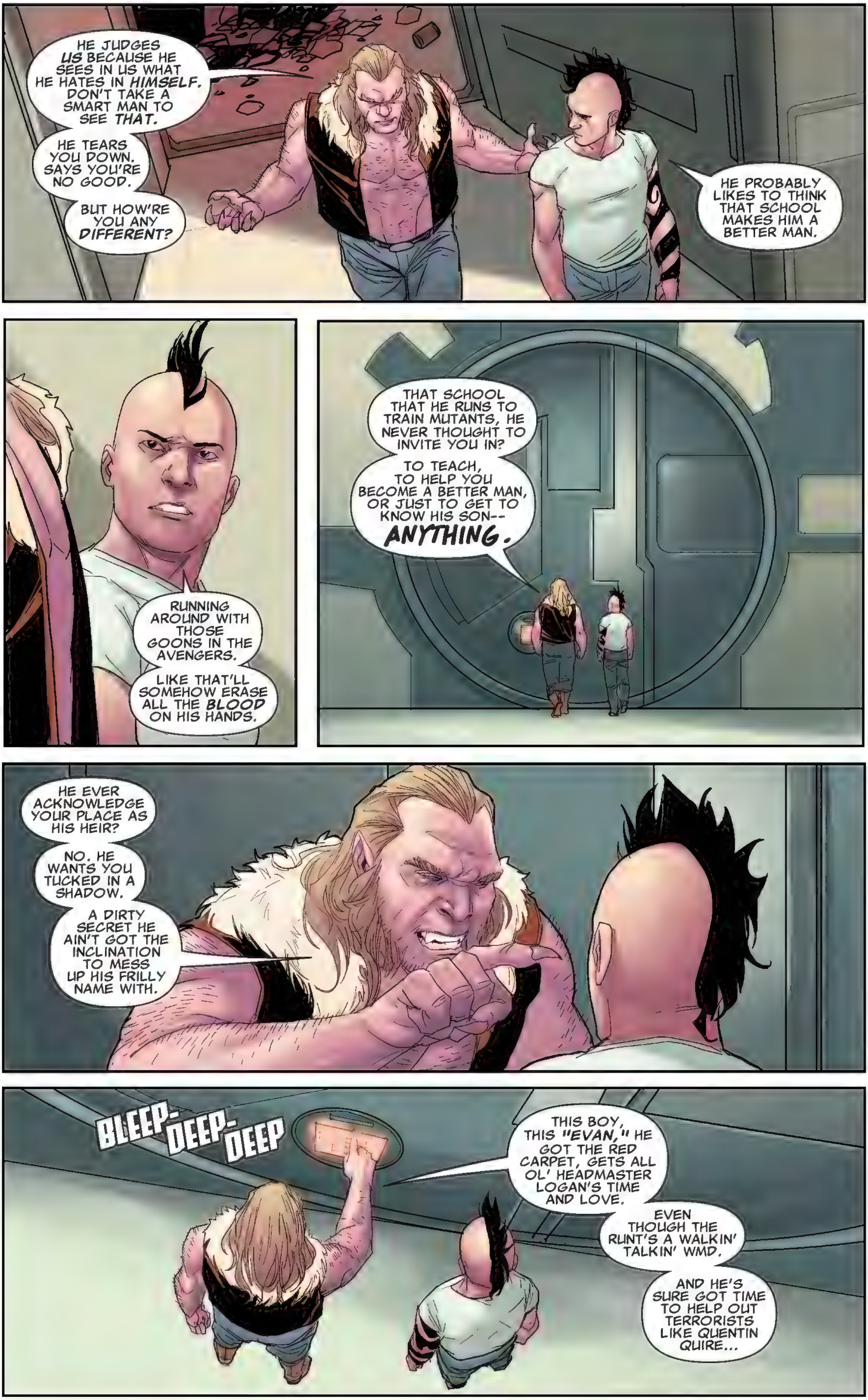

"...IS *TOO HARD* TO HIDE."
MY PARENTS WERE NEVER REAL--
SIMULATIONS-- COMPUTER PROGRAMS.
IT CAN'T SINK IN. I LOVE THEM.
MISS THEM SO MUCH...
EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE IS A LIE.
UNCLE CLUSTER'S LIES.
HEADMASTER LOGAN'S LIES.
HOW COULD GOOD PEOPLE LIE TO SOMEONE ABOUT SOMETHING SO IMPORTANT?
GOOD PEOPLE COULDN'T.
DAKEN AND SABRETOOTH...
THEY TOLD ME THE TRUTH.
I'M NOTHING BUT A SCIENCE EXPERIMENT CLONED FROM A BOY UNCLE CLUSTER MURDERED.
SO MANY LIES.
AND THE LIARS WHO HURT ME.
MAYBE SOMEONE *SHOULD* HURT THEM.

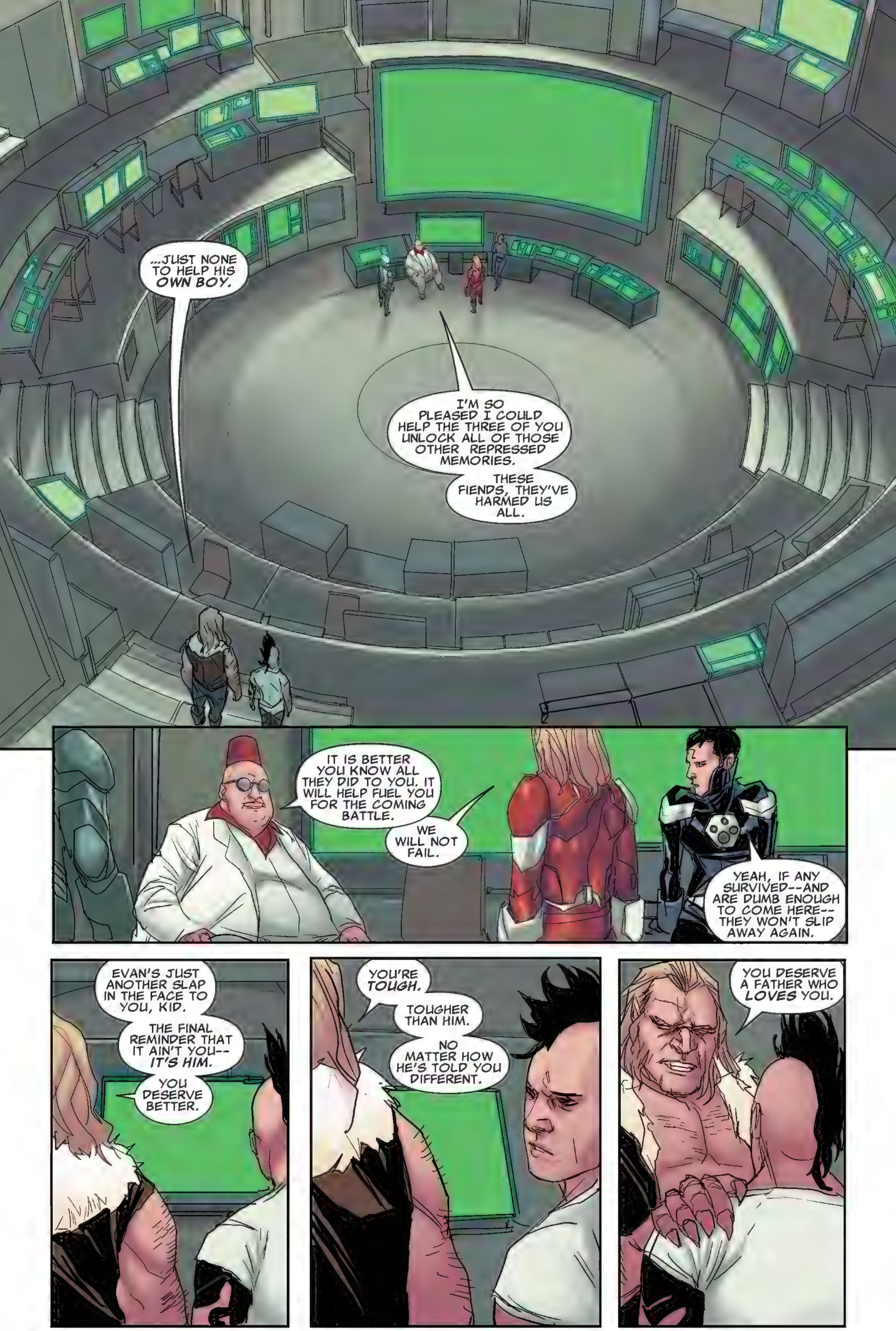

EVAN!
UN-UNCLE CLUSTER?!
I THOUGHT THEY'D...THEY'D TOLD ME YOU WERE...
...DEAD.
GHA-- GHA--

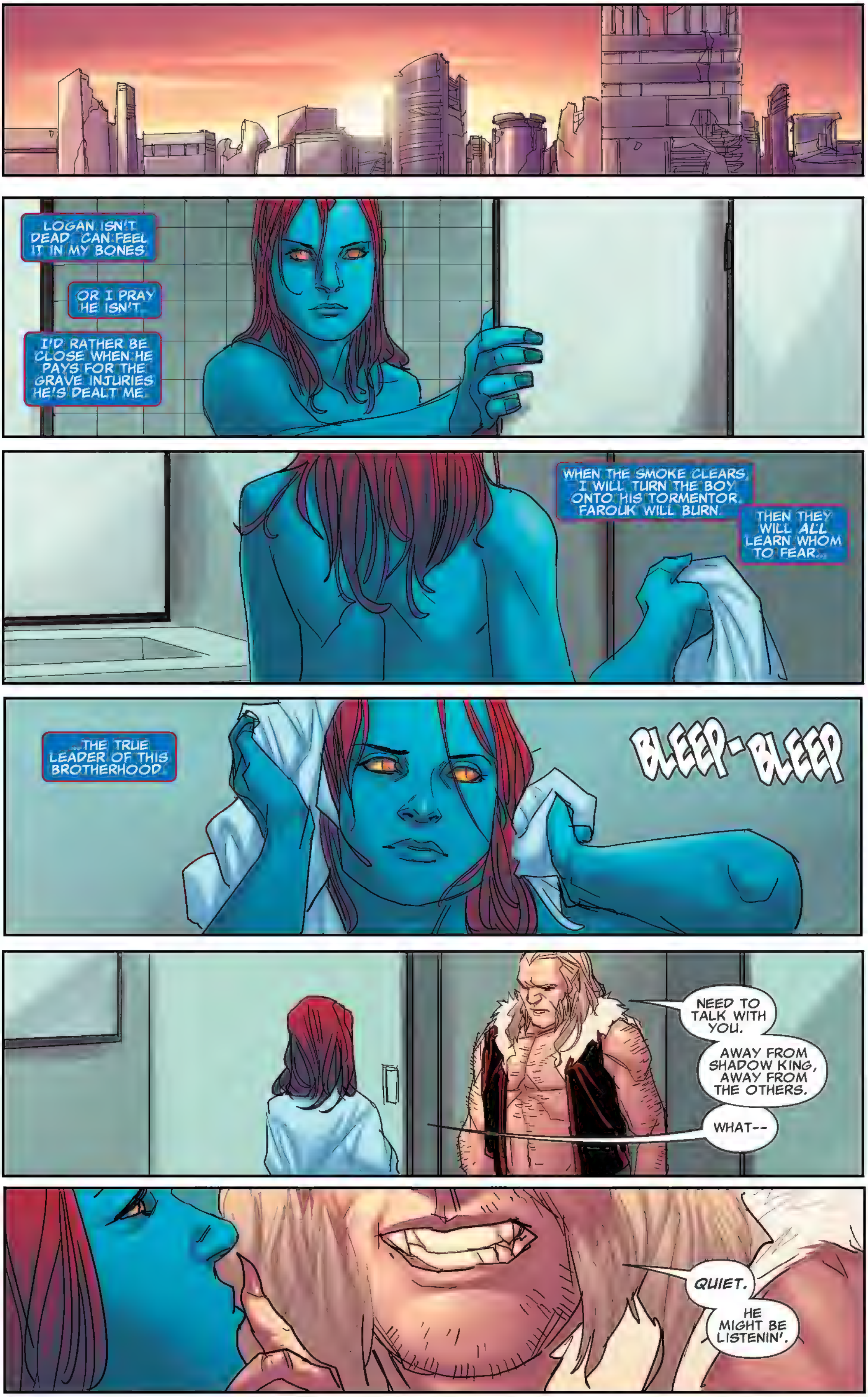

SURPRISE-- STILL DEAD!
THAT WAS SCREWED UP.
INDEED.
LISTEN, IF YOU'RE PISSED, I'D BE PISSED... SEE THAT SUIT RIGHT THERE?
IT'S THE REAL DEAL, CELESTIAL MADE, ONE OF APOCALYPSE'S ORIGINALS.
IT'LL AMPLIFY YOUR POWERS. MAKE YOU A GOD.
PUT IT ON AND SHADOW KING CAN'T KEEP YOU CUT OFF FROM ALL THOSE POWERS.
GET REVENGE.
YOU NEED TO THINK SOME MORE. THAT'S OKAY.
WE'LL LEAVE YOU WITH YOUR GOOD UNCLE CLUSTER.
MAYBE HE CAN OFFER YOU SOME DIRECTION.

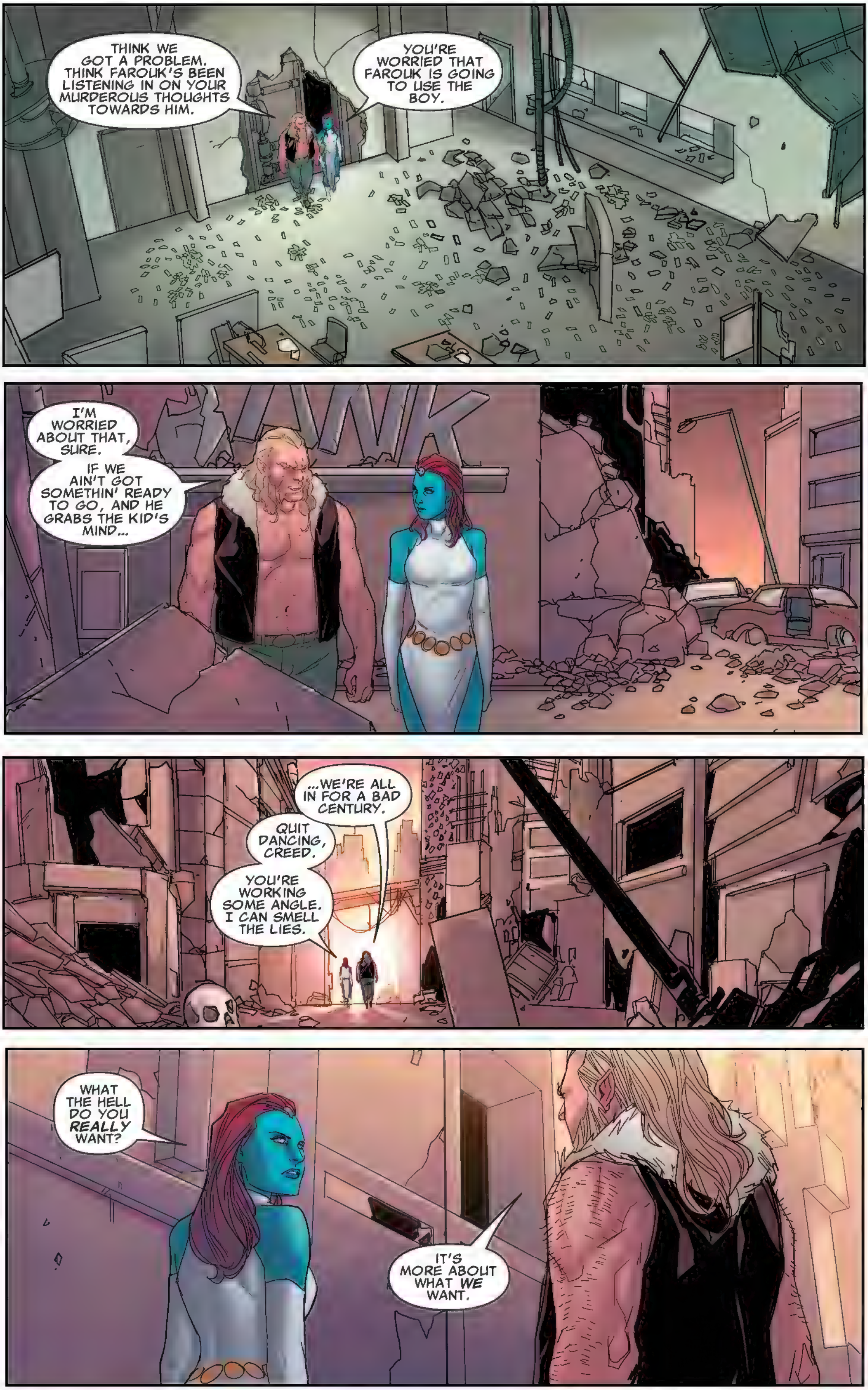

I **LOVE** THAT WE LEFT THE BODY IN THERE WITH HIM.
WELL, YES, WE NEED HIM UPSET ENOUGH TO MAKE THAT FIRST STEP.
ONCE HE DOES, FAROUK CAN PUSH THE PUNK'S MIND THE REST OF THE WAY.
I KNEW YOU WERE THE MAN FOR THE JOB, ME BOYO.
LOOK AT YOU. ***GLOWIN'.*** I TOLD YOU THIS WAS THE LIFE FOR YOU.
YOU AIN'T PAN--***YOU'RE A PIRATE!***
AND THIS ***SLIMY LIMEY***--WHEN ***WE*** RAN TOGETHER HE HAD SKIN.
AND YOU HAD A TOOTHBRUSH YOU MUST'VE SINCE ***ABANDONED.***
SAYS THE LIPLESS ROTTER.
YOU MIND IF I STEAL OUR FEARLESS LEADER FOR A BIT?
NOT AT ALL.
WE'VE JUST FINISHED BEING ***INCREDIBLY*** NASTY TO A SMALL CHILD--I'M DUE FOR A GOOD CRY INTO MY ***GUILT BUCKET.***
SO, WHERE ARE WE AT WITH THE KID?
STRONGER THAN HE LOOKS. THINKS HE'S A COMIC BOOK HERO.
CHAMPION CHAP OR ***CAPTAIN SURPRISE*** OR WHATEVER.
STILL, JUST A MATTER OF TIME.

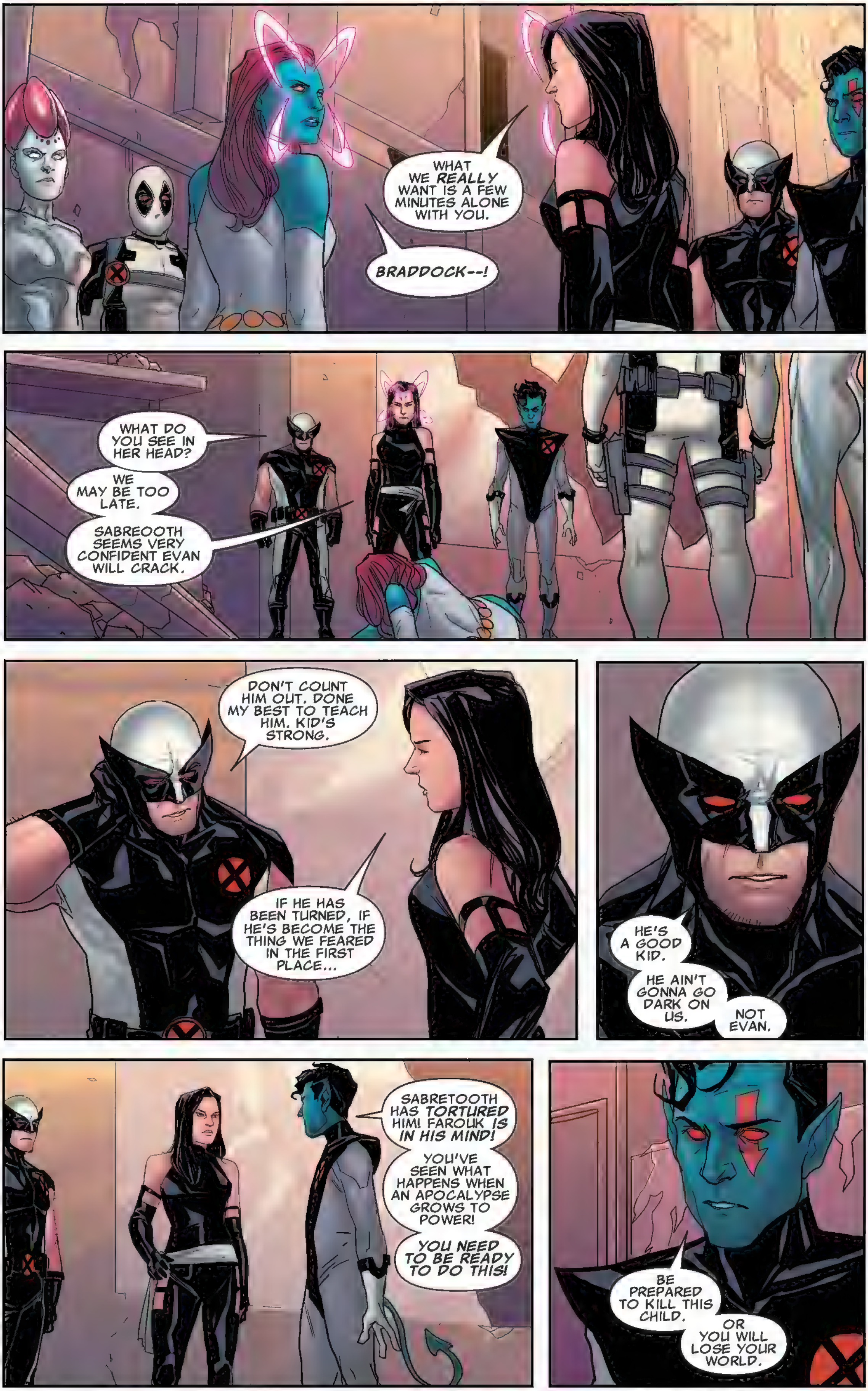

AND HOW YOU FEELIN'? STILL GOT THE FIRE TO DO THIS?
YEAH.
OLD MAN'S NEVER RESPECTED YOU, HE WILL *NOW*.
HE'S HARD TO KILL. NO ONE'S EVER GOTTEN VERY CLOSE.
PLAN'S IN PLACE.
YOU'LL *SUCCEED* WHERE THE REST OF US HAVE *FAILED*.
I SEE IT IN YOU, KID. YOU GOT HEART.
HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT.
HE'S GOING TO BE AWFULLY *PISSED*.
AND AREN'T *WE* PISSED?
WHAT ABOUT THE FIRE IN *OUR* BELLIES?
HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU WATCHED HIM GET EMBRACED BY THE WORLD WHILE FOLK LIKE US ARE LABELED CRIMINAL AND HUNTED?
AND WHO THE *HELL* IS *HE*?
HE'S JUST ANOTHER KILLER.
HE JUST FANCIES IT UP.
BUT HE AIN'T GONNA STOP KILLIN'.
HE'S A SAVAGE LIKE US, BUT WORSE STILL--*A DAMN HYPOCRITE*.
CHOO-CHOO MAMA LOVES THE PARTY LIFE!
HA HA HA HA

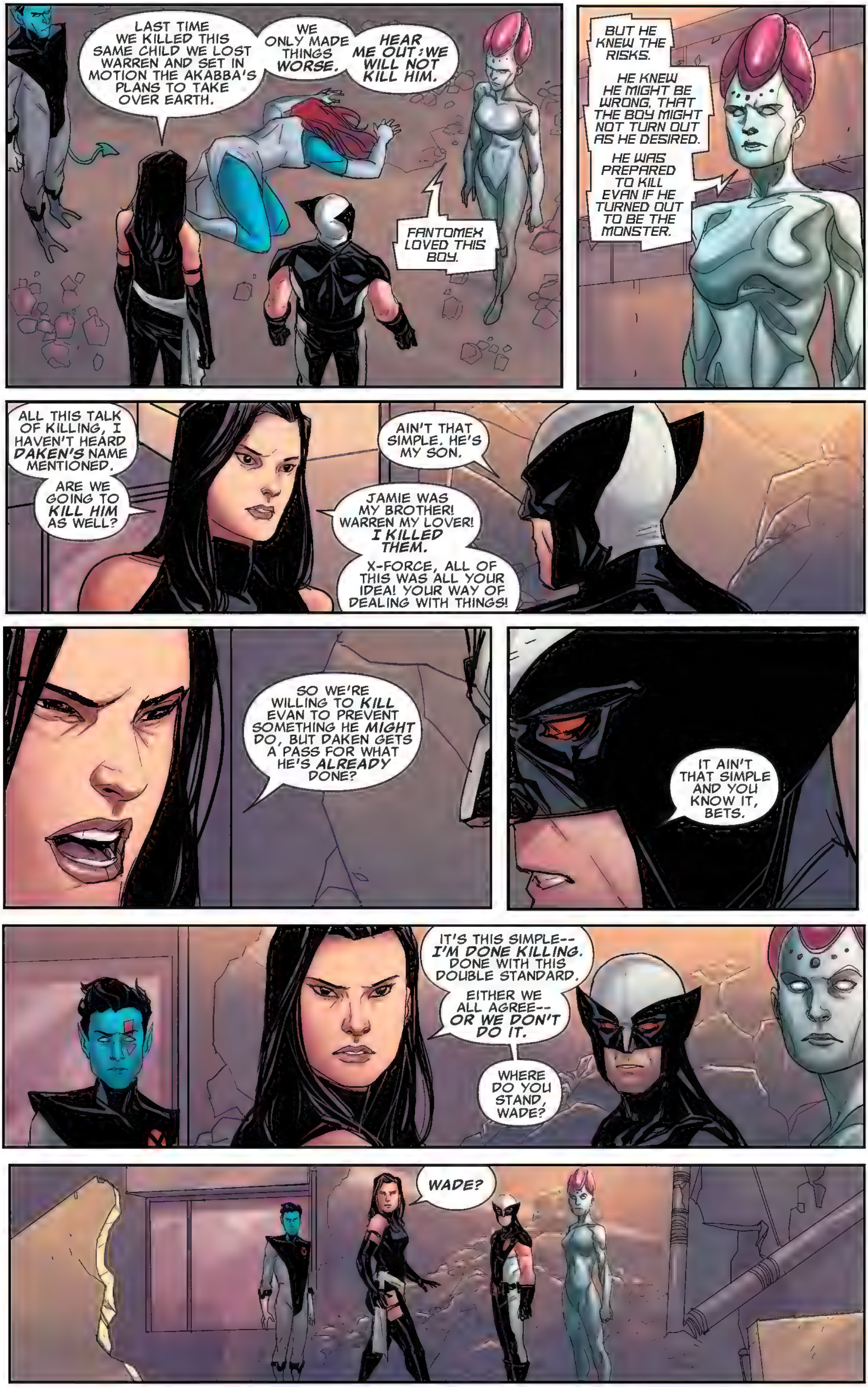

HE JUDGES *US* BECAUSE HE SEES IN US WHAT HE HATES IN *HIMSELF*. DON'T TAKE A SMART MAN TO SEE *THAT*.
HE TEARS YOU DOWN. SAYS YOU'RE NO GOOD.
BUT HOW'RE YOU ANY *DIFFERENT?*
HE PROBABLY LIKES TO THINK THAT SCHOOL MAKES HIM A BETTER MAN.
RUNNING AROUND WITH THOSE GOONS IN THE AVENGERS.
LIKE THAT'LL SOMEHOW ERASE ALL THE *BLOOD* ON HIS HANDS.
THAT SCHOOL THAT HE RUNS TO TRAIN MUTANTS, HE NEVER THOUGHT TO INVITE YOU IN?
TO TEACH, TO HELP YOU BECOME A BETTER MAN, OR JUST TO GET TO KNOW HIS SON--
ANYTHING.
HE EVER ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR PLACE AS HIS HEIR?
NO. HE WANTS YOU TUCKED IN A SHADOW.
A DIRTY SECRET HE AIN'T GOT THE INCLINATION TO MESS UP HIS FRILLY NAME WITH.
BLEEP-DEEP-DEEP
THIS BOY, THIS *"EVAN,"* HE GOT THE RED CARPET, GETS ALL OL' HEADMASTER LOGAN'S TIME AND LOVE.
EVEN THOUGH THE RUNT'S A WALKIN' TALKIN' WMD.
AND HE'S SURE GOT TIME TO HELP OUT TERRORISTS LIKE QUENTIN QUIRE...

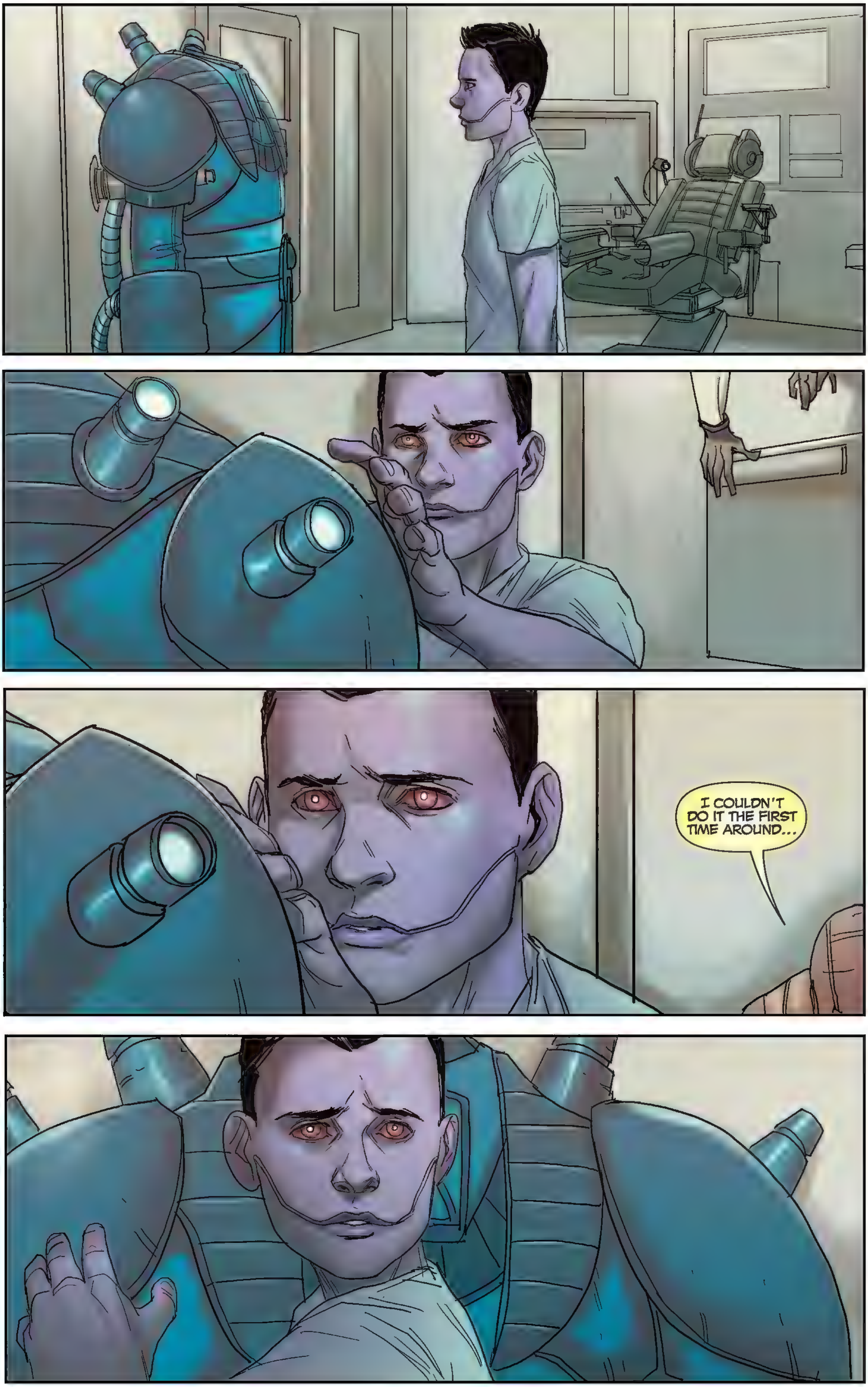

...JUST NONE TO HELP HIS *OWN BOY.*
I'M SO PLEASED I COULD HELP THE THREE OF YOU UNLOCK ALL OF THOSE OTHER REPRESSED MEMORIES.
THESE FIENDS, THEY'VE HARMED US ALL.
IT IS BETTER YOU KNOW ALL THEY DID TO YOU. IT WILL HELP FUEL YOU FOR THE COMING BATTLE.
WE WILL NOT FAIL.
YEAH, IF ANY SURVIVED--AND ARE DUMB ENOUGH TO COME HERE--THEY WON'T SLIP AWAY AGAIN.
EVAN'S JUST ANOTHER SLAP IN THE FACE TO YOU, KID.
THE FINAL REMINDER THAT IT AIN'T YOU-- *IT'S HIM.*
YOU DESERVE BETTER.
YOU'RE *TOUGH.*
TOUGHER THAN HIM.
NO MATTER HOW HE'S TOLD YOU DIFFERENT.
YOU DESERVE A FATHER WHO *LOVES* YOU.

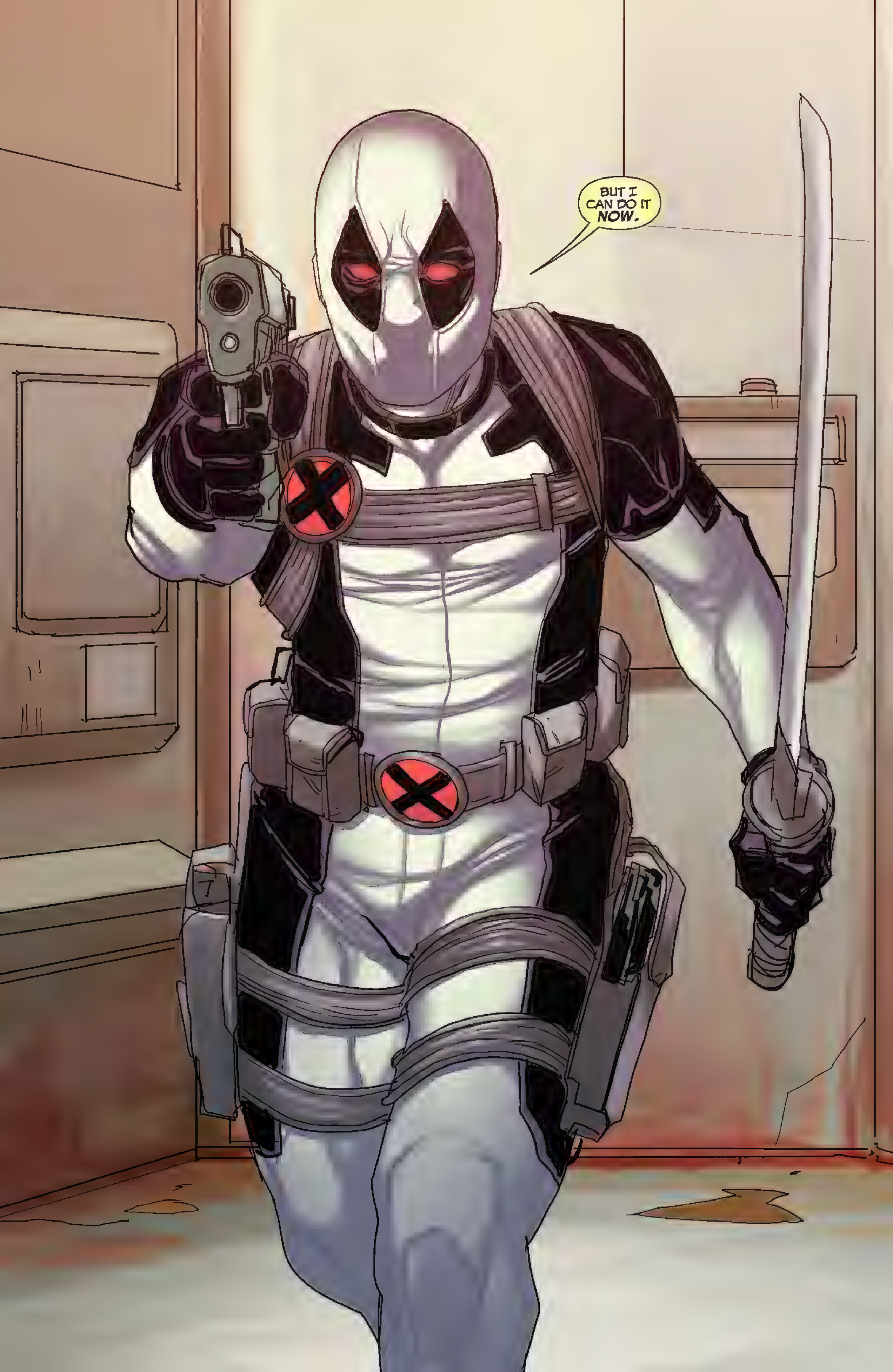

LOGAN ISN'T DEAD. CAN FEEL IT IN MY BONES.
OR I PRAY HE ISN'T.
I'D RATHER BE CLOSE WHEN HE PAYS FOR THE GRAVE INJURIES HE'S DEALT ME.
WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS, I WILL TURN THE BOY ONTO HIS TORMENTOR. FAROUK WILL BURN.
THEN THEY WILL *ALL* LEARN WHOM TO FEAR...
...THE TRUE LEADER OF THIS BROTHERHOOD.
BLEEP-BLEEP
NEED TO TALK WITH YOU.
AWAY FROM SHADOW KING, AWAY FROM THE OTHERS.
WHAT--
QUIET.
HE MIGHT BE LISTENIN'.


THINK WE GOT A PROBLEM. THINK FAROUK'S BEEN LISTENING IN ON YOUR MURDEROUS THOUGHTS TOWARDS HIM.
YOU'RE WORRIED THAT FAROUK IS GOING TO USE THE BOY.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT THAT, SURE.
IF WE AIN'T GOT SOMETHIN' READY TO GO, AND HE GRABS THE KID'S MIND...
...WE'RE ALL IN FOR A BAD CENTURY.
QUIT DANCING, CREED.
YOU'RE WORKING SOME ANGLE. I CAN SMELL THE LIES.
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU *REALLY* WANT?
IT'S MORE ABOUT WHAT *WE* WANT.


WHAT WE *REALLY* WANT IS A FEW MINUTES ALONE WITH YOU.
BRADDOCK--!
WHAT DO YOU SEE IN HER HEAD?
WE MAY BE TOO LATE.
SABREOOTH SEEMS VERY CONFIDENT EVAN WILL CRACK.
DON'T COUNT HIM OUT. DONE MY BEST TO TEACH HIM. KID'S STRONG.
IF HE HAS BEEN TURNED, IF HE'S BECOME THE THING WE FEARED IN THE FIRST PLACE...
HE'S A GOOD KID.
HE AIN'T GONNA GO DARK ON US.
NOT EVAN.
SABRETOOTH HAS *TORTURED* HIM! FAROUK *IS IN HIS MIND!*
YOU'VE SEEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN APOCALYPSE GROWS TO POWER!
YOU NEED TO BE READY TO DO THIS!
BE PREPARED TO KILL THIS CHILD.
OR YOU WILL LOSE YOUR WORLD.

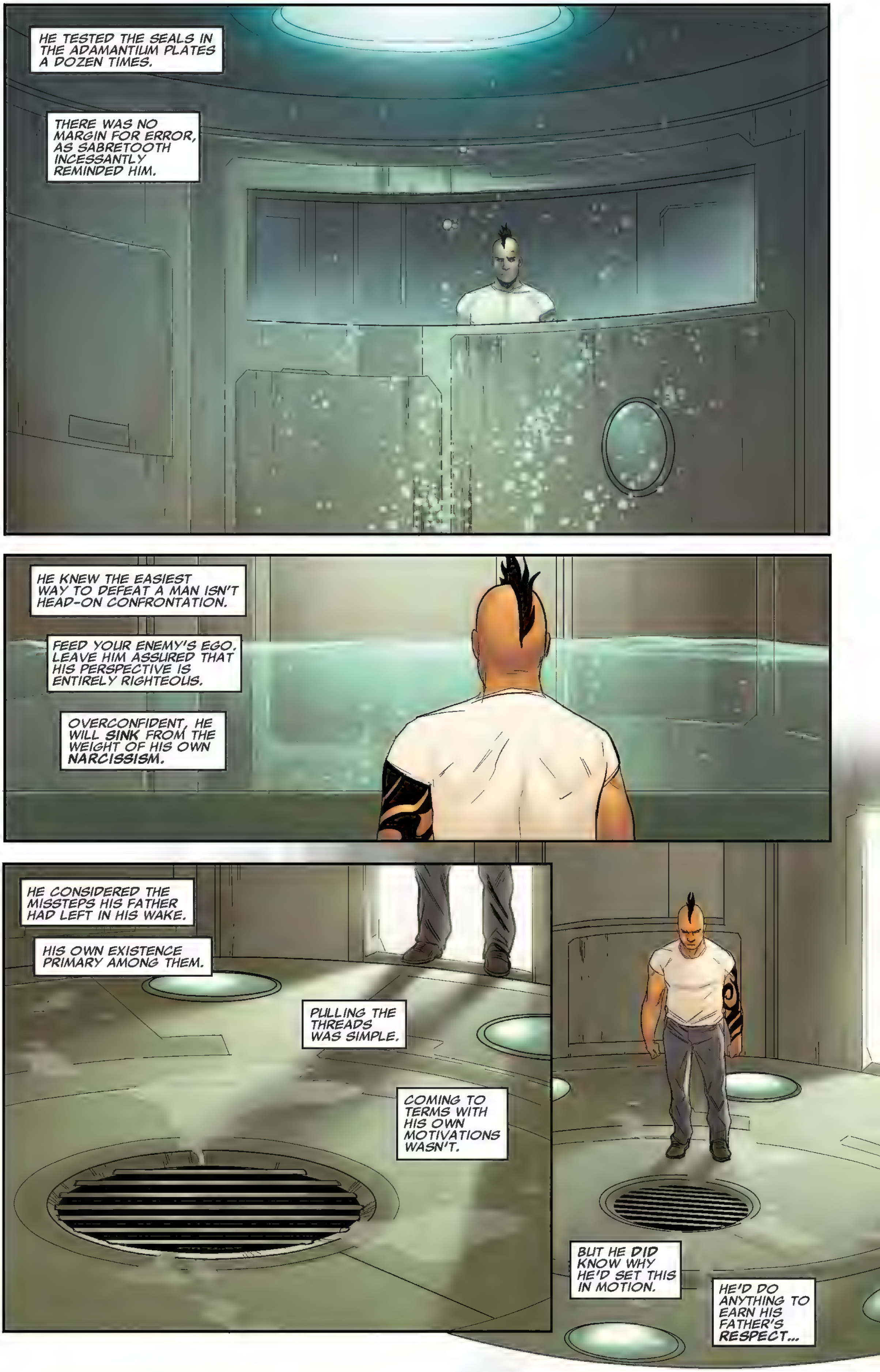

LAST TIME WE KILLED THIS SAME CHILD WE LOST WARREN AND SET IN MOTION THE AKABBA'S PLANS TO TAKE OVER EARTH.
WE ONLY MADE THINGS ***WORSE.***
HEAR ME OUT: WE WILL NOT KILL HIM.
FANTOMEX LOVED THIS BOY.
BUT HE KNEW THE RISKS.
HE KNEW HE MIGHT BE WRONG, THAT THE BOY MIGHT NOT TURN OUT AS HE DESIRED.
HE WAS PREPARED TO KILL EVAN IF HE TURNED OUT TO BE THE MONSTER.
ALL THIS TALK OF KILLING, I HAVEN'T HEARD ***DAKEN'S*** NAME MENTIONED.
ARE WE GOING TO ***KILL HIM*** AS WELL?
AIN'T THAT SIMPLE. HE'S MY SON.
JAMIE WAS MY BROTHER! WARREN MY LOVER! ***I KILLED THEM.***
X-FORCE, ALL OF THIS WAS ALL YOUR IDEA! YOUR WAY OF DEALING WITH THINGS!
SO WE'RE WILLING TO ***KILL*** EVAN TO PREVENT SOMETHING HE ***MIGHT*** DO, BUT DAKEN GETS A PASS FOR WHAT HE'S ***ALREADY*** DONE?
IT AIN'T THAT SIMPLE AND YOU KNOW IT, BETS.
IT'S THIS SIMPLE-- ***I'M DONE KILLING.*** DONE WITH THIS DOUBLE STANDARD.
EITHER WE ALL AGREE-- ***OR WE DON'T DO IT.***
WHERE DO YOU STAND, WADE?
WADE?

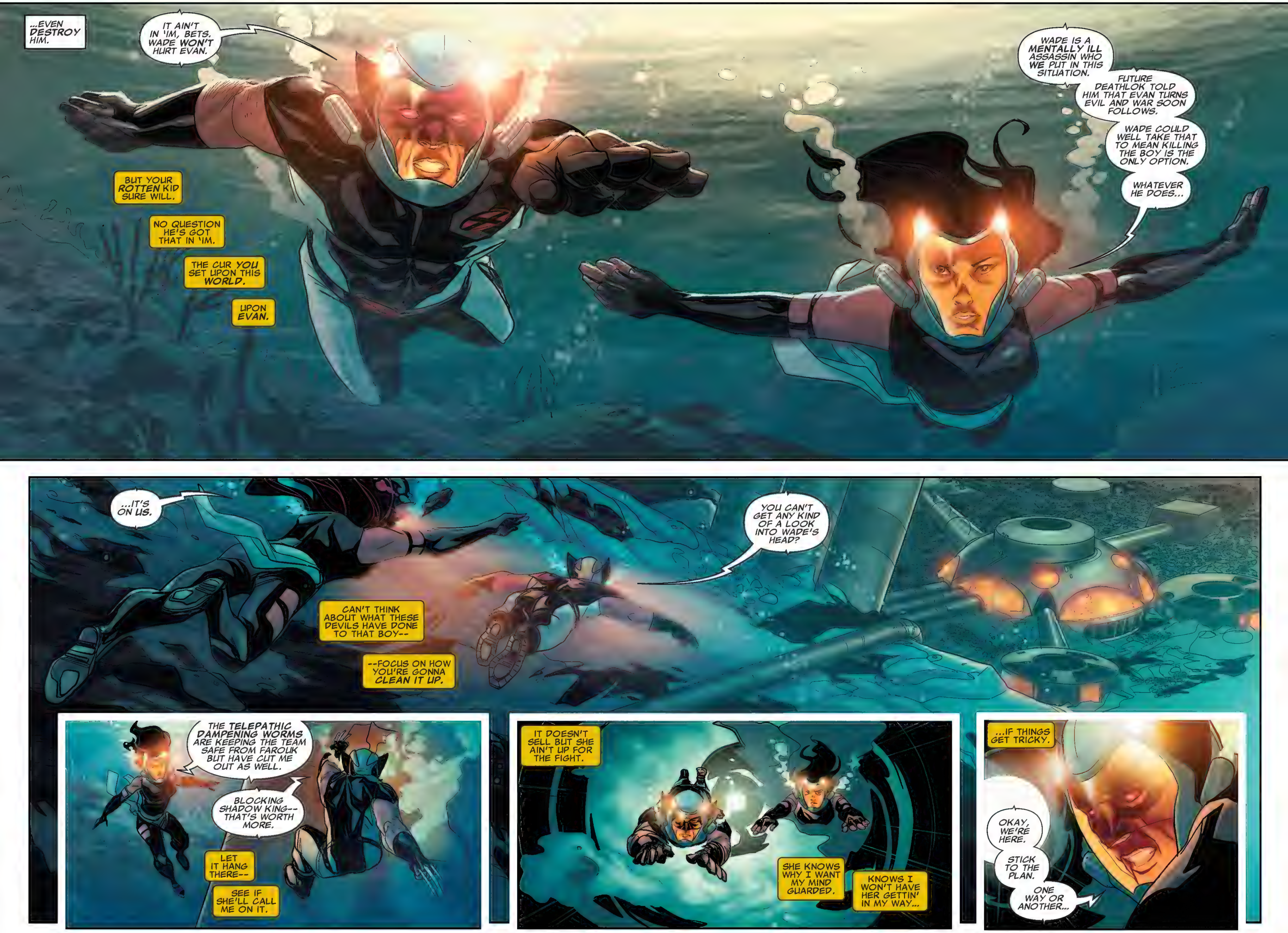

I COULDN'T DO IT THE FIRST TIME AROUND...

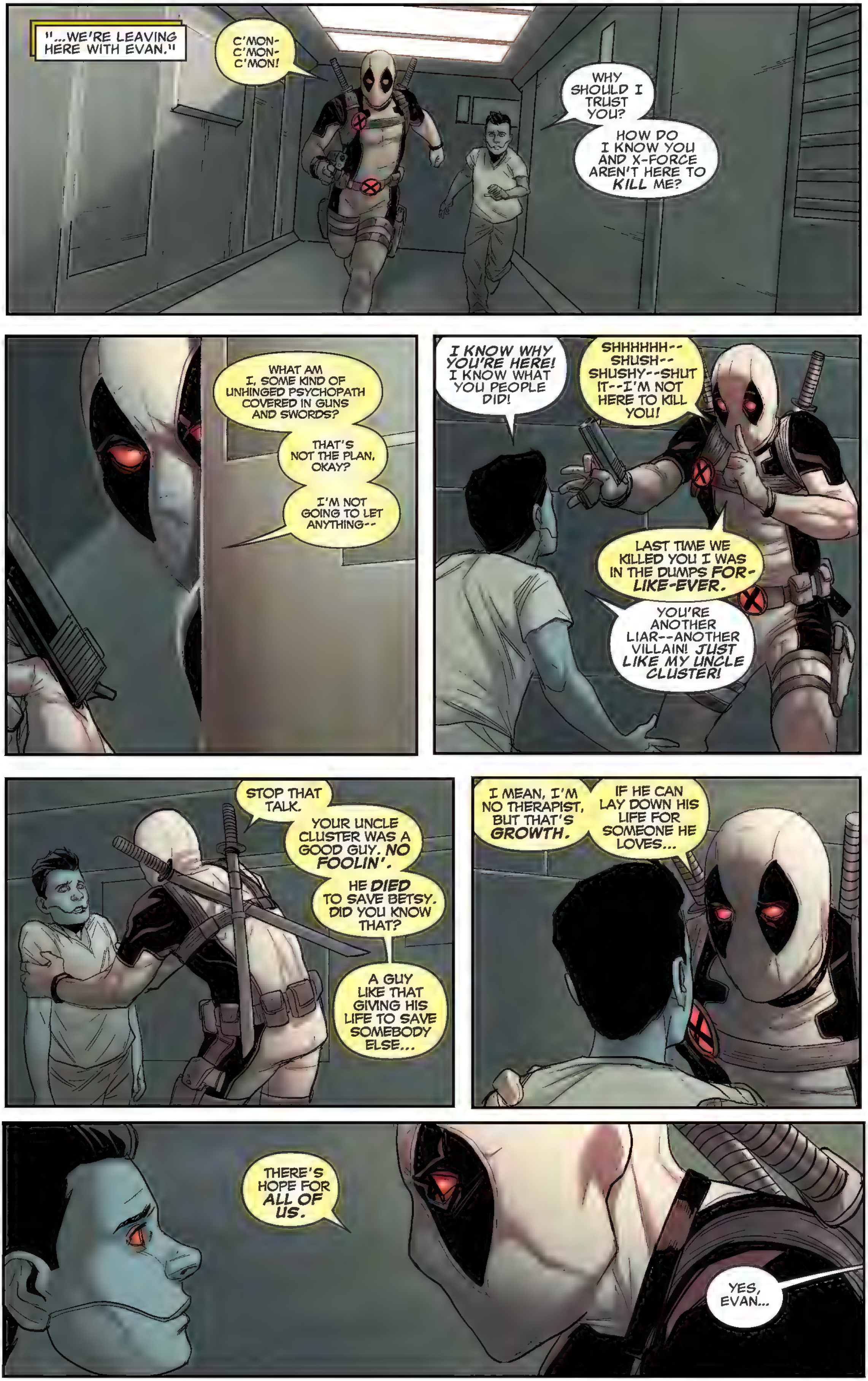

BUT I CAN DO IT NOW.

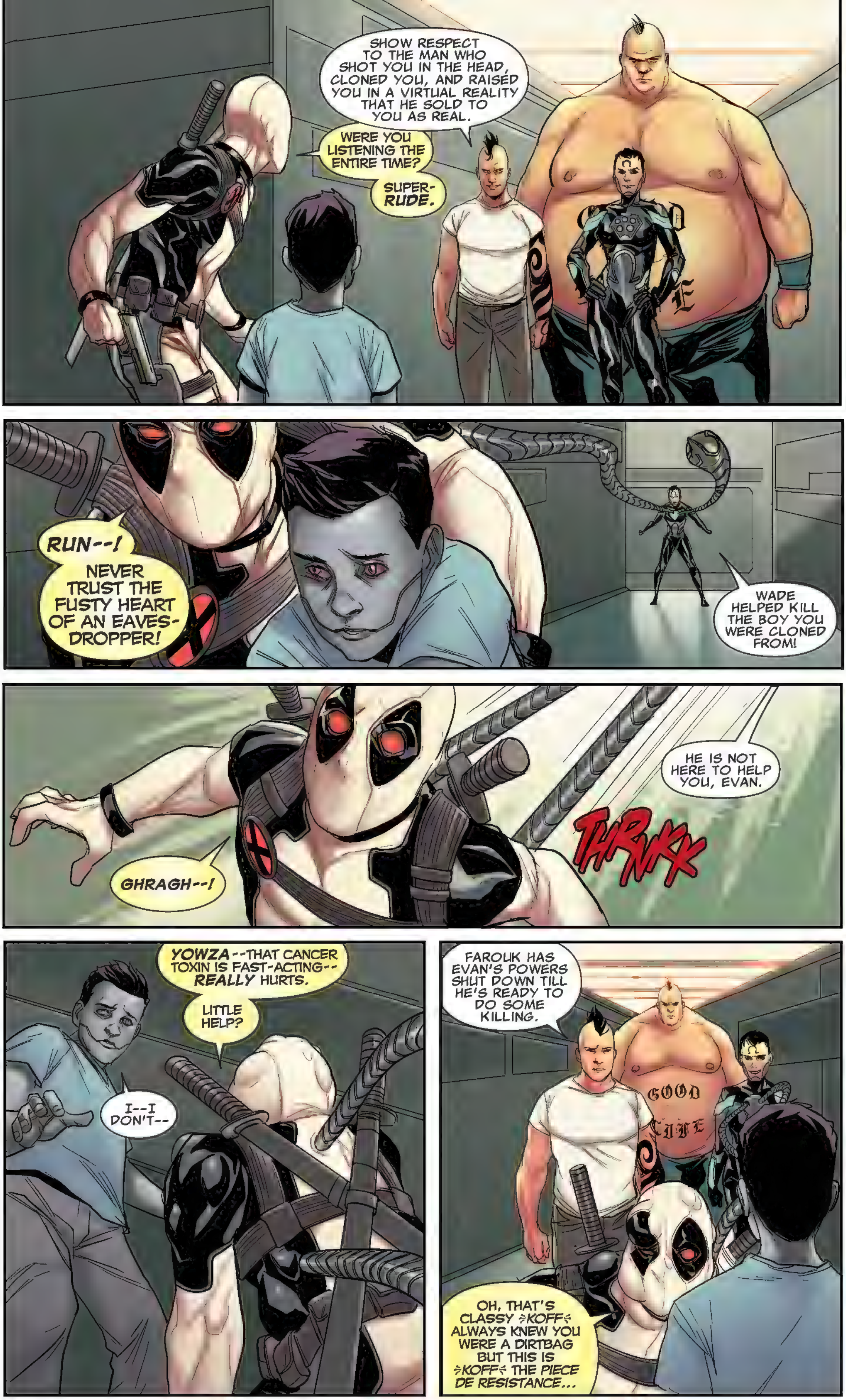
32 FINAL EXECUTION

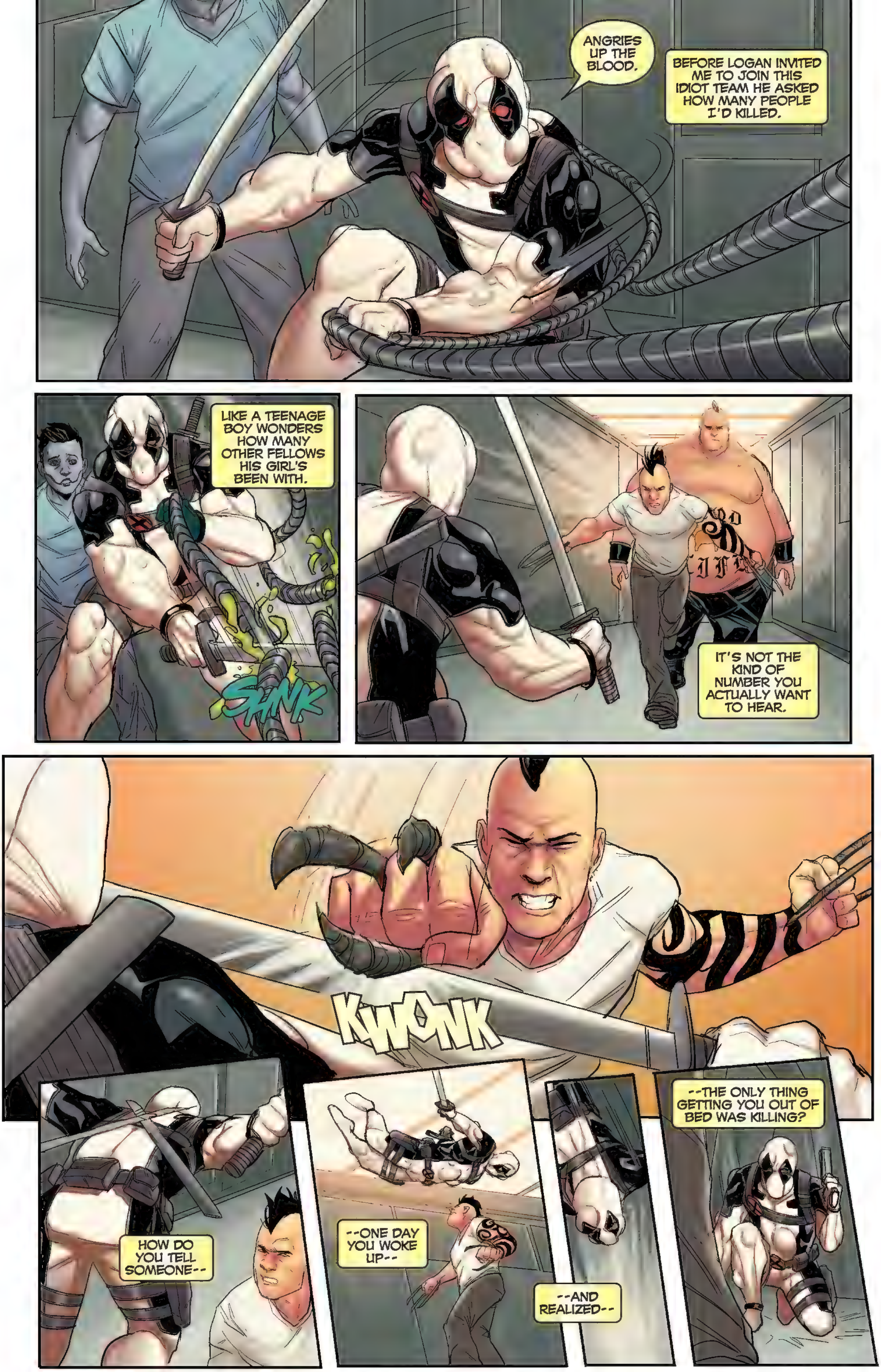
CHAPTER 8: OPPOSITE OF PROGRESS

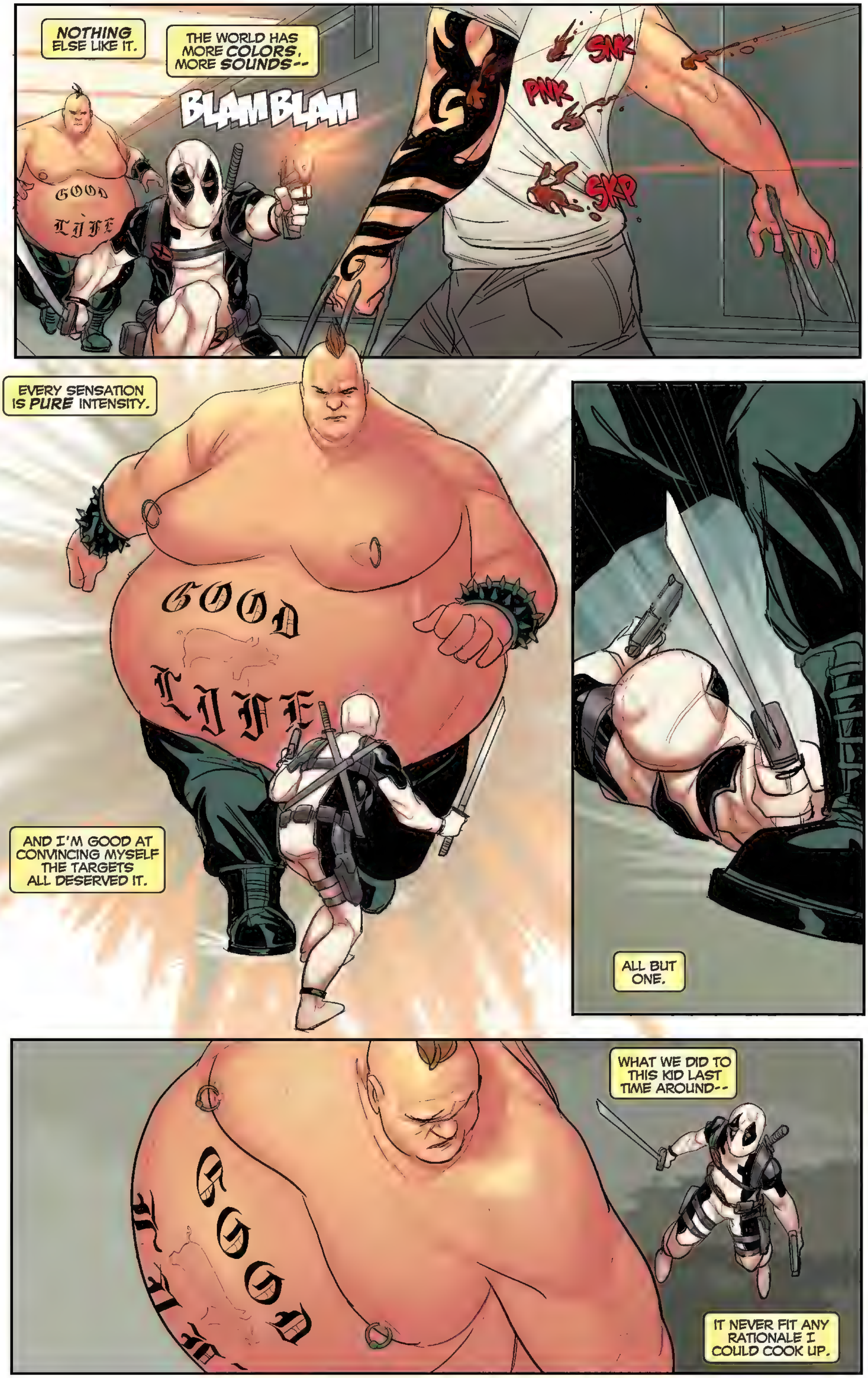

HE TESTED THE SEALS IN THE ADAMANTIUM PLATES A DOZEN TIMES.
THERE WAS NO MARGIN FOR ERROR, AS SABRETOOTH INCESSANTLY REMINDED HIM.
HE KNEW THE EASIEST WAY TO DEFEAT A MAN ISN'T HEAD-ON CONFRONTATION.
FEED YOUR ENEMY'S EGO. LEAVE HIM ASSURED THAT HIS PERSPECTIVE IS ENTIRELY RIGHTEOUS.
OVERCONFIDENT, HE WILL **SINK** FROM THE WEIGHT OF HIS OWN **NARCISSISM.**
HE CONSIDERED THE MISSTEPS HIS FATHER HAD LEFT IN HIS WAKE.
HIS OWN EXISTENCE PRIMARY AMONG THEM.
PULLING THE THREADS WAS SIMPLE.
COMING TO TERMS WITH HIS OWN MOTIVATIONS WASN'T.
BUT HE **DID** KNOW WHY HE'D SET THIS IN MOTION.
HE'D DO ANYTHING TO EARN HIS FATHER'S RESPECT...

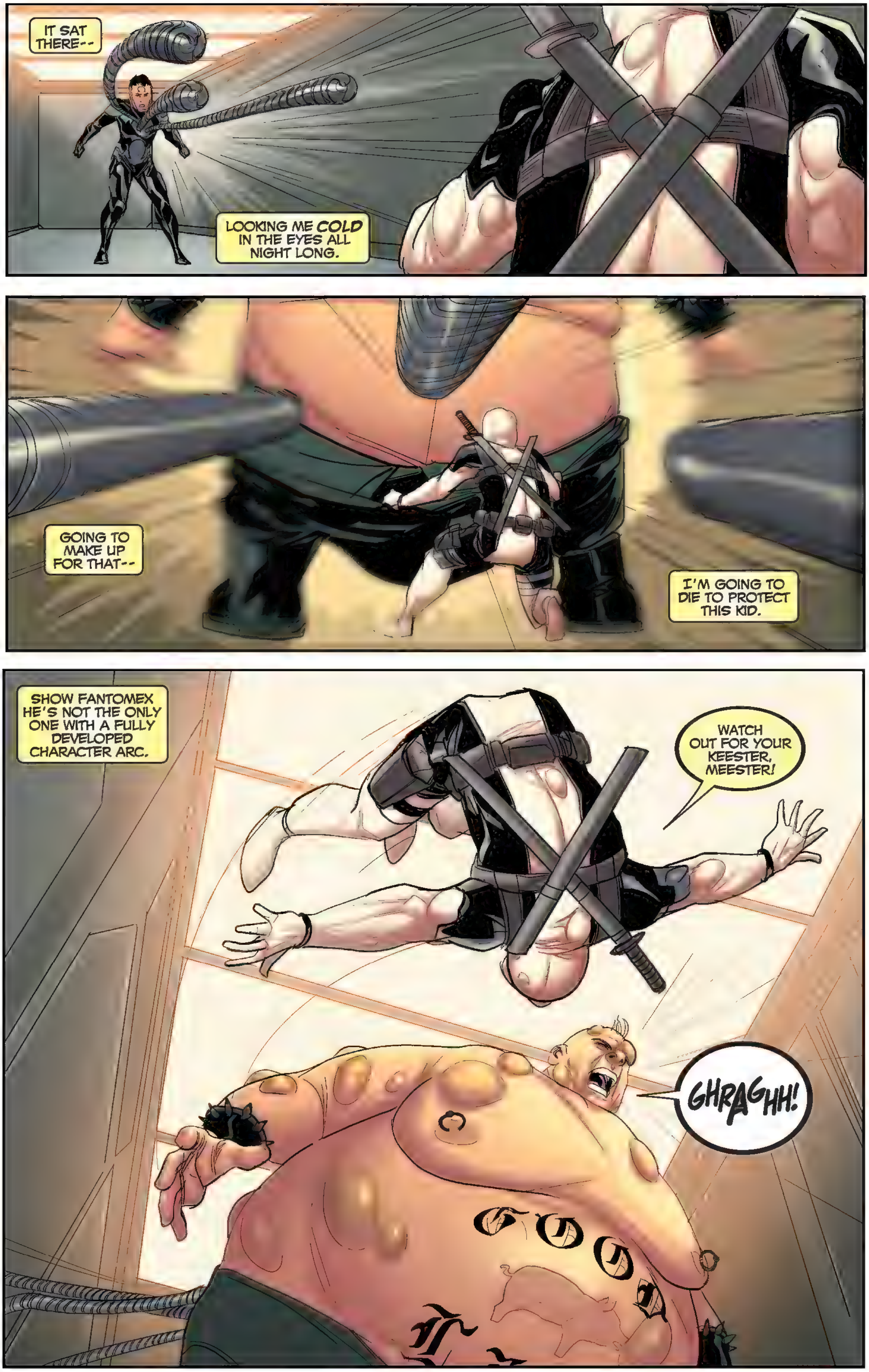

...EVEN DESTROY HIM.
IT AIN'T IN 'IM, BETS. WADE WON'T HURT EVAN.
BUT YOUR ROTTEN KID SURE WILL.
NO QUESTION HE'S GOT THAT IN 'IM.
THE CUR YOU SET UPON THIS WORLD.
UPON EVAN.
WADE IS A MENTALLY ILL ASSASSIN WHO WE PUT IN THIS SITUATION.
FUTURE DEATHLOK TOLD HIM THAT EVAN TURNS EVIL AND WAR SOON FOLLOWS.
WADE COULD WELL TAKE THAT TO MEAN KILLING THE BOY IS THE ONLY OPTION.
WHATEVER HE DOES...
...IT'S ON US.
CAN'T THINK ABOUT WHAT THESE DEVILS HAVE DONE TO THAT BOY--
--FOCUS ON HOW YOU'RE GONNA CLEAN IT UP.
YOU CAN'T GET ANY KIND OF A LOOK INTO WADE'S HEAD?
THE TELEPATHIC DAMPENING WORMS ARE KEEPING THE TEAM SAFE FROM FAROUK BUT HAVE CUT ME OUT AS WELL.
BLOCKING SHADOW KING-- THAT'S WORTH MORE.
LET IT HANG THERE--
SEE IF SHE'LL CALL ME ON IT.
IT DOESN'T SELL BUT SHE AIN'T UP FOR THE FIGHT.
SHE KNOWS WHY I WANT MY MIND GUARDED.
KNOWS I WON'T HAVE HER GETTIN' IN MY WAY...
...IF THINGS GET TRICKY.
OKAY, WE'RE HERE.
STICK TO THE PLAN.
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER...

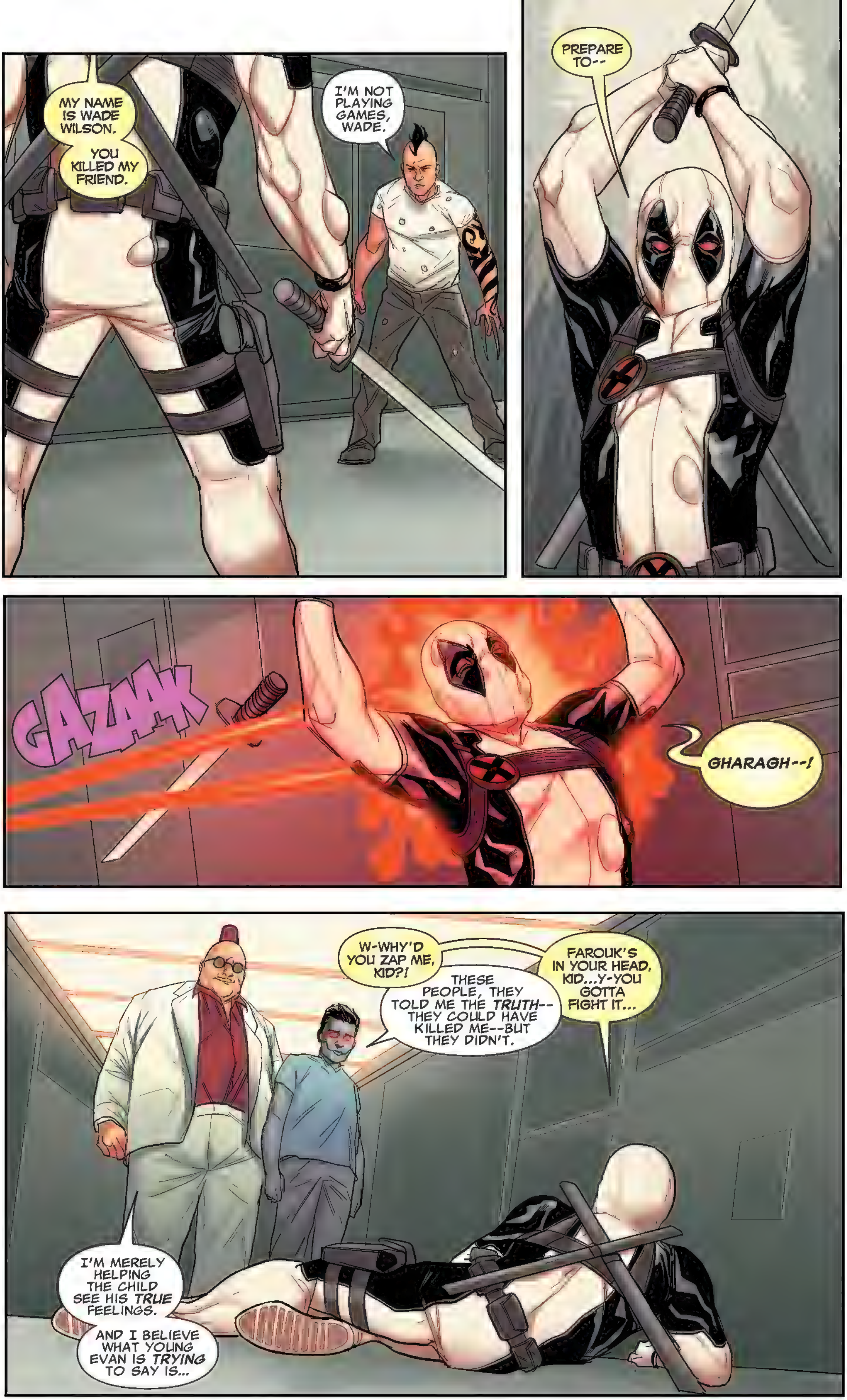

"...WE'RE LEAVING HERE WITH EVAN."
C'MON-C'MON-C'MON!
WHY SHOULD I TRUST YOU?
HOW DO I KNOW YOU AND X-FORCE AREN'T HERE TO *KILL* ME?
WHAT AM I, SOME KIND OF UNHINGED PSYCHOPATH COVERED IN GUNS AND SWORDS?
THAT'S NOT THE PLAN, OKAY?
I'M NOT GOING TO LET ANYTHING--
I KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE! I KNOW WHAT YOU PEOPLE DID!
SHHHHHH--SHUSH--SHUSHY--SHUT IT--I'M NOT HERE TO KILL YOU!
LAST TIME WE KILLED YOU I WAS IN THE DUMPS *FOR-LIKE-EVER.*
YOU'RE ANOTHER LIAR--ANOTHER VILLAIN! *JUST LIKE MY UNCLE CLUSTER!*
STOP THAT TALK.
YOUR UNCLE CLUSTER WAS A GOOD GUY. *NO FOOLIN'.*
HE *DIED* TO SAVE BETSY. DID YOU KNOW THAT?
A GUY LIKE THAT GIVING HIS LIFE TO SAVE SOMEBODY ELSE...
I MEAN, I'M NO THERAPIST, BUT THAT'S *GROWTH.*
IF HE CAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR SOMEONE HE LOVES...
THERE'S HOPE FOR *ALL OF US.*
YES, EVAN...

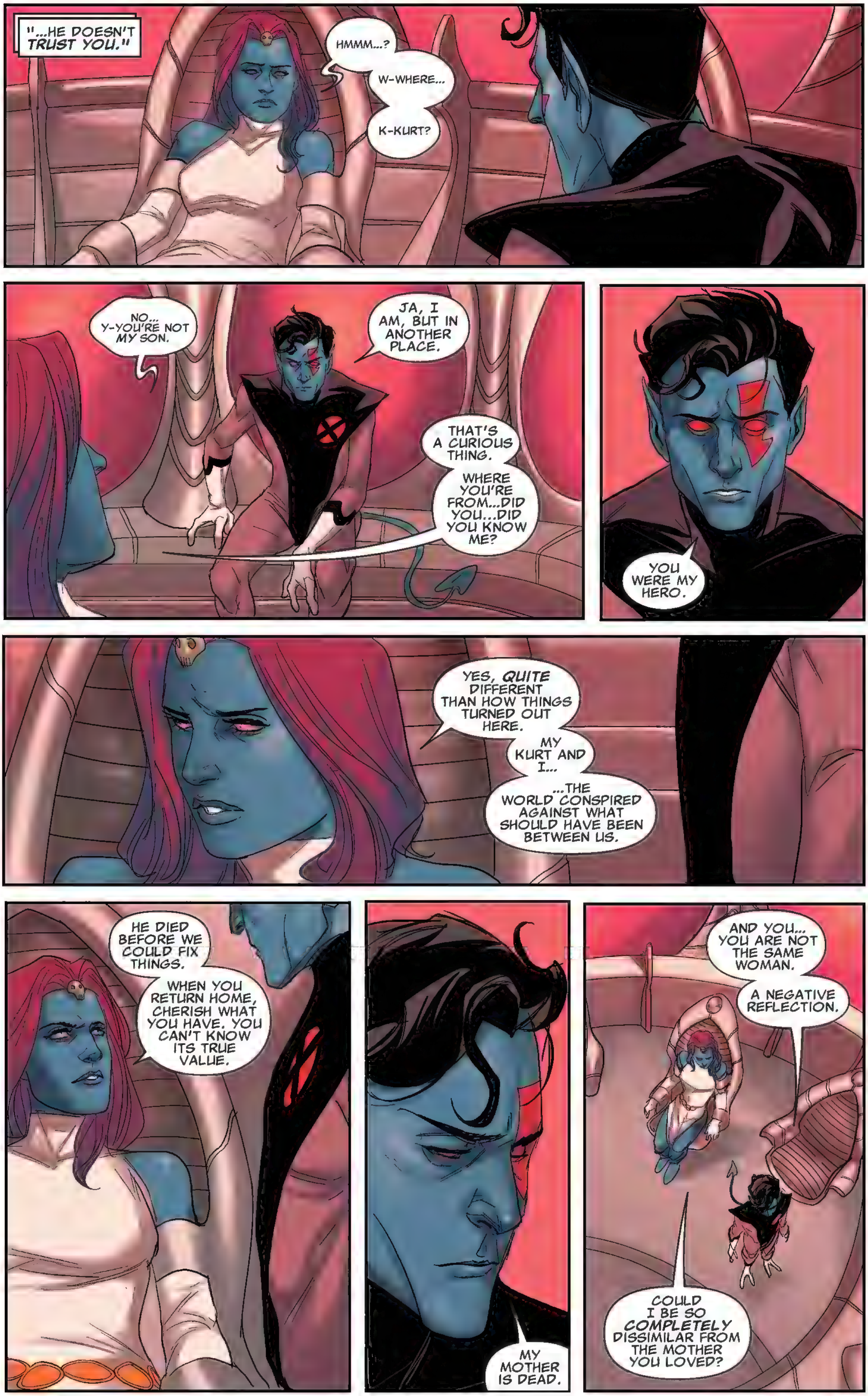

SHOW RESPECT TO THE MAN WHO SHOT YOU IN THE HEAD, CLONED YOU, AND RAISED YOU IN A VIRTUAL REALITY THAT HE SOLD TO YOU AS REAL.
WERE YOU LISTENING THE ENTIRE TIME?
SUPER-*RUDE.*
RUN--!
NEVER TRUST THE FUSTY HEART OF AN EAVES-DROPPER!
WADE HELPED KILL THE BOY YOU WERE CLONED FROM!
HE IS NOT HERE TO HELP YOU, EVAN.
THRNKK
GHRAGH--!
YOWZA--THAT CANCER TOXIN IS FAST-ACTING--*REALLY* HURTS.
LITTLE HELP?
I--I DON'T--
FAROUK HAS EVAN'S POWERS SHUT DOWN TILL HE'S READY TO DO SOME KILLING.
GOOD LIFE
OH, THAT'S CLASSY *KOFF* ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE A DIRTBAG BUT THIS IS *KOFF* THE PIECE DE RESISTANCE...

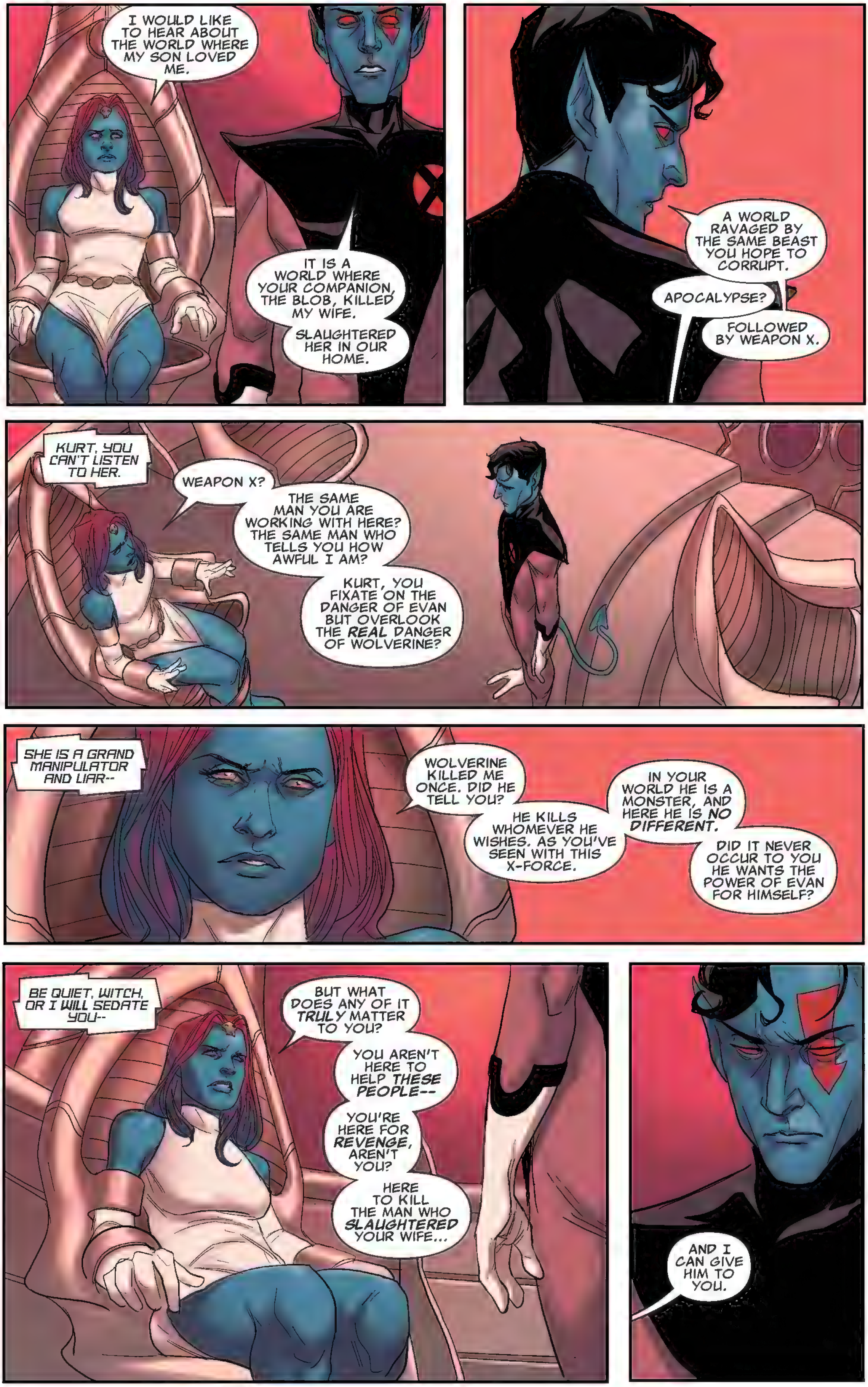

ANGRIES UP THE BLOOD.
BEFORE LOGAN INVITED ME TO JOIN THIS IDIOT TEAM HE ASKED HOW MANY PEOPLE I'D KILLED.
LIKE A TEENAGE BOY WONDERS HOW MANY OTHER FELLOWS HIS GIRL'S BEEN WITH.
SHNK
IT'S NOT THE KIND OF NUMBER YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO HEAR.
KWONK
HOW DO YOU TELL SOMEONE--
--ONE DAY YOU WOKE UP--
--AND REALIZED--
--THE ONLY THING GETTING YOU OUT OF BED WAS KILLING?

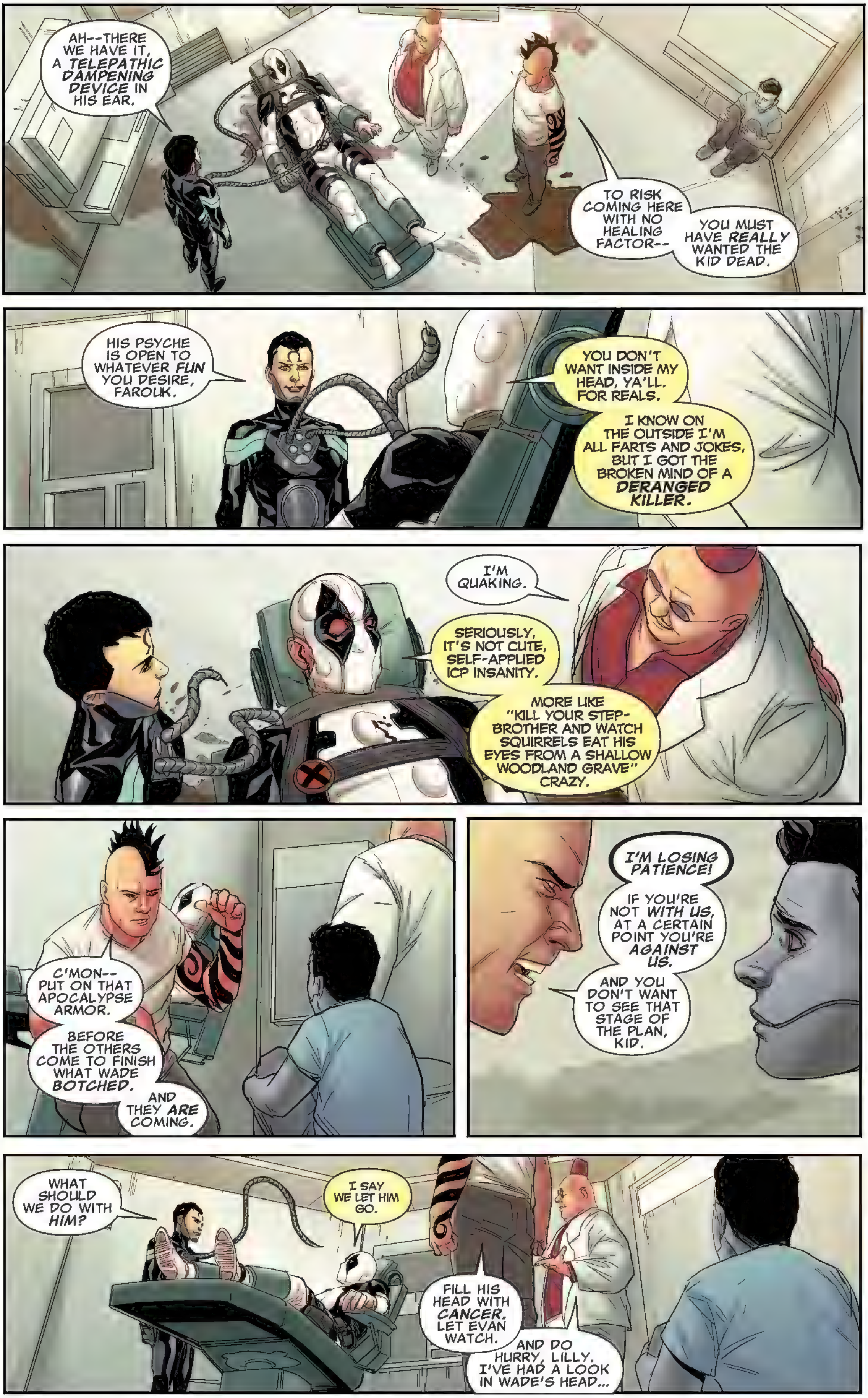

NOTHING ELSE LIKE IT.
THE WORLD HAS MORE COLORS, MORE SOUNDS--
BLAM BLAM
SNK
PNK
SKP
GOOD LIFE
EVERY SENSATION IS PURE INTENSITY.
GOOD LIFE
AND I'M GOOD AT CONVINCING MYSELF THE TARGETS ALL DESERVED IT.
ALL BUT ONE.
GOOD LIFE
WHAT WE DID TO THIS KID LAST TIME AROUND--
IT NEVER FIT ANY RATIONALE I COULD COOK UP.

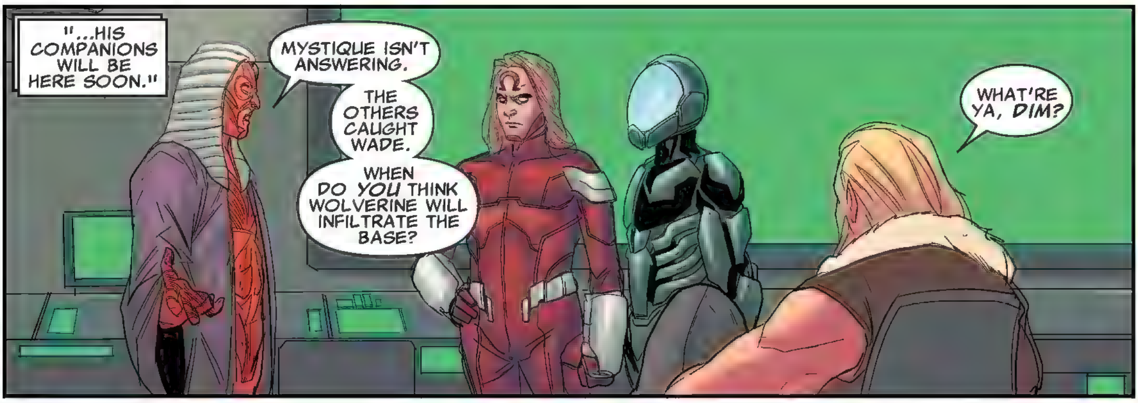

IT SAT THERE--
LOOKING ME COLD IN THE EYES ALL NIGHT LONG.
GOING TO MAKE UP FOR THAT--
I'M GOING TO DIE TO PROTECT THIS KID.
SHOW FANTOMEX HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH A FULLY DEVELOPED CHARACTER ARC.
WATCH OUT FOR YOUR KEESTER, MEESTER!
GHRAGHH!

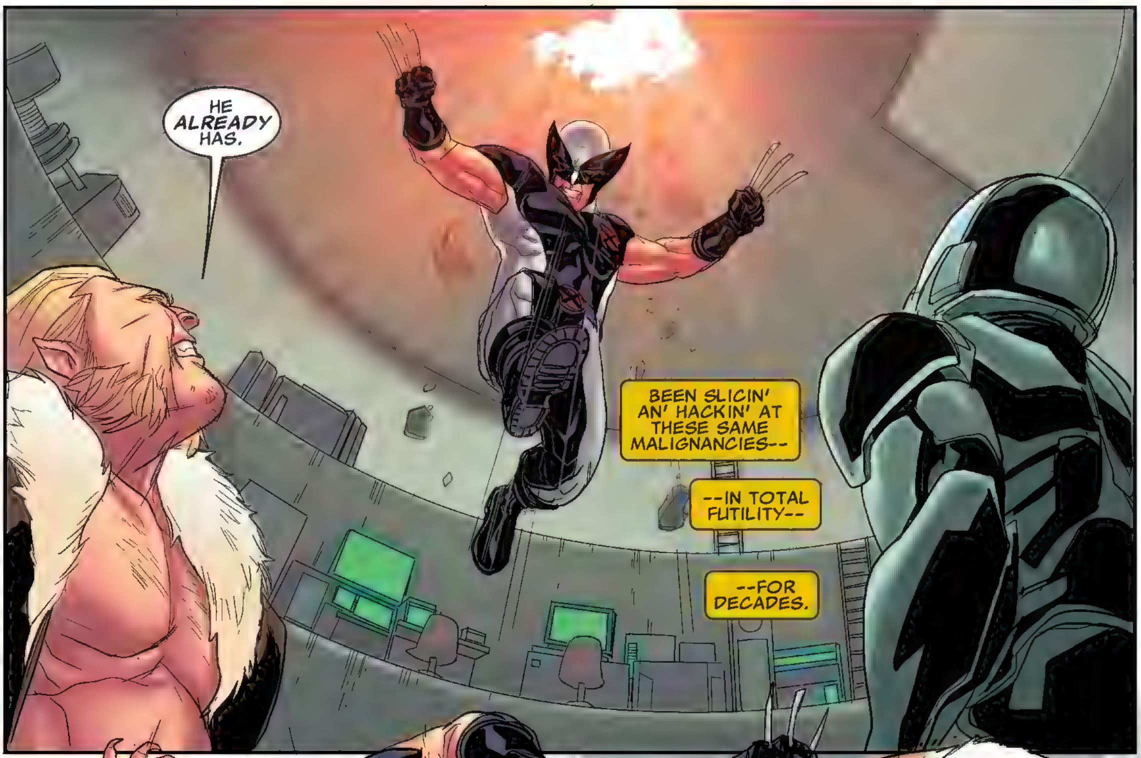

MY NAME IS WADE WILSON.
YOU KILLED MY FRIEND.
I'M NOT PLAYING GAMES, WADE.
PREPARE TO--
GAZAAK
GHARAGH--!
W-WHY'D YOU ZAP ME, KID?!
FAROUK'S IN YOUR HEAD, KID...Y-YOU GOTTA FIGHT IT...
THESE PEOPLE, THEY TOLD ME THE TRUTH--THEY COULD HAVE KILLED ME--BUT THEY DIDN'T.
I'M MERELY HELPING THE CHILD SEE HIS TRUE FEELINGS.
AND I BELIEVE WHAT YOUNG EVAN IS TRYING TO SAY IS...

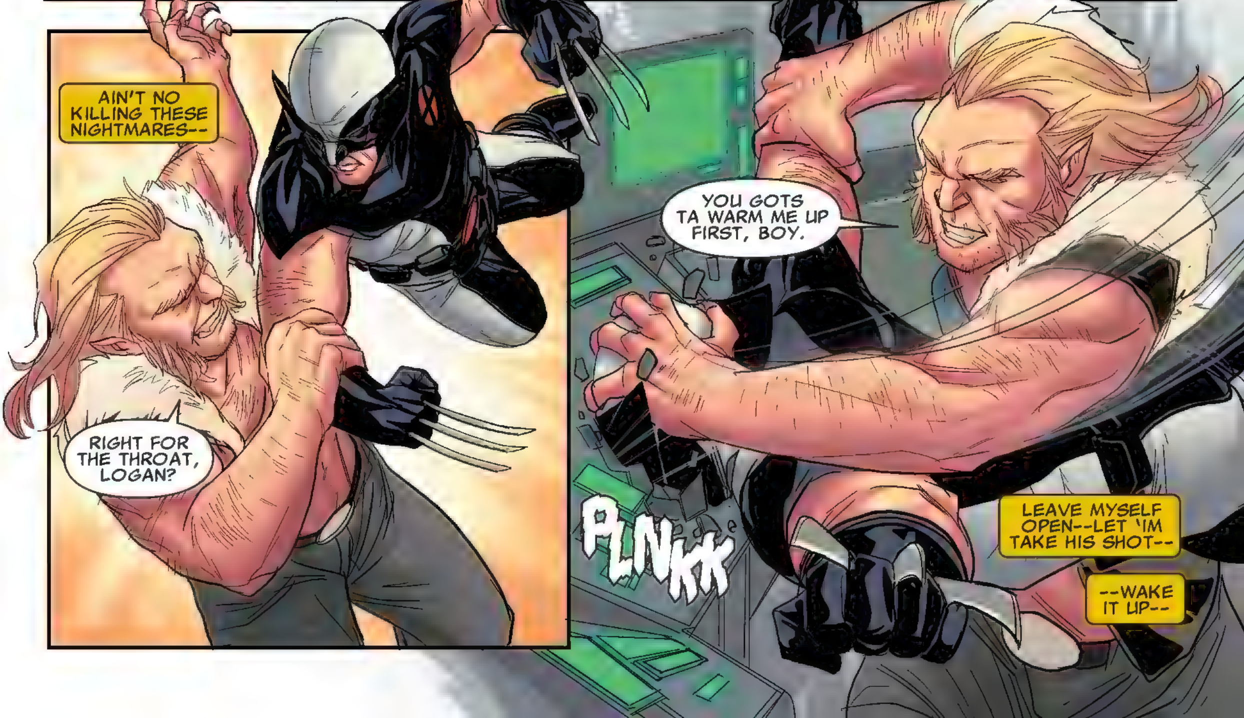

"...HE DOESN'T TRUST YOU."
HMMM...?
W-WHERE...
K-KURT?
NO... Y-YOU'RE NOT MY SON.
JA, I AM, BUT IN ANOTHER PLACE.
THAT'S A CURIOUS THING.
WHERE YOU'RE FROM...DID YOU...DID YOU KNOW ME?
YOU WERE MY HERO.
YES, QUITE DIFFERENT THAN HOW THINGS TURNED OUT HERE.
MY KURT AND I...
...THE WORLD CONSPIRED AGAINST WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETWEEN US.
HE DIED BEFORE WE COULD FIX THINGS.
WHEN YOU RETURN HOME, CHERISH WHAT YOU HAVE. YOU CAN'T KNOW ITS TRUE VALUE.
MY MOTHER IS DEAD.
AND YOU... YOU ARE NOT THE SAME WOMAN.
A NEGATIVE REFLECTION.
COULD I BE SO COMPLETELY DISSIMILAR FROM THE MOTHER YOU LOVED?

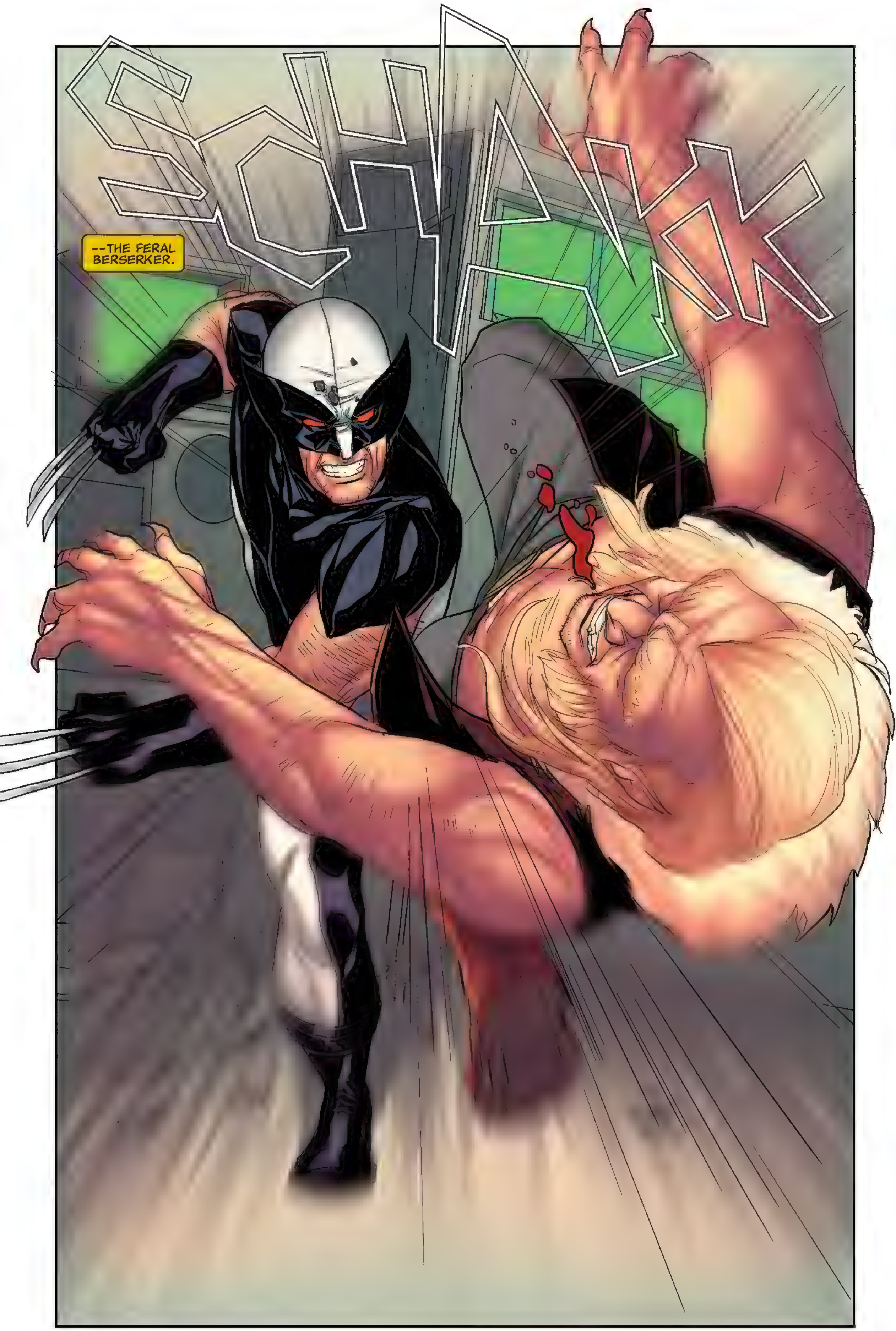

I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT THE WORLD WHERE MY SON LOVED ME.
IT IS A WORLD WHERE YOUR COMPANION, THE BLOB, KILLED MY WIFE.
SLAUGHTERED HER IN OUR HOME.
A WORLD RAVAGED BY THE SAME BEAST YOU HOPE TO CORRUPT.
APOCALYPSE?
FOLLOWED BY WEAPON X.
KURT, YOU CAN'T LISTEN TO HER.
WEAPON X?
THE SAME MAN YOU ARE WORKING WITH HERE? THE SAME MAN WHO TELLS YOU HOW AWFUL I AM?
KURT, YOU FIXATE ON THE DANGER OF EVAN BUT OVERLOOK THE *REAL* DANGER OF WOLVERINE?
SHE IS A GRAND MANIPULATOR AND LIAR--
WOLVERINE KILLED ME ONCE. DID HE TELL YOU?
HE KILLS WHOMEVER HE WISHES. AS YOU'VE SEEN WITH THIS X-FORCE.
IN YOUR WORLD HE IS A MONSTER, AND HERE HE IS *NO DIFFERENT.*
DID IT NEVER OCCUR TO YOU HE WANTS THE POWER OF EVAN FOR HIMSELF?
BE QUIET, WITCH, OR I *WILL* SEDATE YOU--
BUT WHAT DOES ANY OF IT *TRULY* MATTER TO YOU?
YOU AREN'T HERE TO HELP *THESE PEOPLE--*
YOU'RE HERE FOR *REVENGE,* AREN'T YOU?
HERE TO KILL THE MAN WHO *SLAUGHTERED* YOUR WIFE...
AND I CAN GIVE HIM TO YOU.

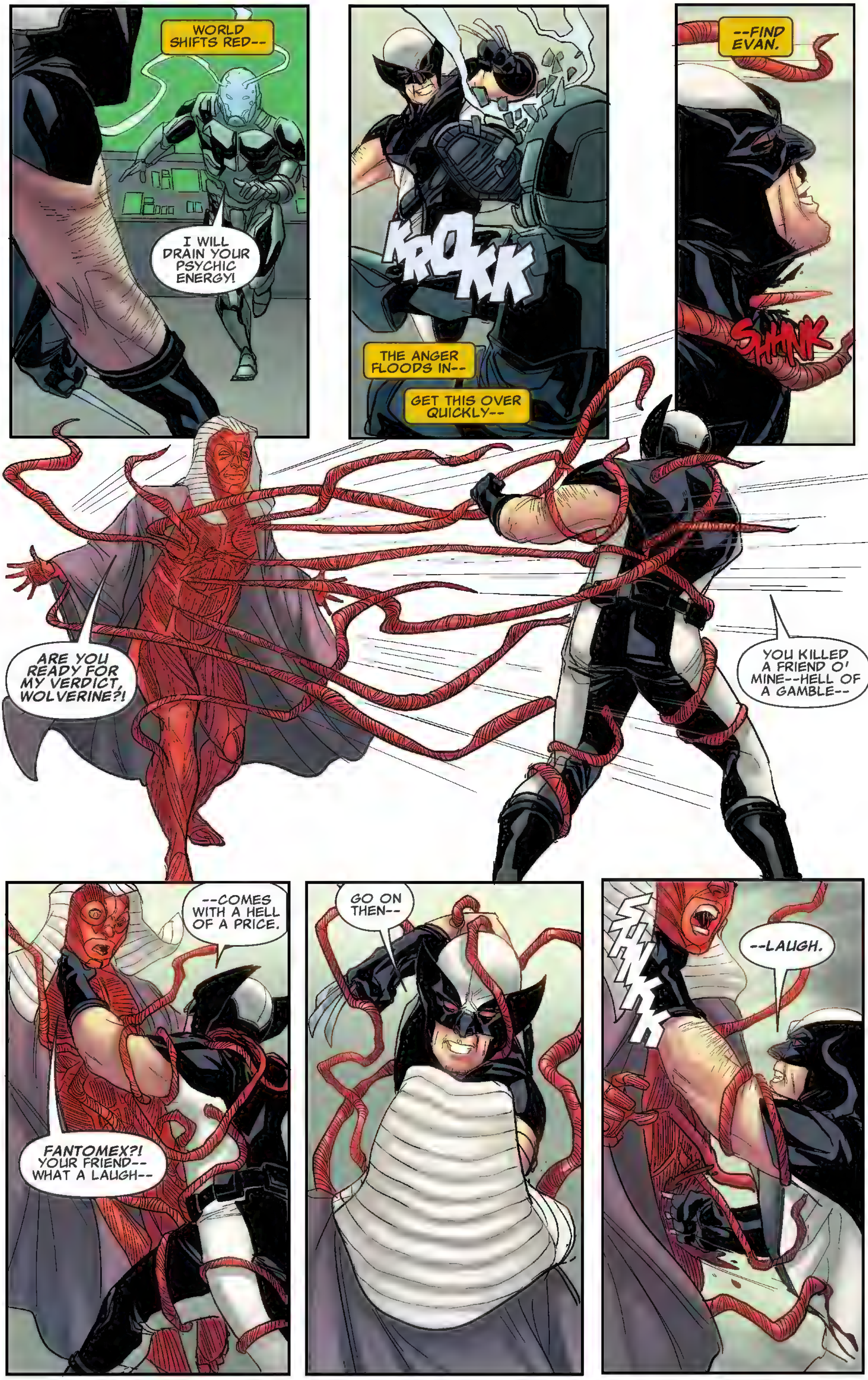

AH--THERE WE HAVE IT, A TELEPATHIC DAMPENING DEVICE IN HIS EAR.
TO RISK COMING HERE WITH NO HEALING FACTOR--
YOU MUST HAVE REALLY WANTED THE KID DEAD.
HIS PSYCHE IS OPEN TO WHATEVER FUN YOU DESIRE, FAROUK.
YOU DON'T WANT INSIDE MY HEAD, YA'LL. FOR REALS.
I KNOW ON THE OUTSIDE I'M ALL FARTS AND JOKES, BUT I GOT THE BROKEN MIND OF A DERANGED KILLER.
I'M QUAKING.
SERIOUSLY, IT'S NOT CUTE, SELF-APPLIED ICP INSANITY.
MORE LIKE "KILL YOUR STEP-BROTHER AND WATCH SQUIRRELS EAT HIS EYES FROM A SHALLOW WOODLAND GRAVE" CRAZY.
C'MON--PUT ON THAT APOCALYPSE ARMOR.
BEFORE THE OTHERS COME TO FINISH WHAT WADE BOTCHED.
AND THEY ARE COMING.
I'M LOSING PATIENCE!
IF YOU'RE NOT WITH US, AT A CERTAIN POINT YOU'RE AGAINST US.
AND YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THAT STAGE OF THE PLAN, KID.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH HIM?
I SAY WE LET HIM GO.
FILL HIS HEAD WITH CANCER. LET EVAN WATCH.
AND DO HURRY, LILLY. I'VE HAD A LOOK IN WADE'S HEAD...

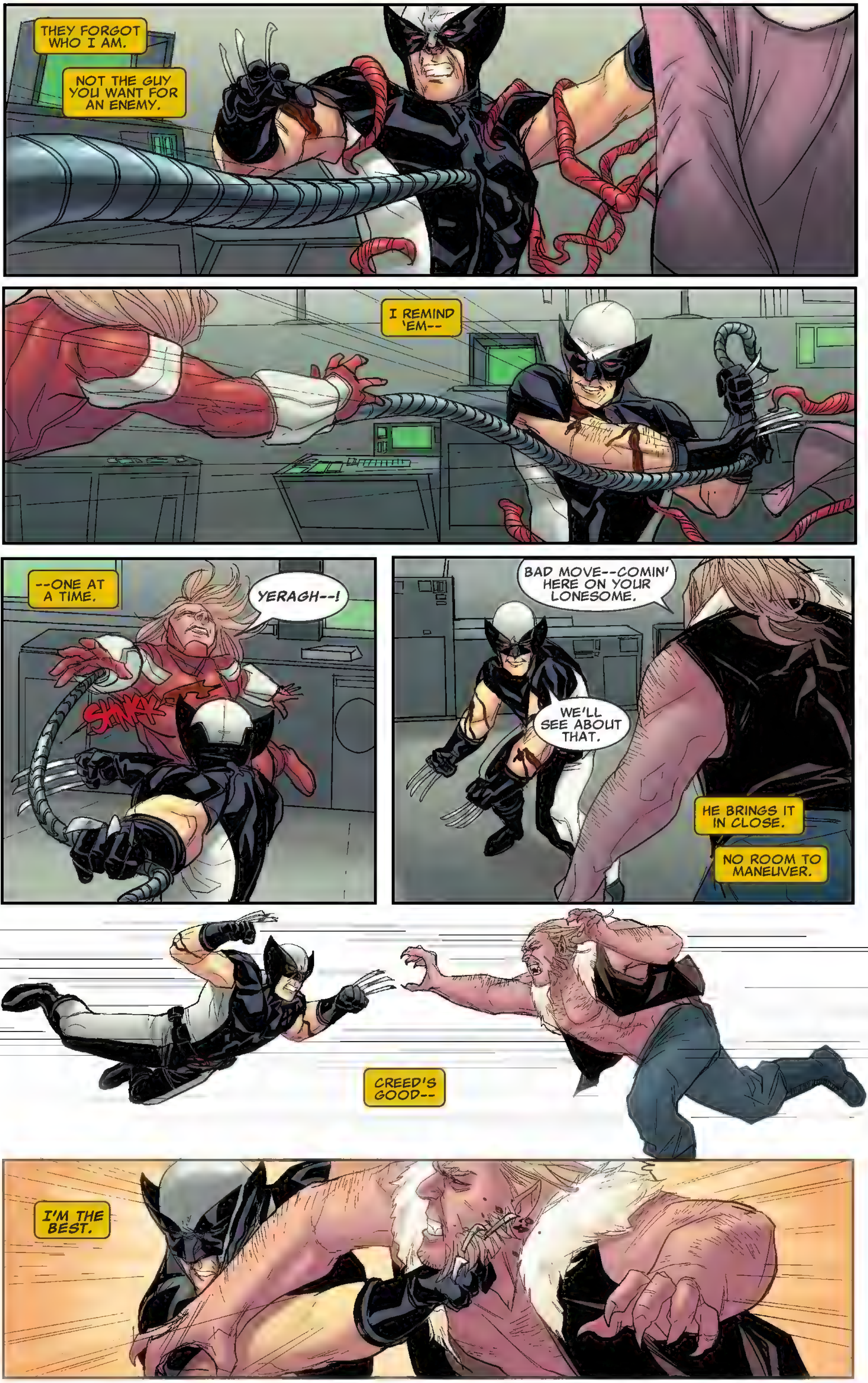

"...HIS COMPANIONS WILL BE HERE SOON."
MYSTIQUE ISN'T ANSWERING.
THE OTHERS CAUGHT WADE.
WHEN DO *YOU* THINK WOLVERINE WILL INFILTRATE THE BASE?
WHAT'RE YA, *DIM?*

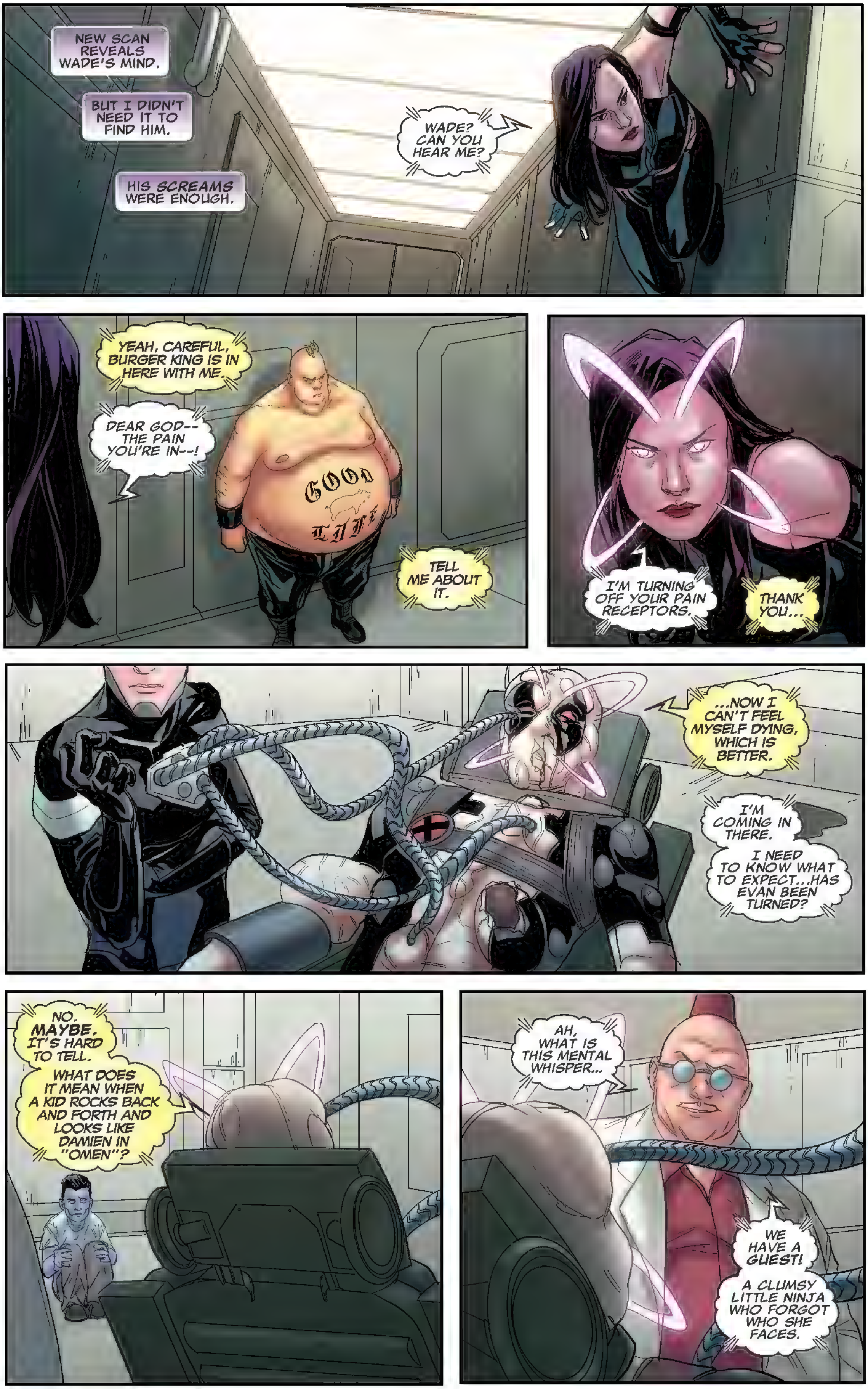

HE *ALREADY* HAS.
BEEN SLICIN' AN' HACKIN' AT THESE SAME MALIGNANCIES--
--IN TOTAL FUTILITY--
--FOR DECADES.

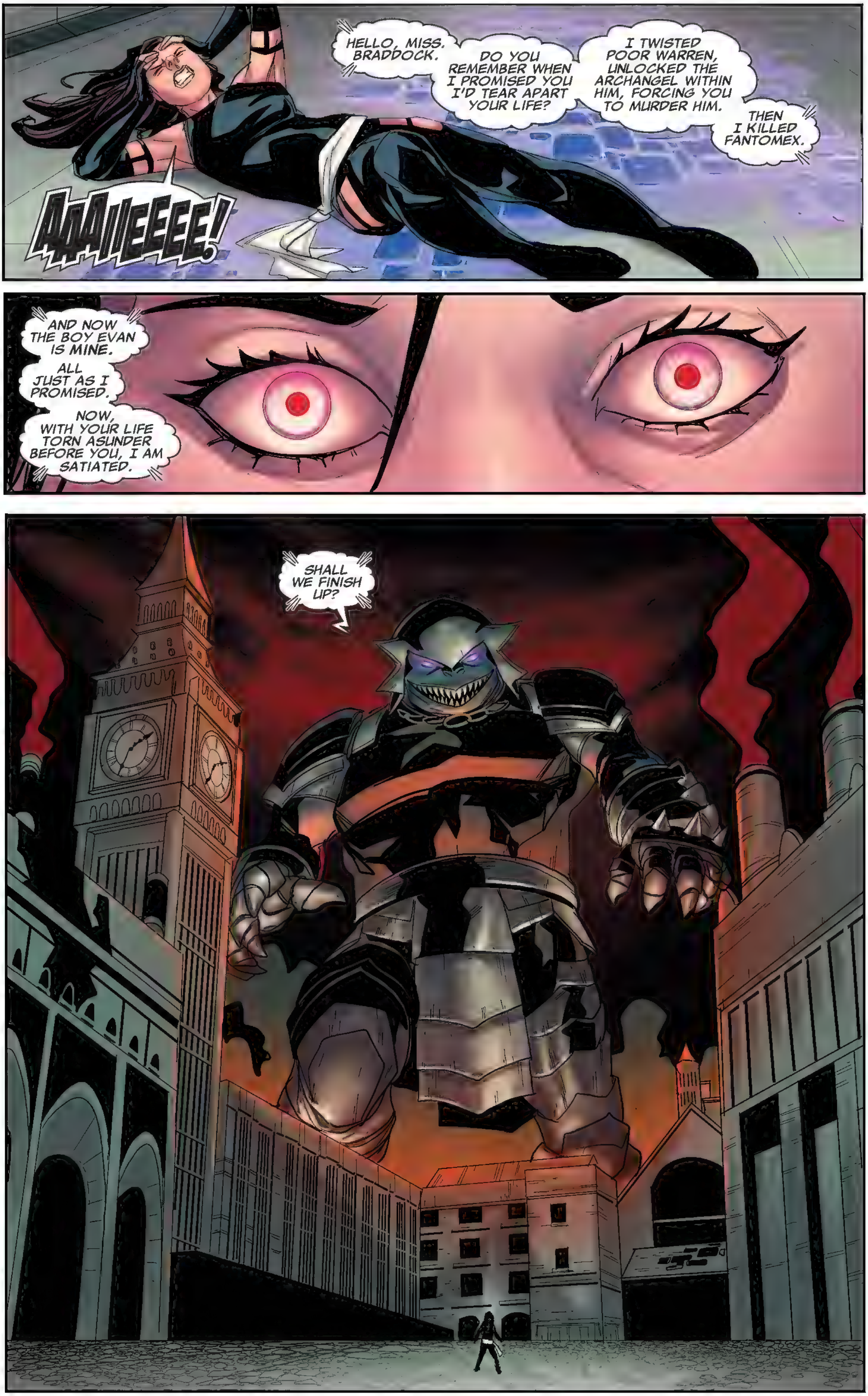

AIN'T NO KILLING THESE NIGHTMARES--
RIGHT FOR THE THROAT, LOGAN?
YOU GOTS TA WARM ME UP FIRST, BOY.
PLNKK
LEAVE MYSELF OPEN--LET 'IM TAKE HIS SHOT--
--WAKE IT UP--

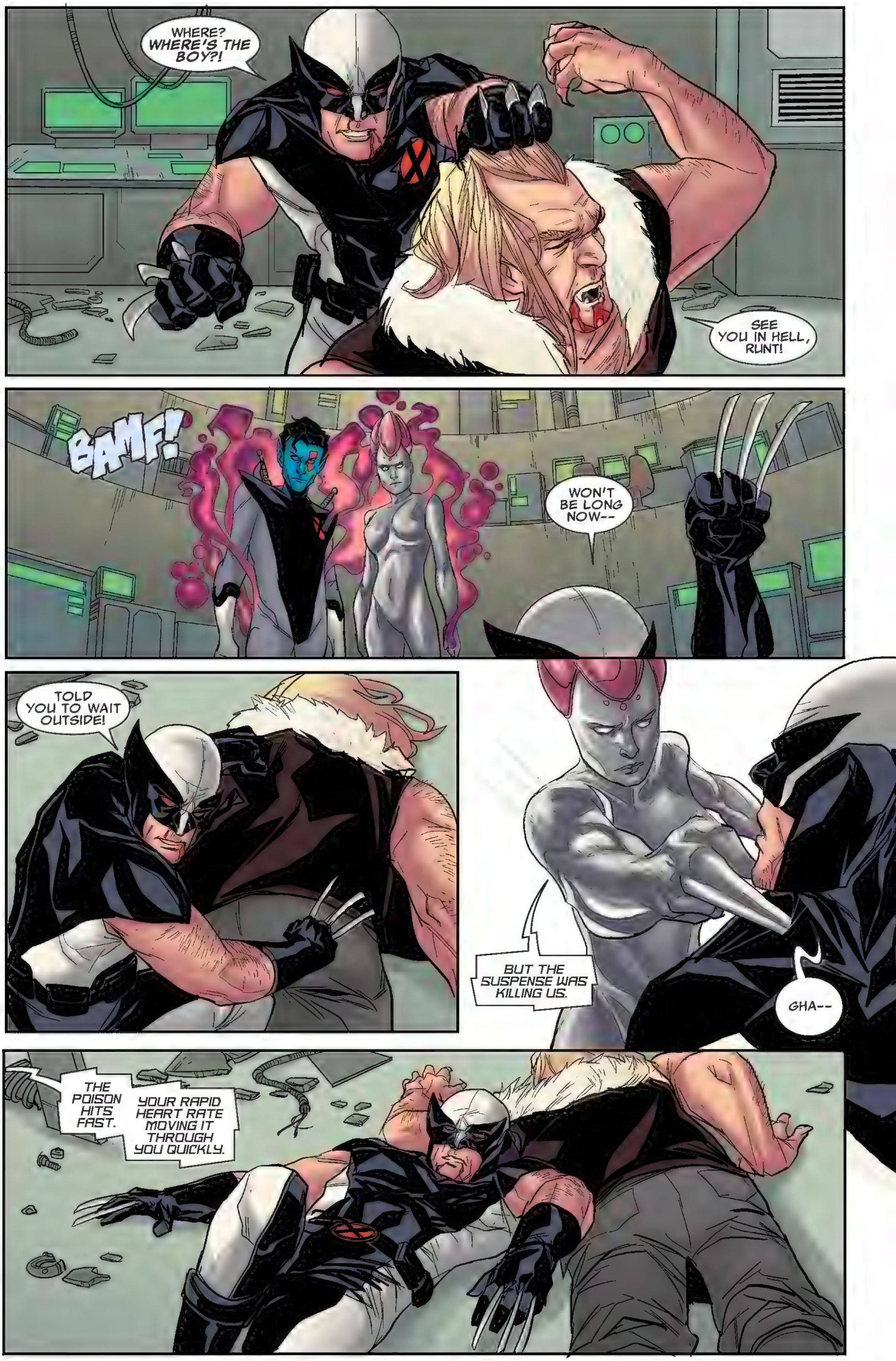

--THE FERAL BERSERKER.
SCHAKK

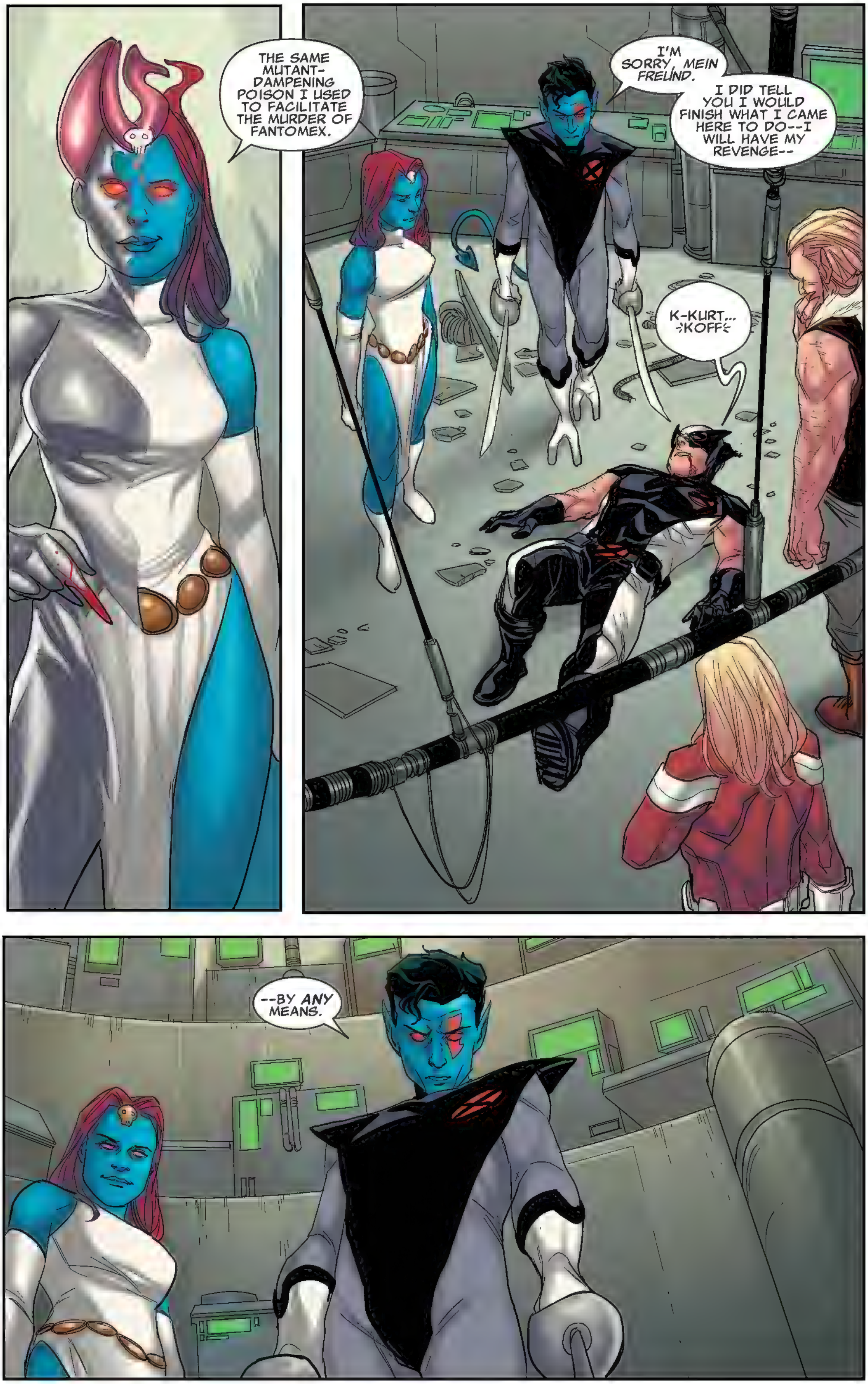

WORLD SHIFTS RED--
I WILL DRAIN YOUR PSYCHIC ENERGY!
KROKK
THE ANGER FLOODS IN--
GET THIS OVER QUICKLY--
--FIND EVAN.
SHNK
ARE YOU READY FOR MY VERDICT, WOLVERINE?!
YOU KILLED A FRIEND O' MINE--HELL OF A GAMBLE--
FANTOMEX?! YOUR FRIEND--WHAT A LAUGH--
--COMES WITH A HELL OF A PRICE.
GO ON THEN--
SHNKK
--LAUGH.


THEY FORGOT WHO I AM.
NOT THE GUY YOU WANT FOR AN ENEMY.
I REMIND 'EM--
--ONE AT A TIME.
YERAGH--!
SHNKK
BAD MOVE--COMIN' HERE ON YOUR LONESOME.
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT.
HE BRINGS IT IN CLOSE.
NO ROOM TO MANEUVER.
CREED'S GOOD--
I'M THE BEST.

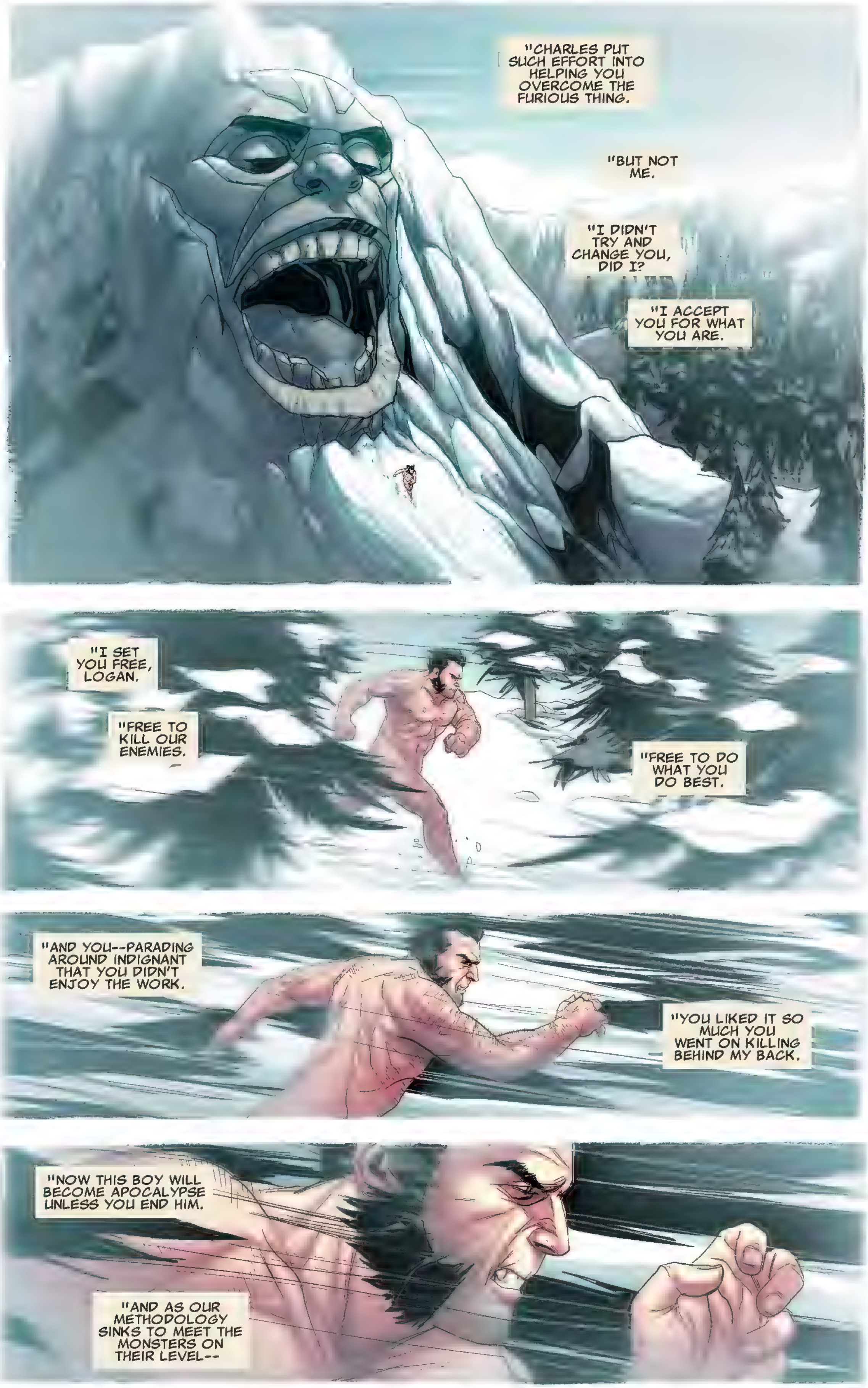

NEW SCAN REVEALS WADE'S MIND.
BUT I DIDN'T NEED IT TO FIND HIM.
HIS SCREAMS WERE ENOUGH.
WADE? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
YEAH, CAREFUL, BURGER KING IS IN HERE WITH ME.
DEAR GOD-- THE PAIN YOU'RE IN--!
GOOD LIFE
TELL ME ABOUT IT.
I'M TURNING OFF YOUR PAIN RECEPTORS.
THANK YOU...
...NOW I CAN'T FEEL MYSELF DYING, WHICH IS BETTER.
I'M COMING IN THERE.
I NEED TO KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT...HAS EVAN BEEN TURNED?
NO. MAYBE. IT'S HARD TO TELL.
WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN A KID ROCKS BACK AND FORTH AND LOOKS LIKE DAMIEN IN "OMEN"?
AH, WHAT IS THIS MENTAL WHISPER...
WE HAVE A GUEST!
A CLUMSY LITTLE NINJA WHO FORGOT WHO SHE FACES.

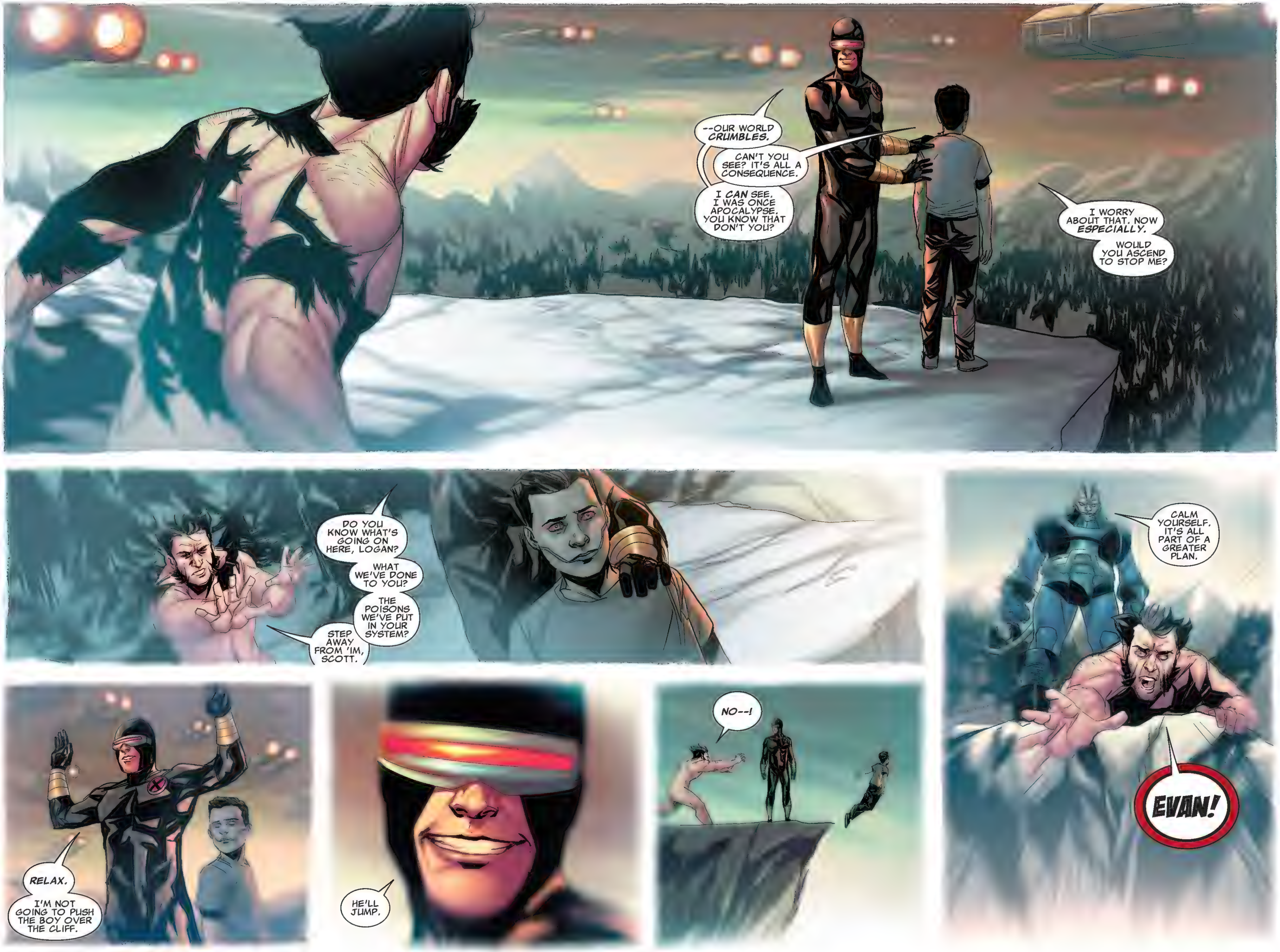

HELLO, MISS BRADDOCK.
DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN I PROMISED YOU I'D TEAR APART YOUR LIFE?
I TWISTED POOR WARREN, UNLOCKED THE ARCHANGEL WITHIN HIM, FORCING YOU TO MURDER HIM.
THEN I KILLED FANTOMEX.
AAAIIEEEE!
AND NOW THE BOY EVAN IS MINE.
ALL JUST AS I PROMISED.
NOW, WITH YOUR LIFE TORN ASUNDER BEFORE YOU, I AM SATIATED.
SHALL WE FINISH UP?

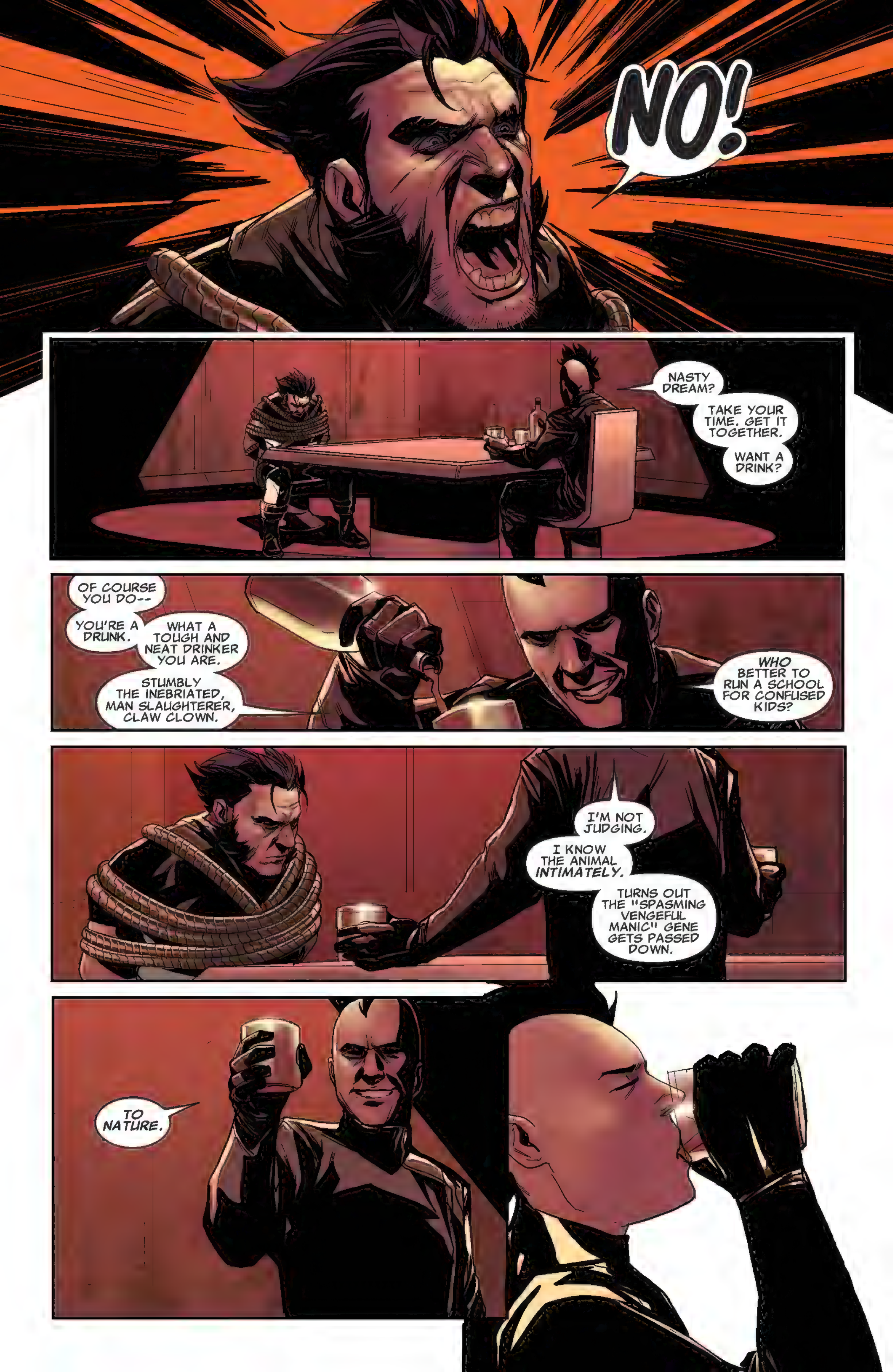

WHERE? WHERE'S THE BOY?!
SEE YOU IN HELL, RUNT!
BAMF!
WON'T BE LONG NOW--
TOLD YOU TO WAIT OUTSIDE!
BUT THE SUSPENSE WAS KILLING US.
GHA--
THE POISON HITS FAST.
YOUR RAPID HEART RATE MOVING IT THROUGH YOU QUICKLY.

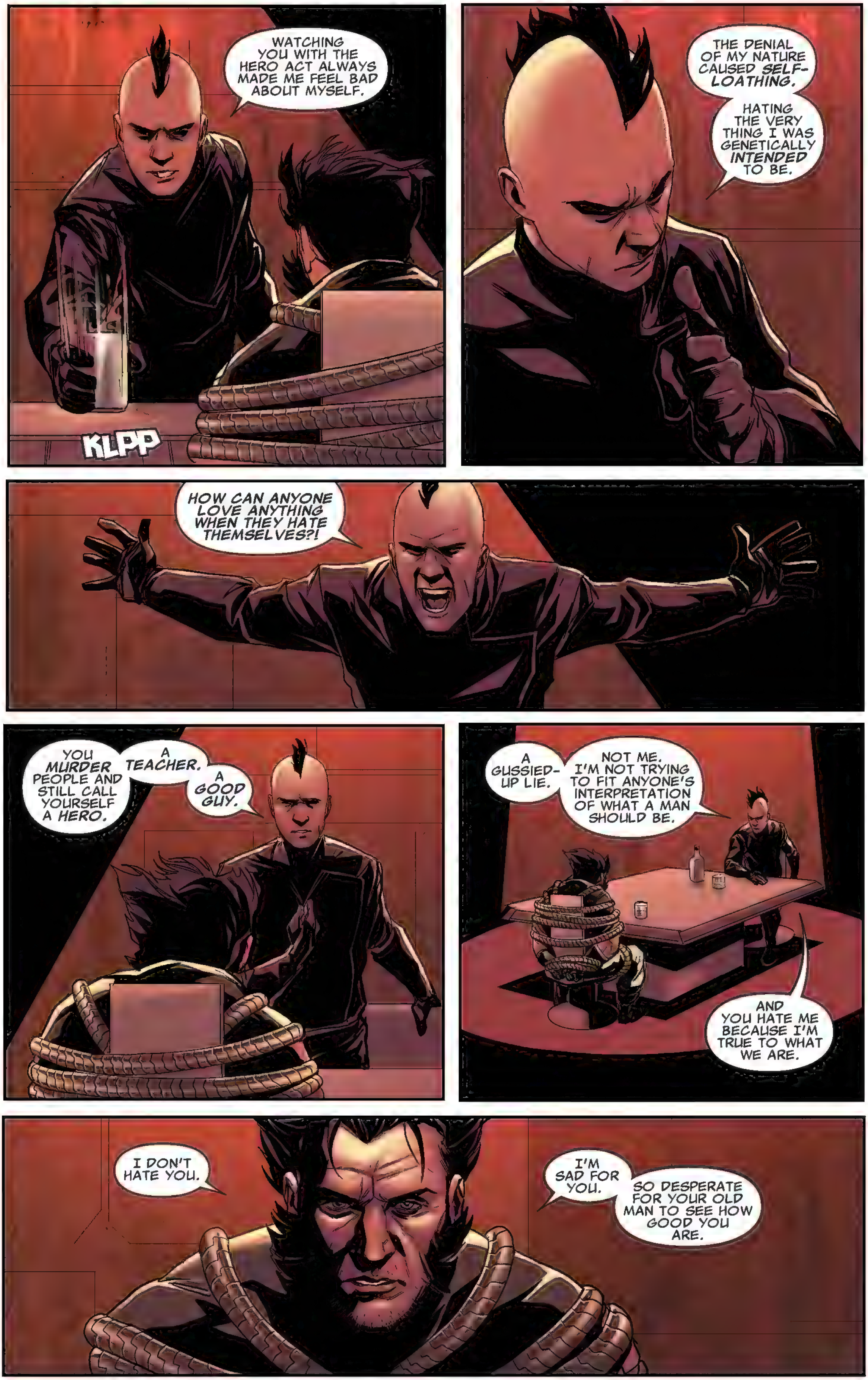

THE SAME MUTANT-DAMPENING POISON I USED TO FACILITATE THE MURDER OF FANTOMEX.
I'M SORRY, MEIN FREUND.
I DID TELL YOU I WOULD FINISH WHAT I CAME HERE TO DO--I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE--
K-KURT... *KOFF*
--BY *ANY* MEANS.

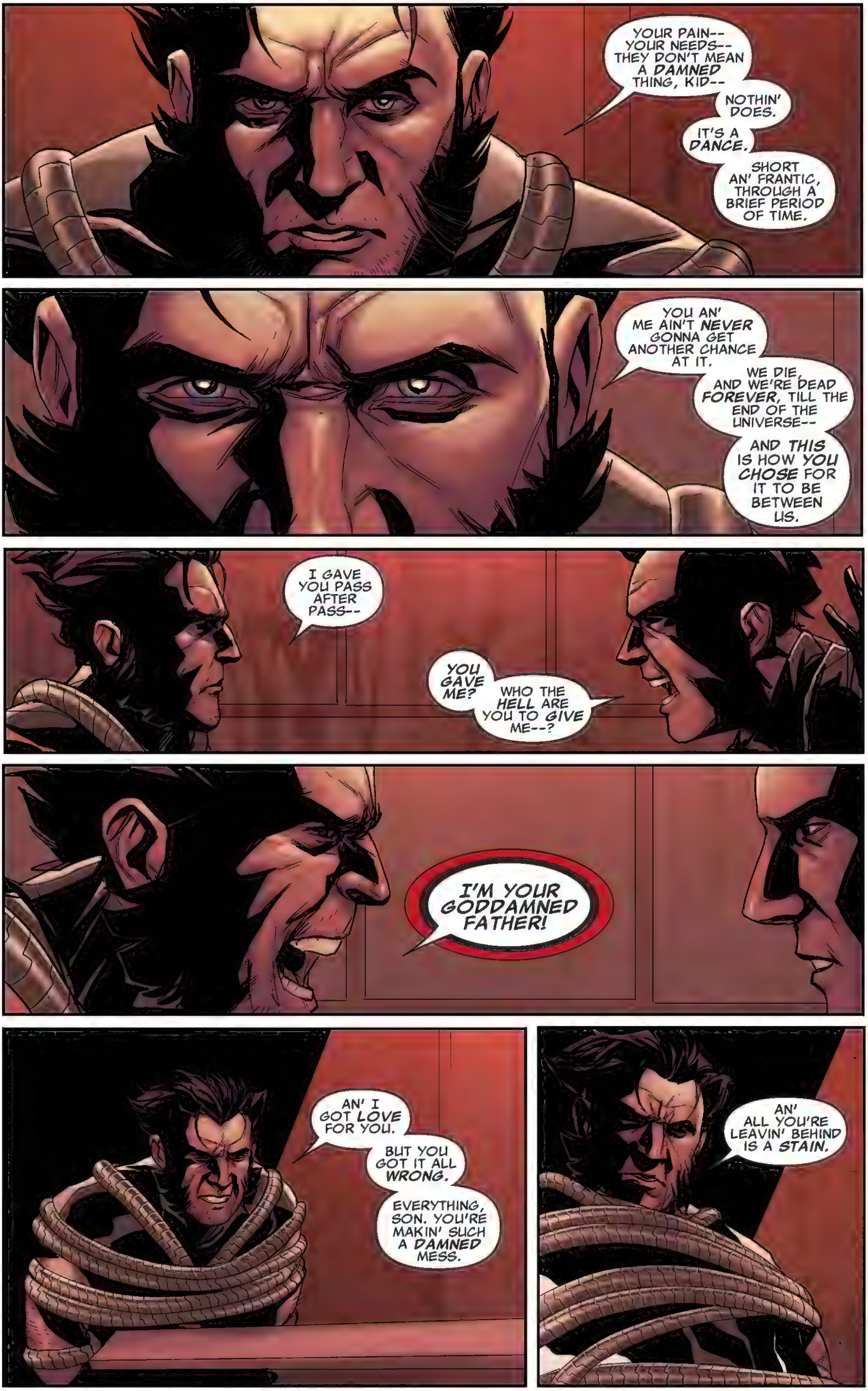
33 FINAL EXECUTION
CHAPTER 9: THE FATHER WHO MUST BE KILLED

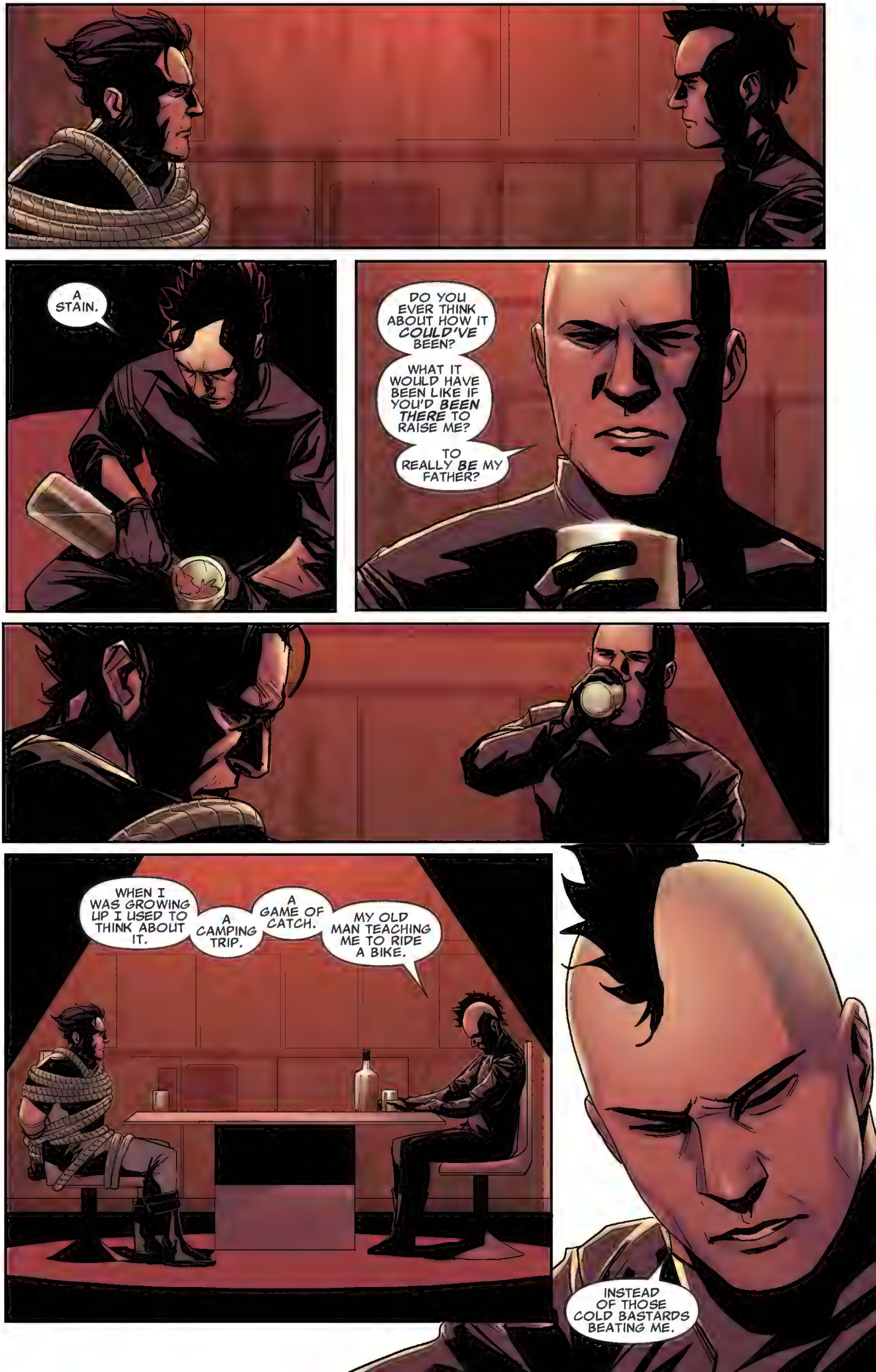

"CHARLES PUT SUCH EFFORT INTO HELPING YOU OVERCOME THE FURIOUS THING.
"BUT NOT ME.
"I DIDN'T TRY AND CHANGE YOU, DID I?
"I ACCEPT YOU FOR WHAT YOU ARE.
"I SET YOU FREE, LOGAN.
"FREE TO KILL OUR ENEMIES.
"FREE TO DO WHAT YOU DO BEST.
"AND YOU--PARADING AROUND INDIGNANT THAT YOU DIDN'T ENJOY THE WORK.
"YOU LIKED IT SO MUCH YOU WENT ON KILLING BEHIND MY BACK.
"NOW THIS BOY WILL BECOME APOCALYPSE UNLESS YOU END HIM.
"AND AS OUR METHODOLOGY SINKS TO MEET THE MONSTERS ON THEIR LEVEL--

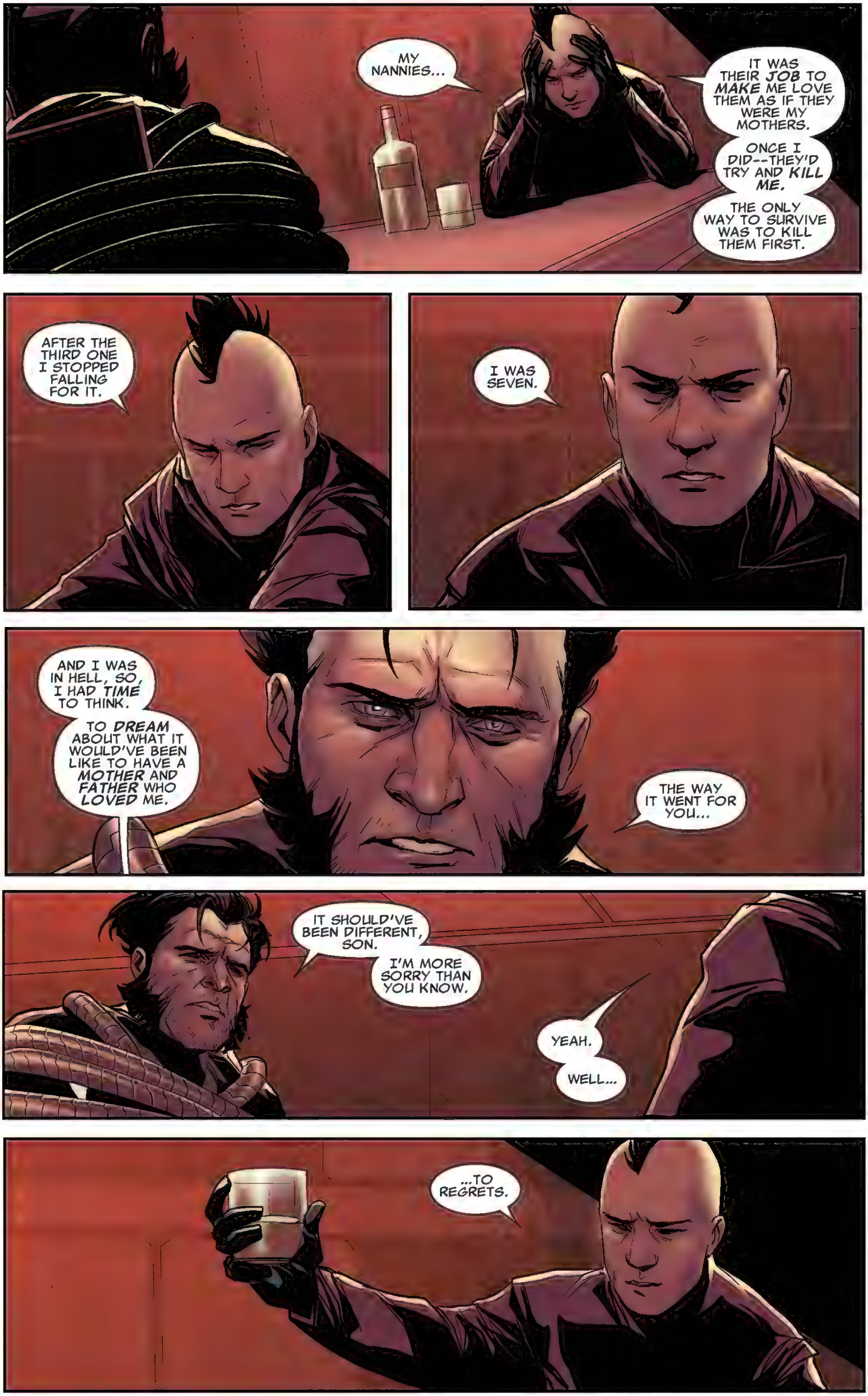

--OUR WORLD *CRUMBLES.*
CAN'T YOU SEE? IT'S ALL A CONSEQUENCE.
I *CAN* SEE. I WAS ONCE APOCALYPSE. YOU KNOW THAT DON'T YOU?
I WORRY ABOUT THAT. NOW *ESPECIALLY.*
WOULD YOU ASCEND TO STOP ME?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, LOGAN?
WHAT WE'VE DONE TO YOU?
THE POISONS WE'VE PUT IN YOUR SYSTEM?
STEP AWAY FROM 'IM, SCOTT.
CALM YOURSELF. IT'S ALL PART OF A GREATER PLAN.
RELAX.
I'M NOT GOING TO PUSH THE BOY OVER THE CLIFF.
HE'LL JUMP.
NO--!
EVAN!

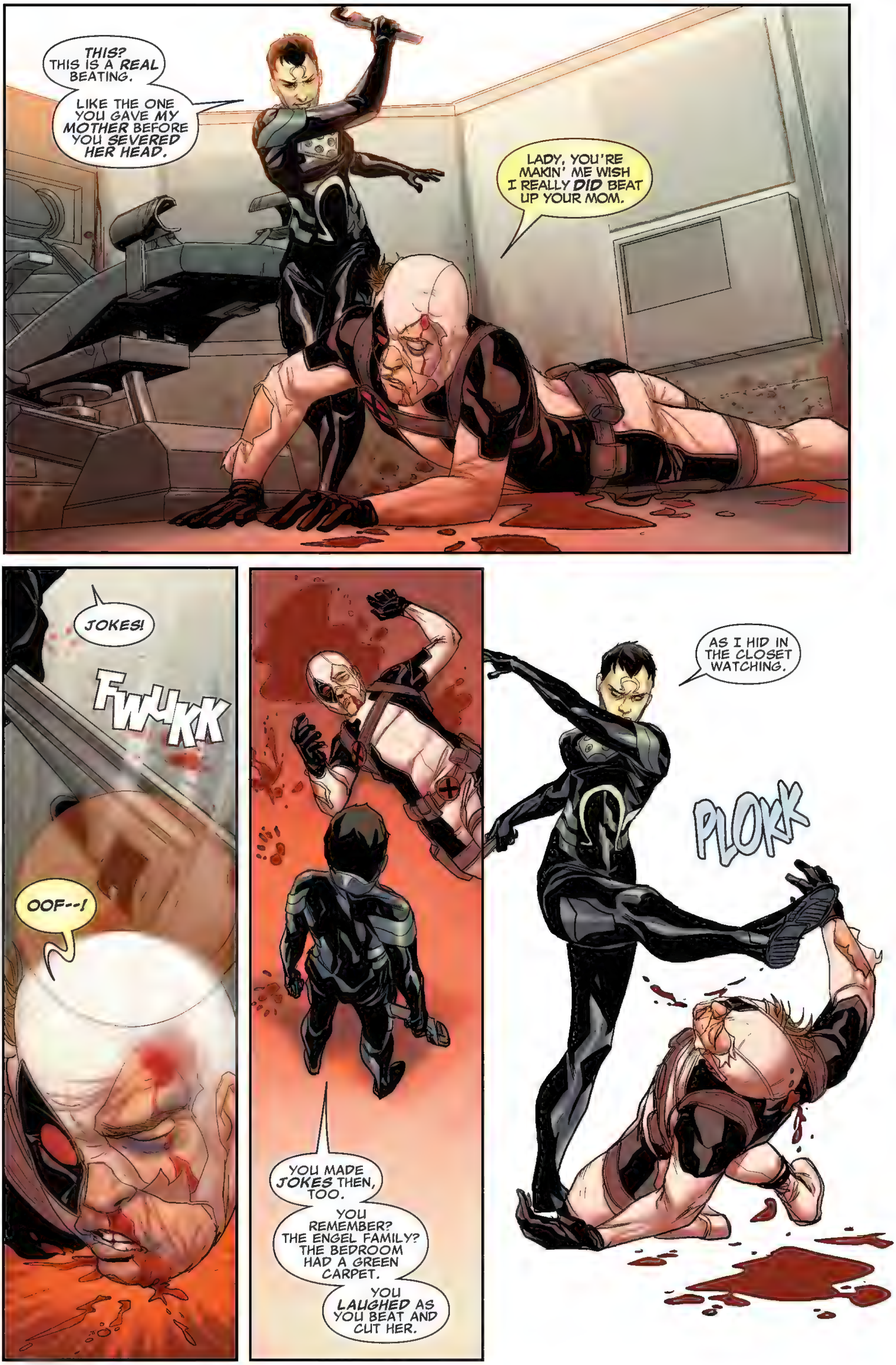

NO!
NASTY DREAM?
TAKE YOUR TIME. GET IT TOGETHER.
WANT A DRINK?
OF COURSE YOU DO--
YOU'RE A DRUNK.
WHAT A TOUGH AND NEAT DRINKER YOU ARE.
STUMBLY THE INEBRIATED, MAN SLAUGHTERER, CLAW CLOWN.
WHO BETTER TO RUN A SCHOOL FOR CONFUSED KIDS?
I'M NOT JUDGING.
I KNOW THE ANIMAL *INTIMATELY.*
TURNS OUT THE "SPASMING VENGEFUL MANIC" GENE GETS PASSED DOWN.
TO NATURE.

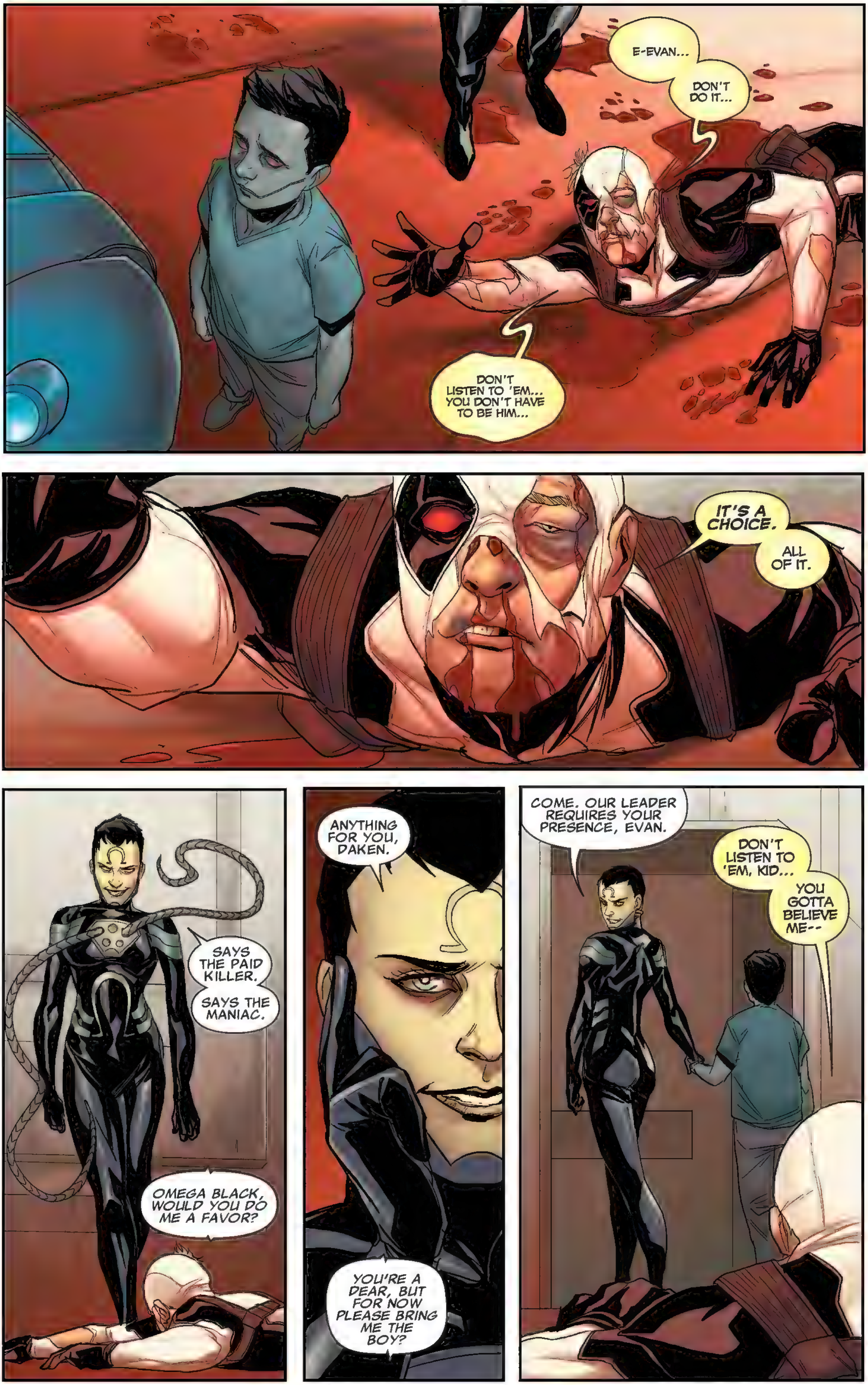

WATCHING YOU WITH THE HERO ACT ALWAYS MADE ME FEEL BAD ABOUT MYSELF.
KLPP
THE DENIAL OF MY NATURE CAUSED *SELF-LOATHING.*
HATING THE VERY THING I WAS GENETICALLY *INTENDED* TO BE.
HOW CAN ANYONE LOVE ANYTHING WHEN THEY HATE THEMSELVES?!
YOU *MURDER* PEOPLE AND STILL CALL YOURSELF A *HERO.*
A *TEACHER.*
A *GOOD GUY.*
A GUSSIED-UP LIE.
NOT ME. I'M NOT TRYING TO FIT ANYONE'S INTERPRETATION OF WHAT A MAN SHOULD BE.
AND YOU HATE ME BECAUSE I'M TRUE TO WHAT WE ARE.
I DON'T HATE YOU.
I'M SAD FOR YOU.
SO DESPERATE FOR YOUR OLD MAN TO SEE HOW GOOD YOU ARE.

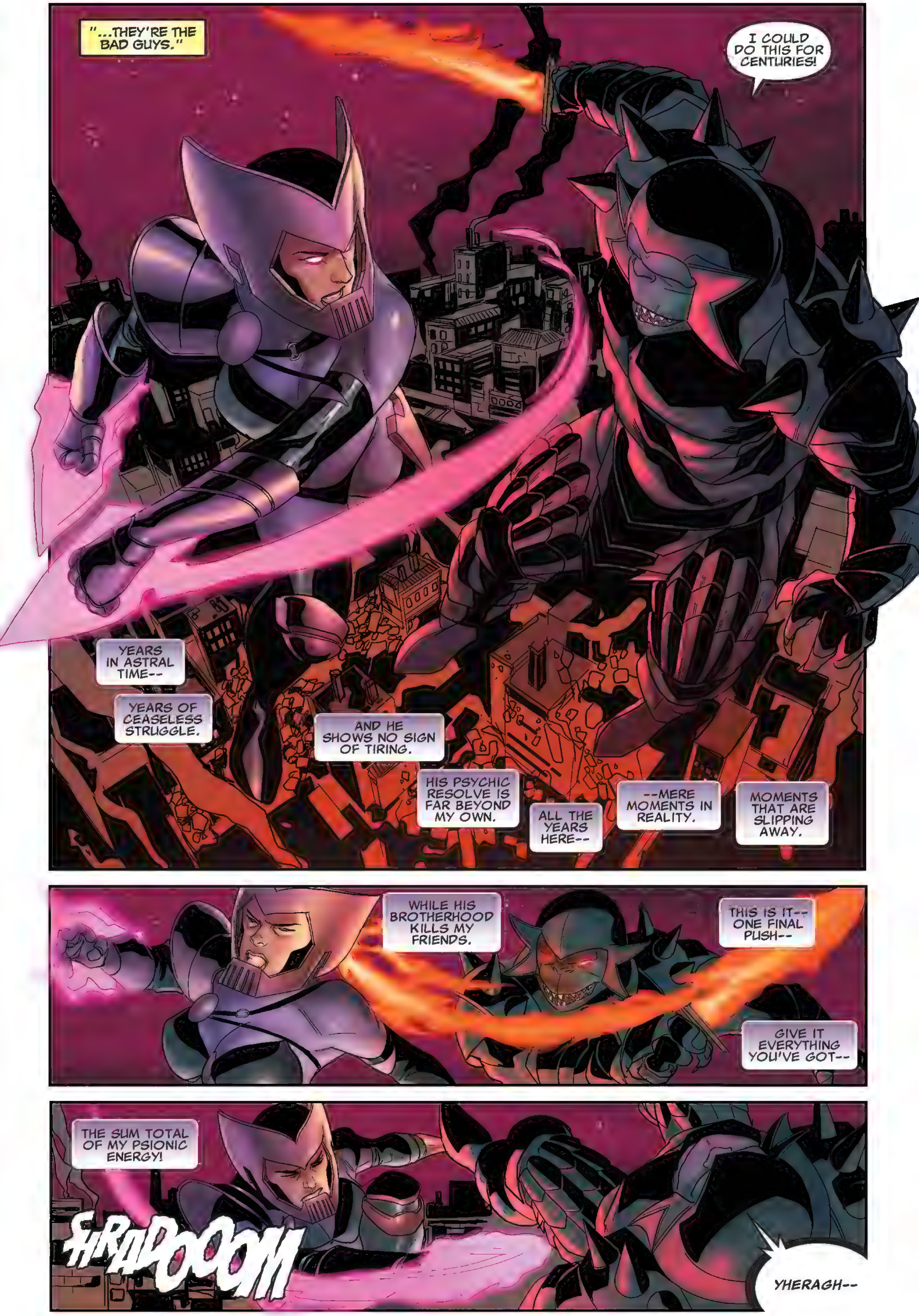

YOUR PAIN-- YOUR NEEDS-- THEY DON'T MEAN A DAMNED THING, KID--
NOTHIN' DOES.
IT'S A DANCE.
SHORT AN' FRANTIC, THROUGH A BRIEF PERIOD OF TIME.
YOU AN' ME AIN'T NEVER GONNA GET ANOTHER CHANCE AT IT.
WE DIE, AND WE'RE DEAD FOREVER, TILL THE END OF THE UNIVERSE--
AND THIS IS HOW YOU CHOSE FOR IT TO BE BETWEEN US.
I GAVE YOU PASS AFTER PASS--
YOU GAVE ME?
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU TO GIVE ME--?
I'M YOUR GODDAMNED FATHER!
AN' I GOT LOVE FOR YOU.
BUT YOU GOT IT ALL WRONG.
EVERYTHING, SON. YOU'RE MAKIN' SUCH A DAMNED MESS.
AN' ALL YOU'RE LEAVIN' BEHIND IS A STAIN.

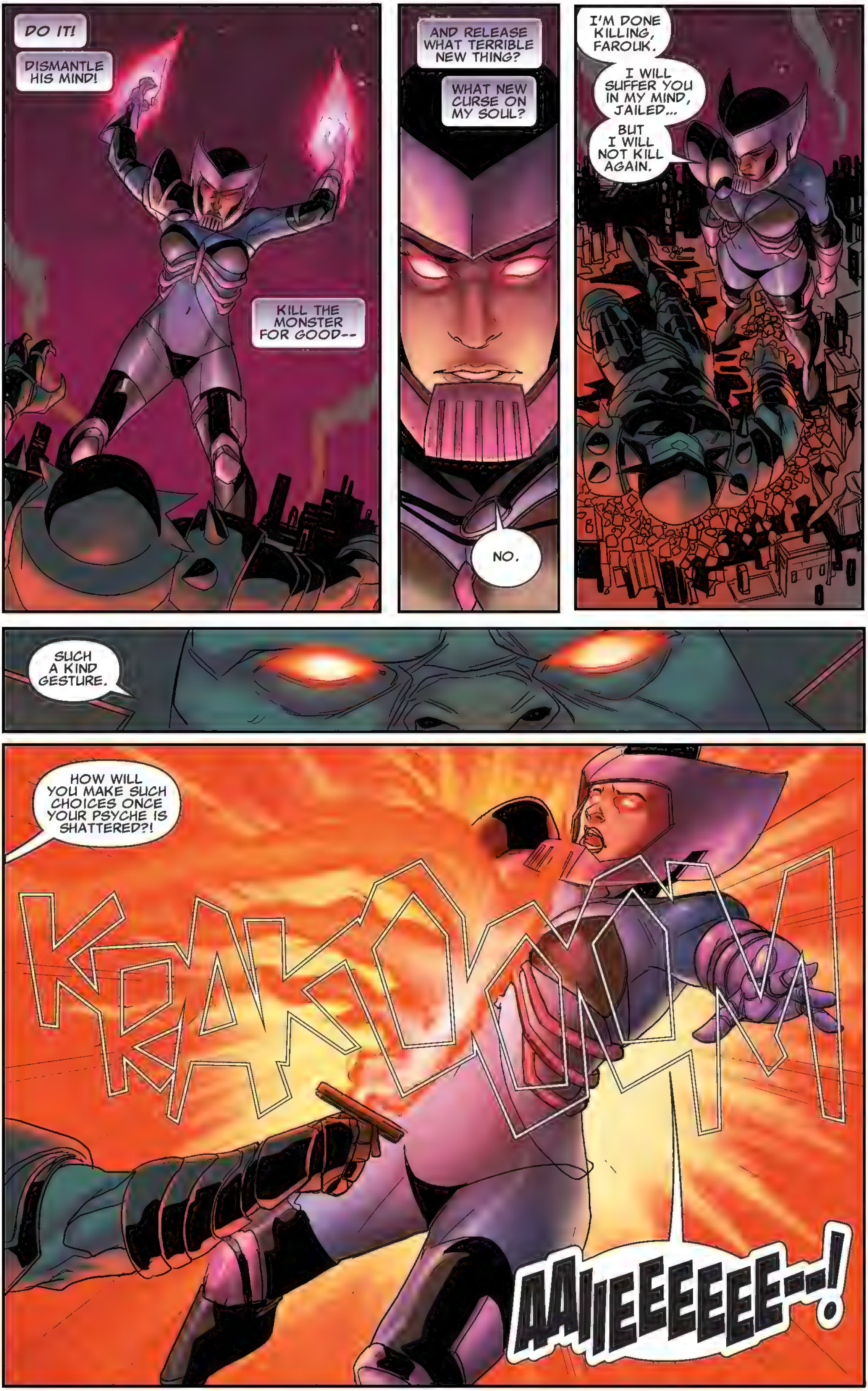

A STAIN.
DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT HOW IT *COULD'VE* BEEN?
WHAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE IF YOU'D *BEEN THERE* TO RAISE ME?
TO REALLY *BE* MY FATHER?
WHEN I WAS GROWING UP I USED TO THINK ABOUT IT.
A CAMPING TRIP.
A GAME OF CATCH.
MY OLD MAN TEACHING ME TO RIDE A BIKE.
INSTEAD OF THOSE COLD BASTARDS BEATING ME.

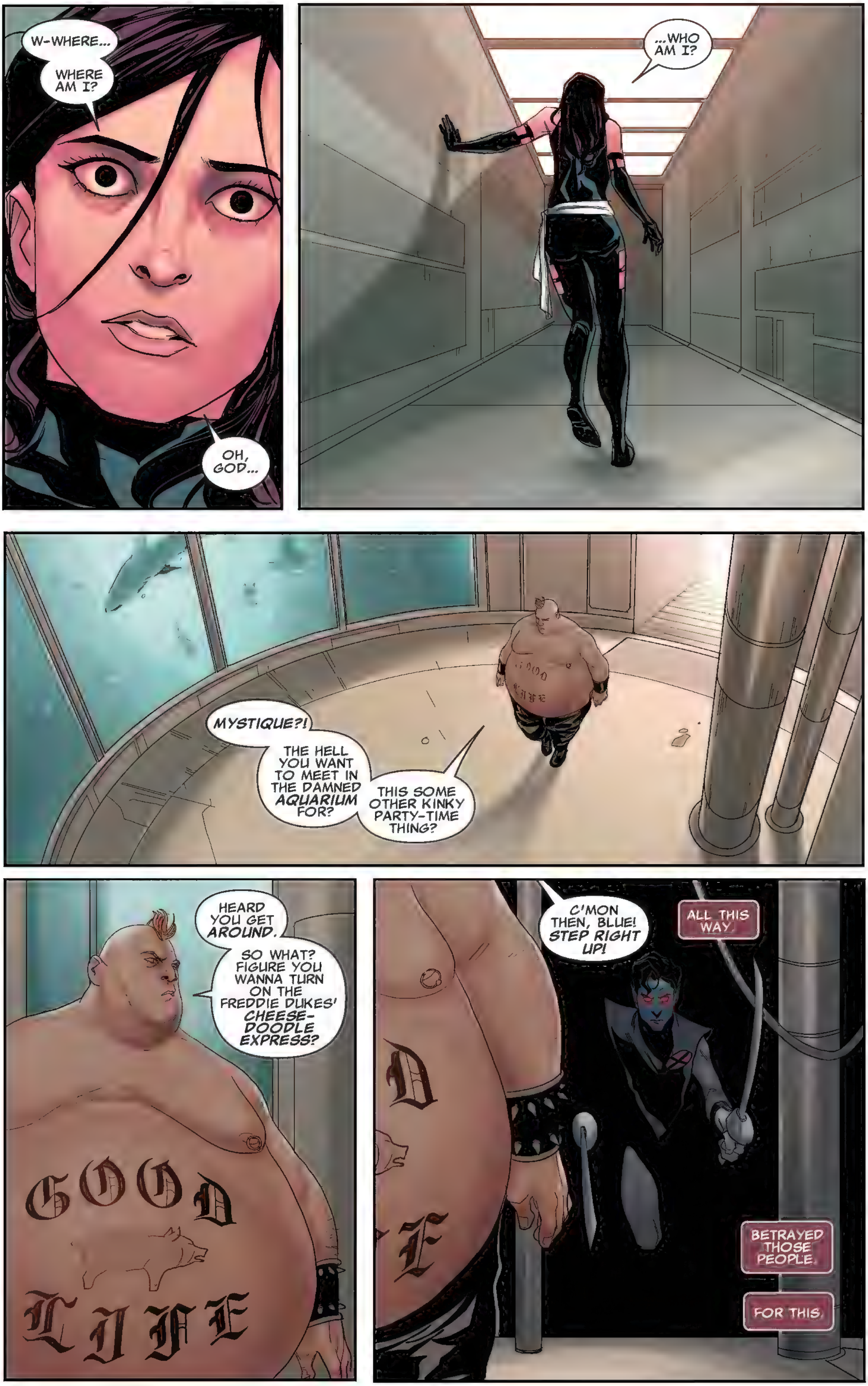

MY NANNIES...
IT WAS THEIR JOB TO MAKE ME LOVE THEM AS IF THEY WERE MY MOTHERS.
ONCE I DID--THEY'D TRY AND KILL ME.
THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE WAS TO KILL THEM FIRST.
AFTER THE THIRD ONE I STOPPED FALLING FOR IT.
I WAS SEVEN.
AND I WAS IN HELL, SO, I HAD TIME TO THINK.
TO DREAM ABOUT WHAT IT WOULD'VE BEEN LIKE TO HAVE A MOTHER AND FATHER WHO LOVED ME.
THE WAY IT WENT FOR YOU...
IT SHOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT, SON.
I'M MORE SORRY THAN YOU KNOW.
YEAH.
WELL...
...TO REGRETS.

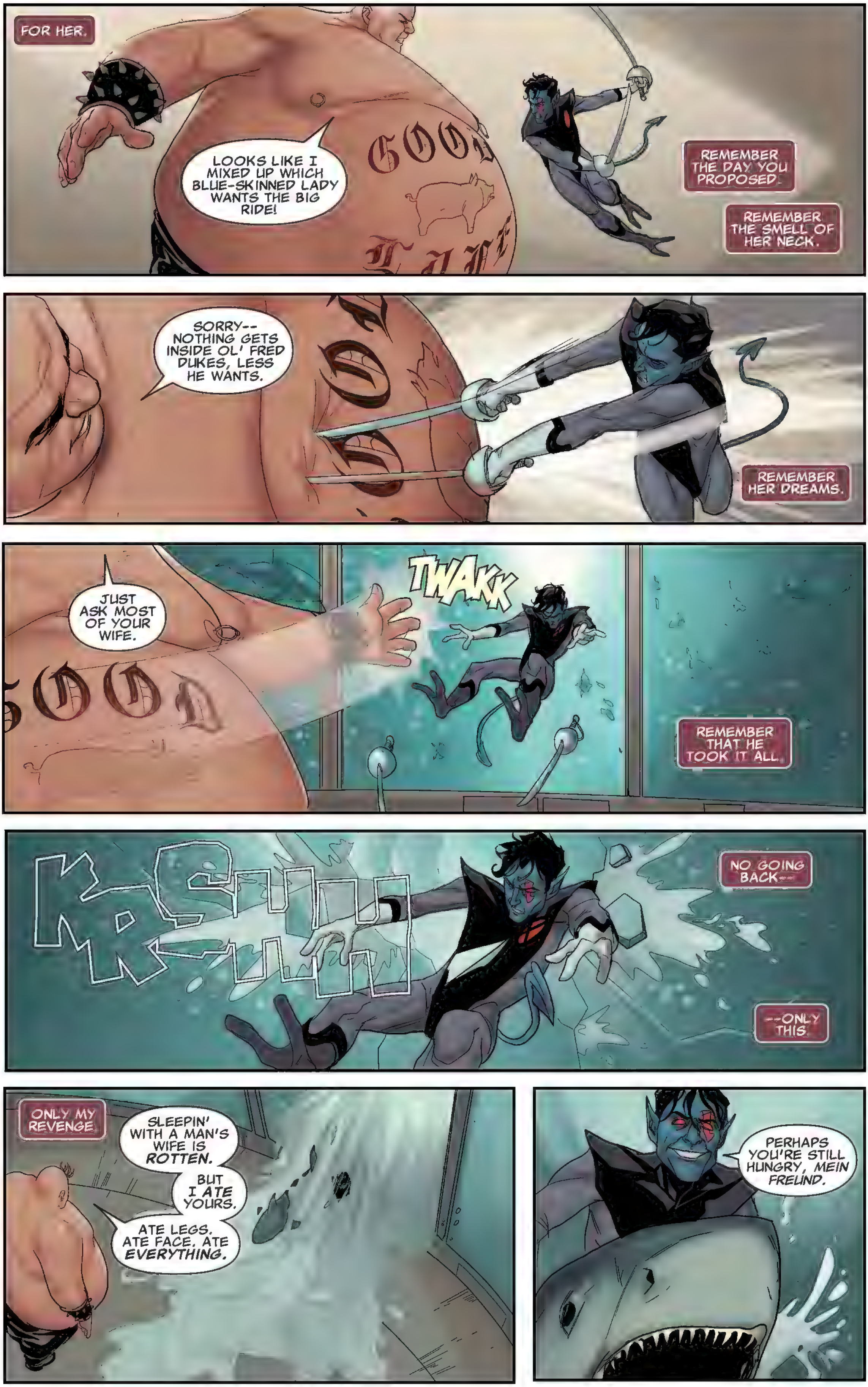

THIS? THIS IS A REAL BEATING.
LIKE THE ONE YOU GAVE MY MOTHER BEFORE YOU SEVERED HER HEAD.
LADY, YOU'RE MAKIN' ME WISH I REALLY DID BEAT UP YOUR MOM.
JOKES!
FWUKK
OOF--!
YOU MADE JOKES THEN, TOO.
YOU REMEMBER? THE ENGEL FAMILY? THE BEDROOM HAD A GREEN CARPET.
YOU LAUGHED AS YOU BEAT AND CUT HER.
AS I HID IN THE CLOSET WATCHING.
PLOKK

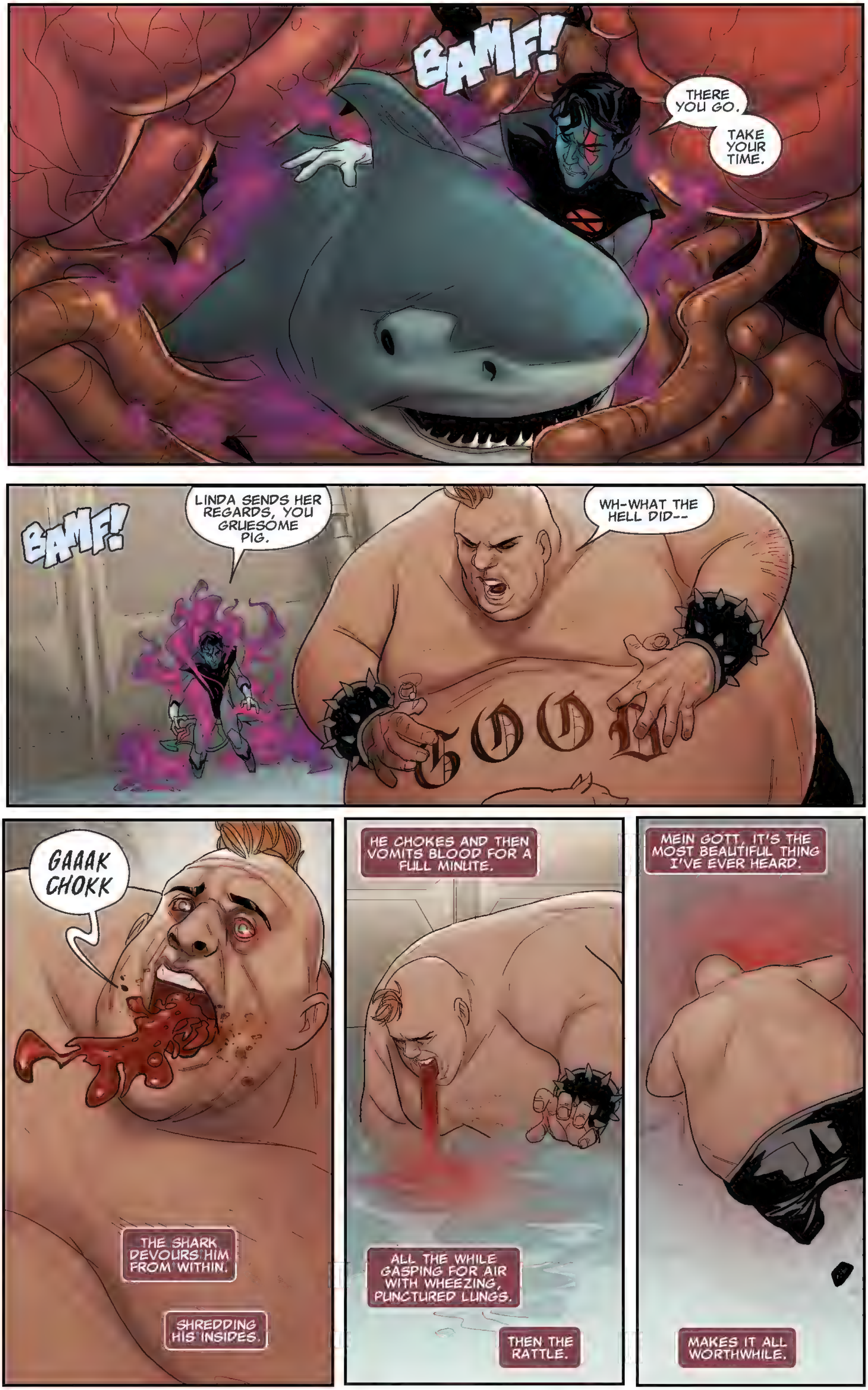

E-EVAN...
DON'T DO IT...
DON'T LISTEN TO 'EM... YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE HIM...
IT'S A CHOICE.
ALL OF IT.
SAYS THE PAID KILLER.
SAYS THE MANIAC.
OMEGA BLACK, WOULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR?
ANYTHING FOR YOU, DAKEN.
YOU'RE A DEAR, BUT FOR NOW PLEASE BRING ME THE BOY?
COME. OUR LEADER REQUIRES YOUR PRESENCE, EVAN.
DON'T LISTEN TO 'EM, KID...
YOU GOTTA BELIEVE ME--

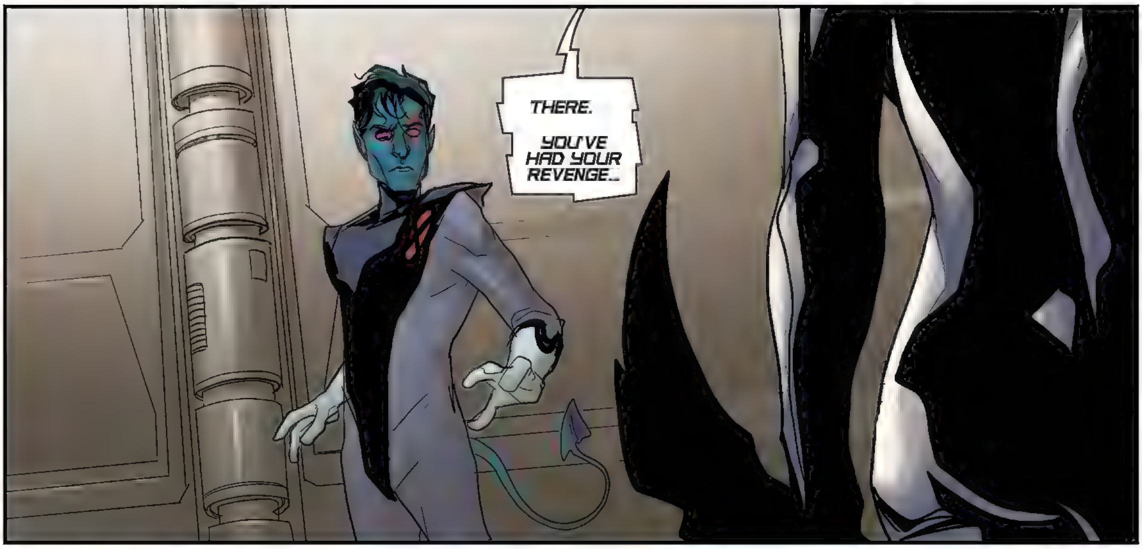

"...THEY'RE THE BAD GUYS."
I COULD DO THIS FOR CENTURIES!
YEARS IN ASTRAL TIME--
YEARS OF CEASELESS STRUGGLE.
AND HE SHOWS NO SIGN OF TIRING.
HIS PSYCHIC RESOLVE IS FAR BEYOND MY OWN.
ALL THE YEARS HERE--
--MERE MOMENTS IN REALITY.
MOMENTS THAT ARE SLIPPING AWAY.
WHILE HIS BROTHERHOOD KILLS MY FRIENDS.
THIS IS IT--ONE FINAL PUSH--
GIVE IT EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT--
THE SUM TOTAL OF MY PSIONIC ENERGY!
SHRADOOOM
YHERAGH--

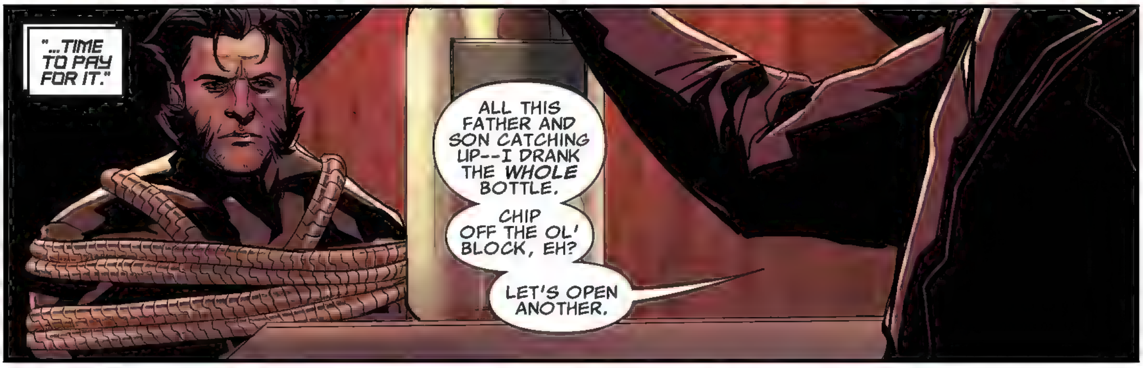

DO IT!
DISMANTLE HIS MIND!
KILL THE MONSTER FOR GOOD--
AND RELEASE WHAT TERRIBLE NEW THING?
WHAT NEW CURSE ON MY SOUL?
NO.
I'M DONE KILLING, FAROUK.
I WILL SUFFER YOU IN MY MIND, JAILED...
BUT I WILL NOT KILL AGAIN.
SUCH A KIND GESTURE.
HOW WILL YOU MAKE SUCH CHOICES ONCE YOUR PSYCHE IS SHATTERED?!
KRAKOOOM
AAIIEEEEEE--!

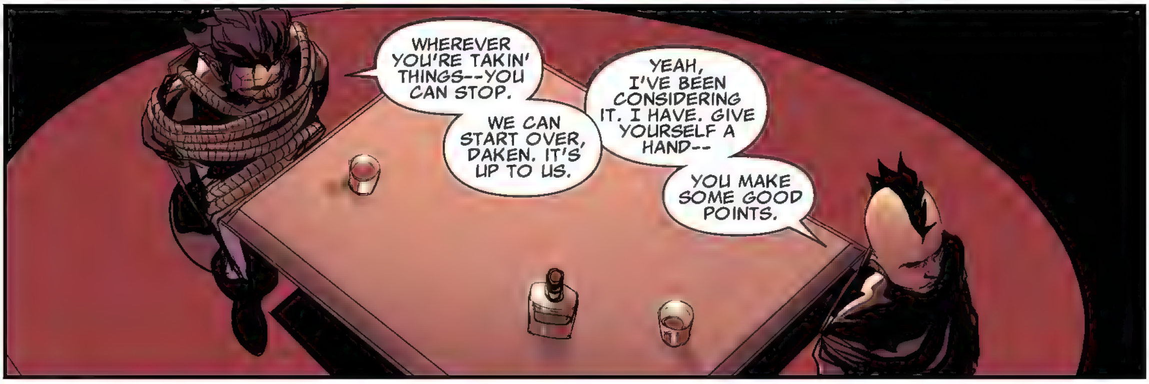

W-WHERE...
WHERE AM I?
OH, GOD...
...WHO AM I?
MYSTIQUE?!
THE HELL YOU WANT TO MEET IN THE DAMNED *AQUARIUM* FOR?
THIS SOME OTHER KINKY PARTY-TIME THING?
HEARD YOU GET *AROUND.*
SO WHAT? FIGURE YOU WANNA TURN ON THE FREDDIE DUKES' *CHEESE-DOODLE EXPRESS?*
GOOD LIFE
C'MON THEN, BLUE! *STEP RIGHT UP!*
ALL THIS WAY.
BETRAYED THOSE PEOPLE.
FOR THIS.

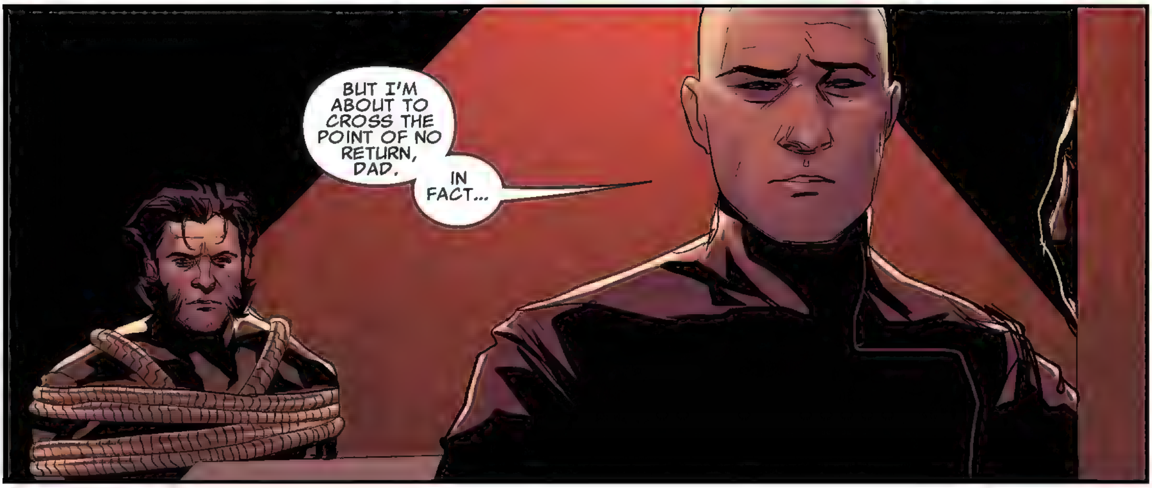

FOR HER.
LOOKS LIKE I MIXED UP WHICH BLUE-SKINNED LADY WANTS THE BIG RIDE!
GOOD LIFE
REMEMBER THE DAY YOU PROPOSED.
REMEMBER THE SMELL OF HER NECK.
SORRY-- NOTHING GETS INSIDE OL' FRED DUKES, LESS HE WANTS.
REMEMBER HER DREAMS.
JUST ASK MOST OF YOUR WIFE.
TWAKK
GOOD
REMEMBER THAT HE TOOK IT ALL.
KRSHH
NO GOING BACK--
--ONLY THIS.
ONLY MY REVENGE.
SLEEPIN' WITH A MAN'S WIFE IS ROTTEN.
BUT I ATE YOURS.
ATE LEGS. ATE FACE. ATE EVERYTHING.
PERHAPS YOU'RE STILL HUNGRY, MEIN FREUND.

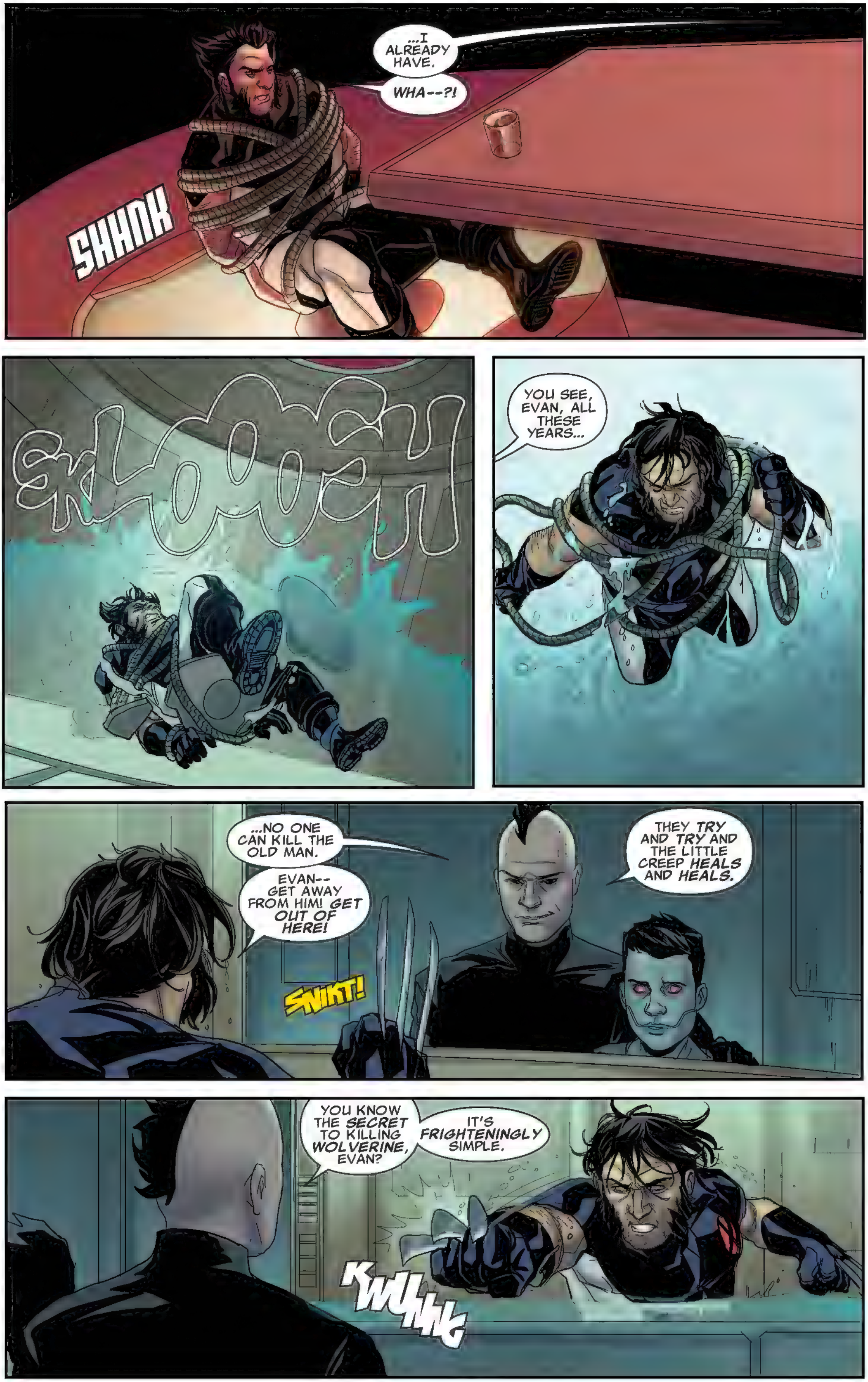

BAMF!
THERE YOU GO.
TAKE YOUR TIME.
BAMF!
LINDA SENDS HER REGARDS, YOU GRUESOME PIG.
WH-WHAT THE HELL DID--
GAAAK CHOKK
THE SHARK DEVOURS HIM FROM WITHIN.
SHREDDING HIS INSIDES.
HE CHOKES AND THEN VOMITS BLOOD FOR A FULL MINUTE.
ALL THE WHILE GASPING FOR AIR WITH WHEEZING, PUNCTURED LUNGS.
THEN THE RATTLE.
MEIN GOTT, IT'S THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I'VE EVER HEARD.
MAKES IT ALL WORTHWHILE.

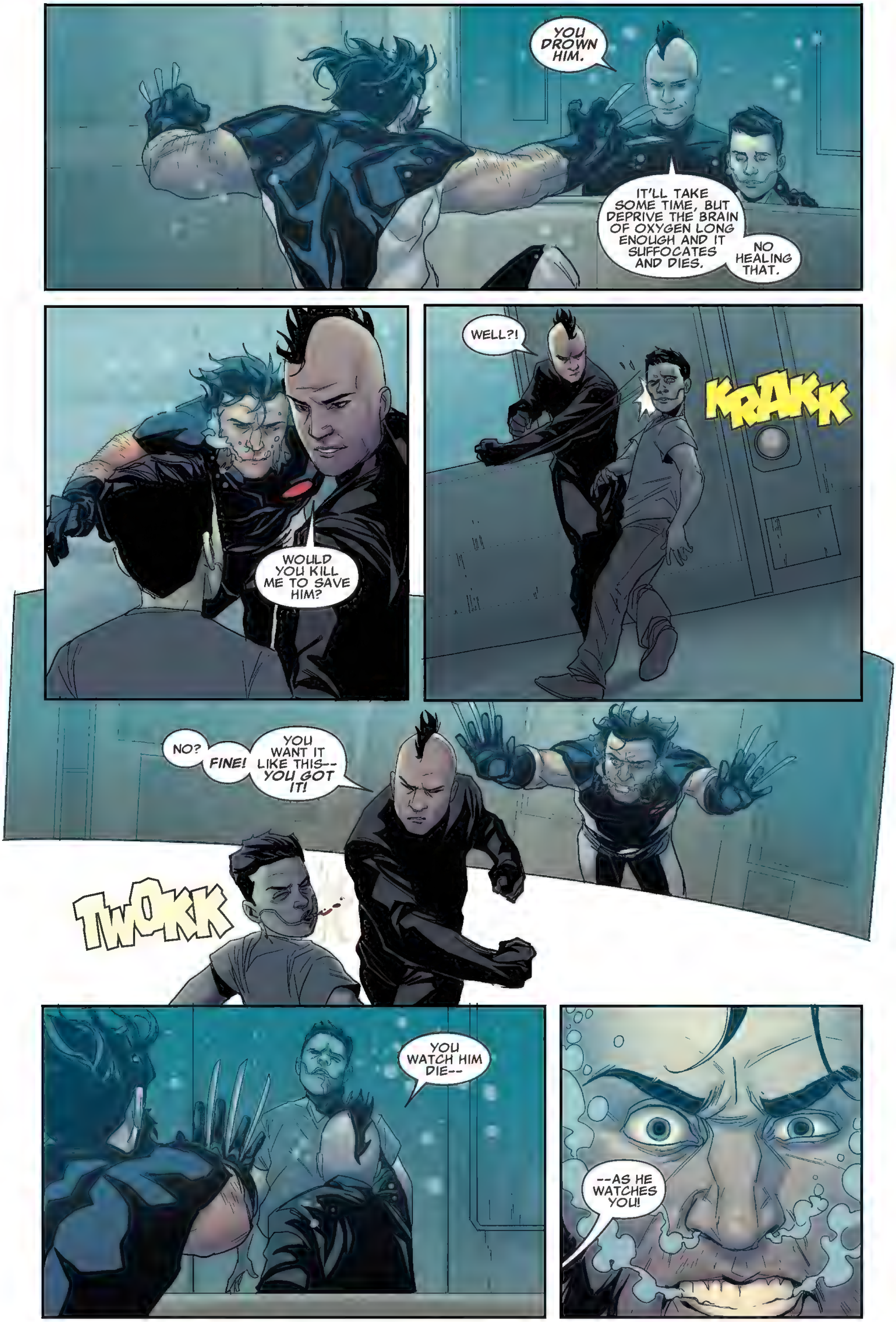

THERE.
YOU'VE HAD YOUR REVENGE...

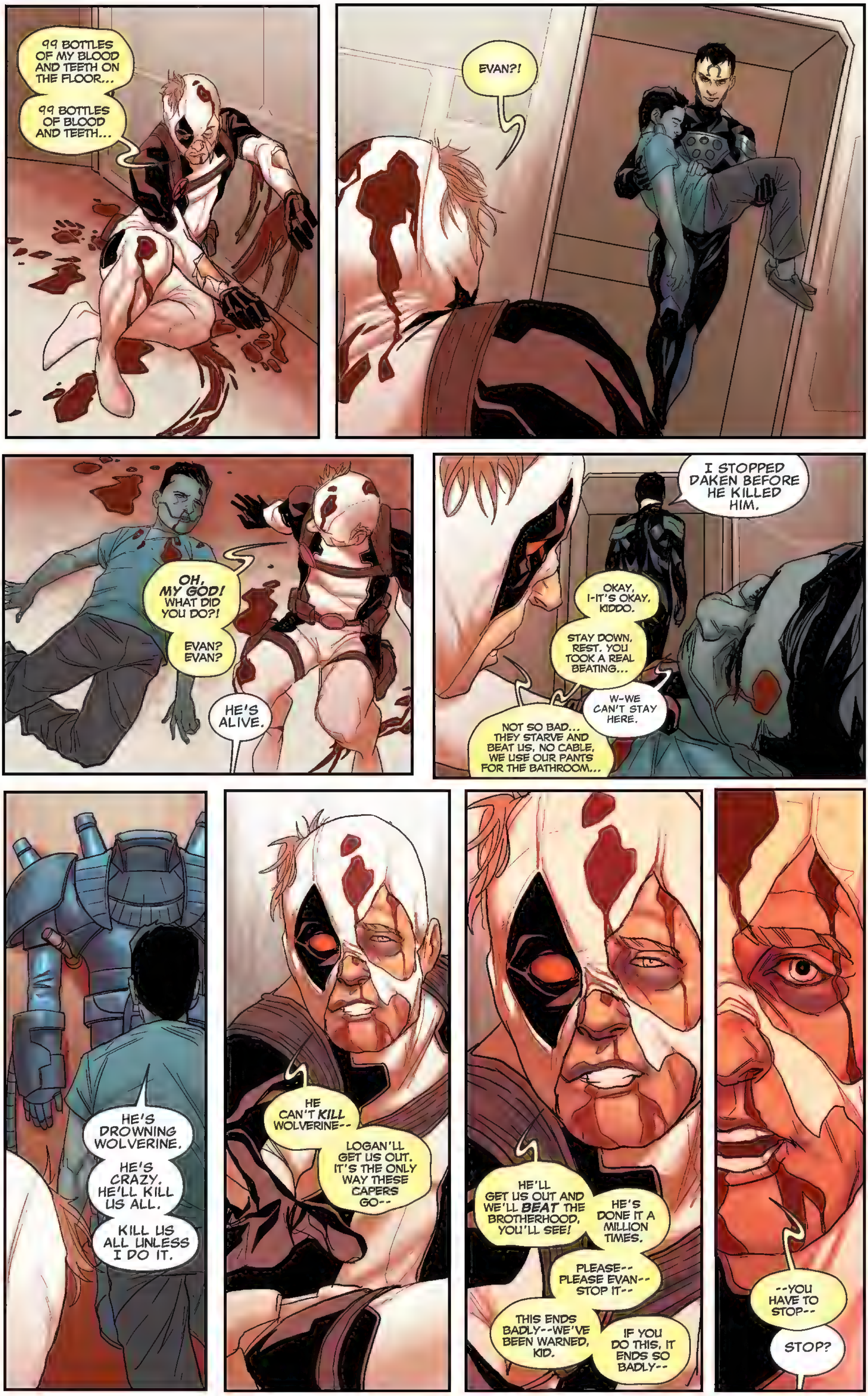

"...TIME TO PAY FOR IT."
ALL THIS FATHER AND SON CATCHING UP--I DRANK THE *WHOLE* BOTTLE.
CHIP OFF THE OL' BLOCK, EH?
LET'S OPEN ANOTHER.


WHEREVER YOU'RE TAKIN' THINGS--YOU CAN STOP.
WE CAN START OVER, DAKEN. IT'S UP TO US.
YEAH, I'VE BEEN CONSIDERING IT. I HAVE. GIVE YOURSELF A HAND--
YOU MAKE SOME GOOD POINTS.


BUT I'M ABOUT TO CROSS THE POINT OF NO RETURN, DAD.
IN FACT...


...I ALREADY HAVE.
WHA--?!
SHHNK
SKLOOOSH
YOU SEE, EVAN, ALL THESE YEARS...
...NO ONE CAN KILL THE OLD MAN.
EVAN-- GET AWAY FROM HIM! GET OUT OF HERE!
THEY TRY AND TRY AND THE LITTLE CREEP HEALS AND HEALS.
SNIKT!
YOU KNOW THE SECRET TO KILLING WOLVERINE, EVAN?
IT'S FRIGHTENINGLY SIMPLE.
KWUNNG


YOU DROWN HIM.
IT'LL TAKE SOME TIME, BUT DEPRIVE THE BRAIN OF OXYGEN LONG ENOUGH AND IT SUFFOCATES AND DIES.
NO HEALING THAT.
WOULD YOU KILL ME TO SAVE HIM?
WELL?!
KRAKK
NO?
FINE!
YOU WANT IT LIKE THIS-- YOU GOT IT!
TWOKK
YOU WATCH HIM DIE--
--AS HE WATCHES YOU!

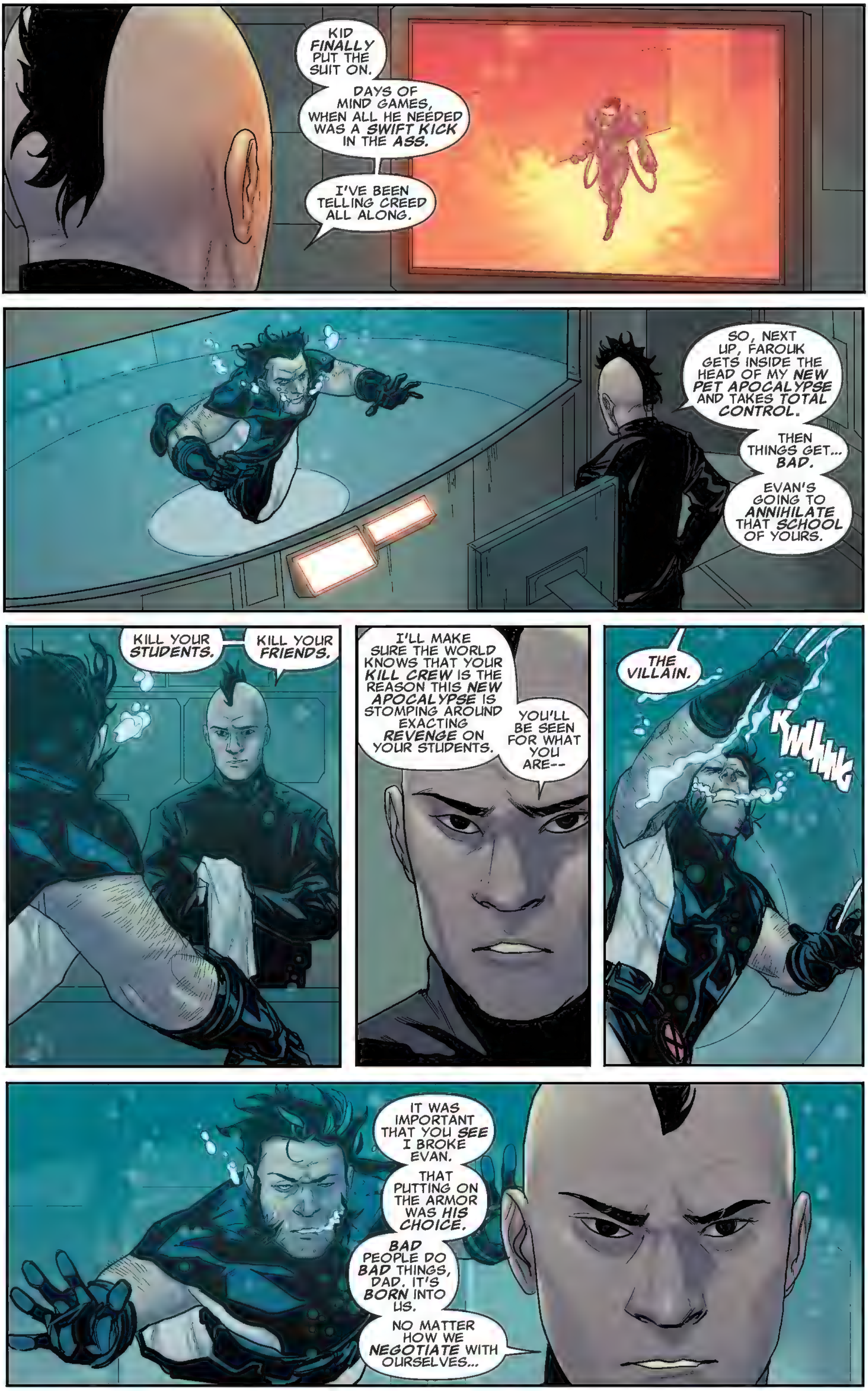

99 BOTTLES OF MY BLOOD AND TEETH ON THE FLOOR...
99 BOTTLES OF BLOOD AND TEETH...
EVAN?!
OH, MY GOD! WHAT DID YOU DO?!
EVAN? EVAN?
HE'S ALIVE.
I STOPPED DAKEN BEFORE HE KILLED HIM.
OKAY, I-IT'S OKAY, KIDDO.
STAY DOWN, REST. YOU TOOK A REAL BEATING...
W-WE CAN'T STAY HERE.
NOT SO BAD... THEY STARVE AND BEAT US, NO CABLE, WE USE OUR PANTS FOR THE BATHROOM...
HE'S DROWNING WOLVERINE.
HE'S CRAZY. HE'LL KILL US ALL.
KILL US ALL UNLESS I DO IT.
HE CAN'T KILL WOLVERINE--
LOGAN'LL GET US OUT. IT'S THE ONLY WAY THESE CAPERS GO--
HE'LL GET US OUT AND WE'LL BEAT THE BROTHERHOOD, YOU'LL SEE!
HE'S DONE IT A MILLION TIMES.
PLEASE-- PLEASE EVAN-- STOP IT--
THIS ENDS BADLY--WE'VE BEEN WARNED, KID.
IF YOU DO THIS, IT ENDS SO BADLY--
--YOU HAVE TO STOP--
STOP?

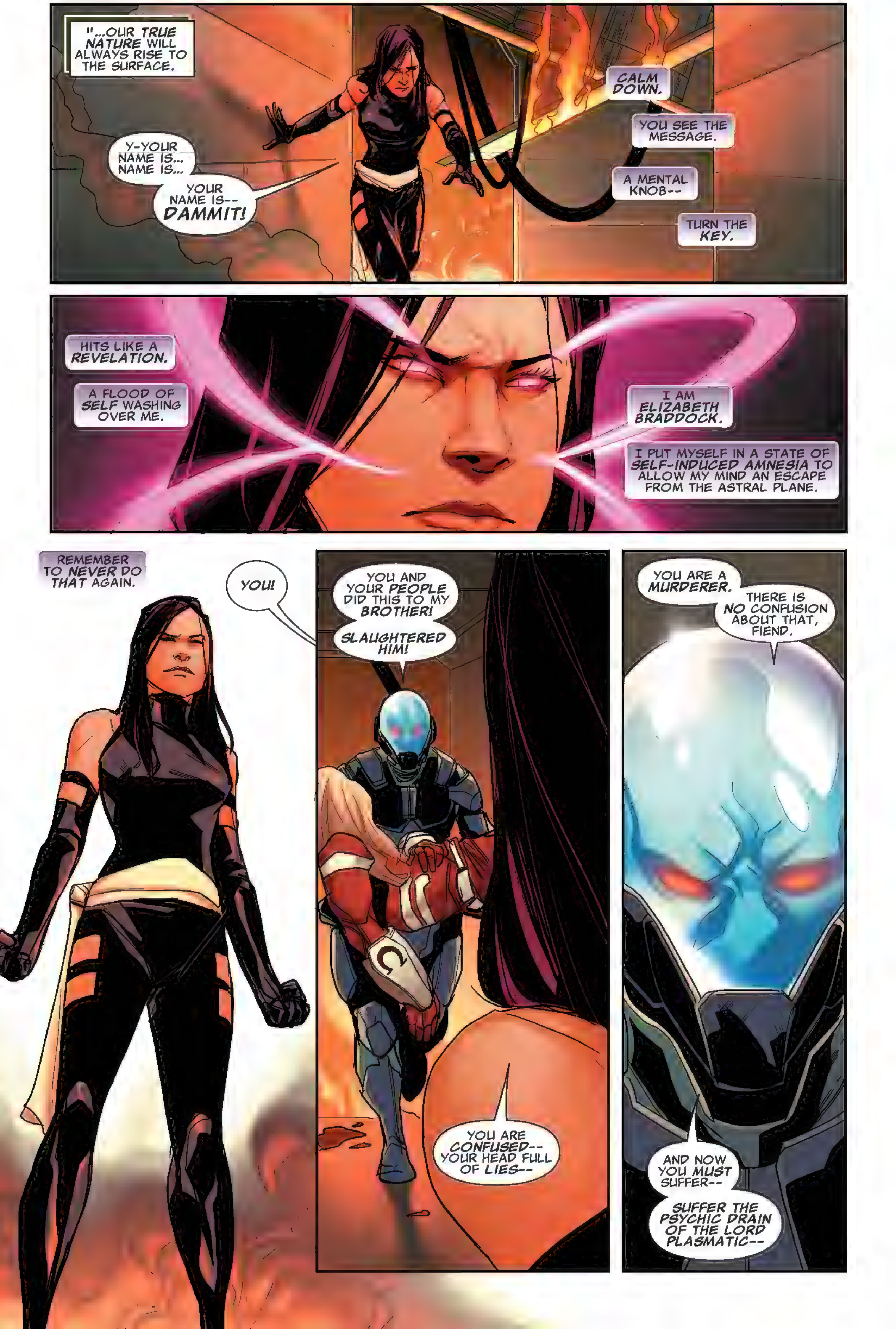
I'VE JUST STARTED.

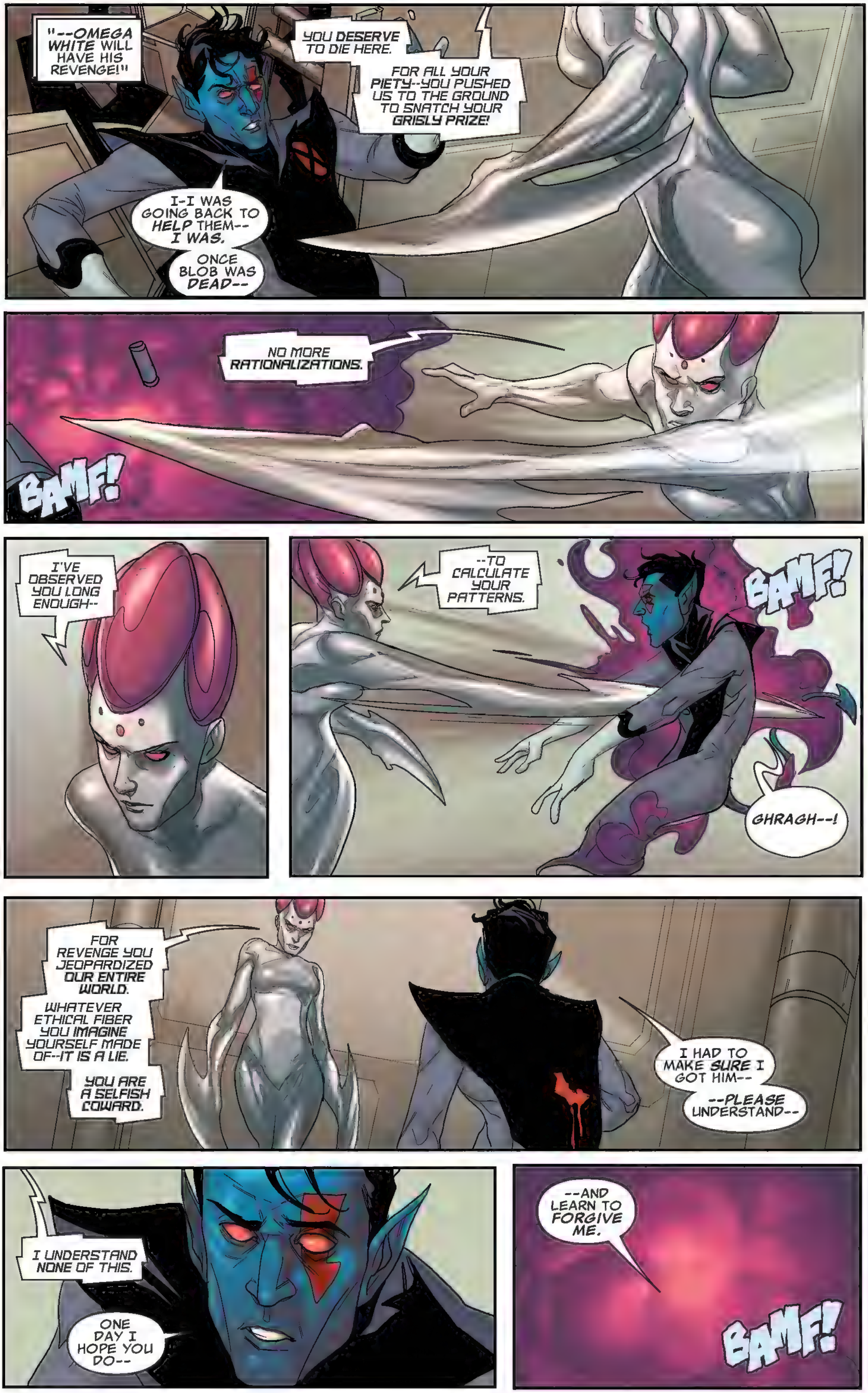
34

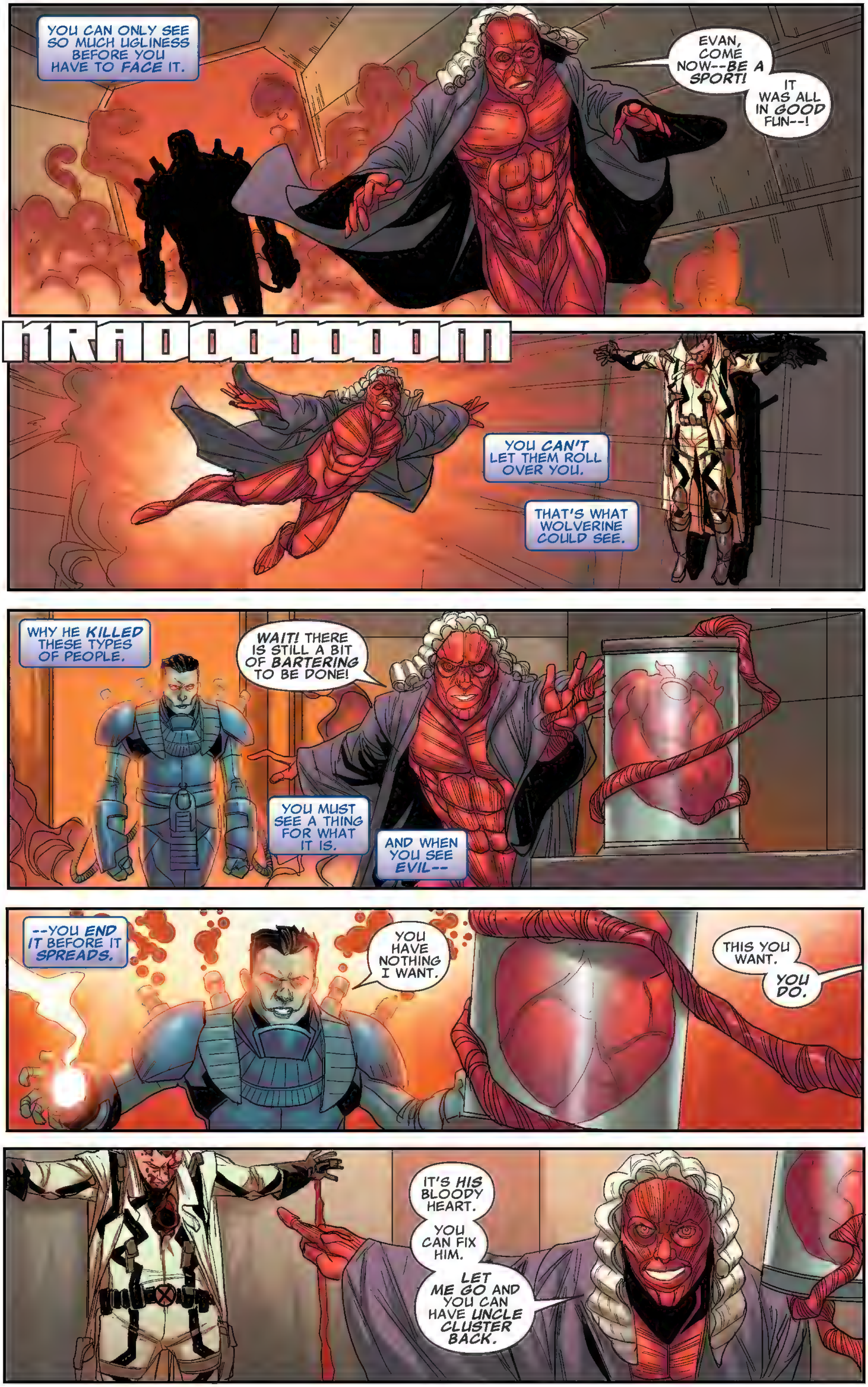
FINAL EXECUTION

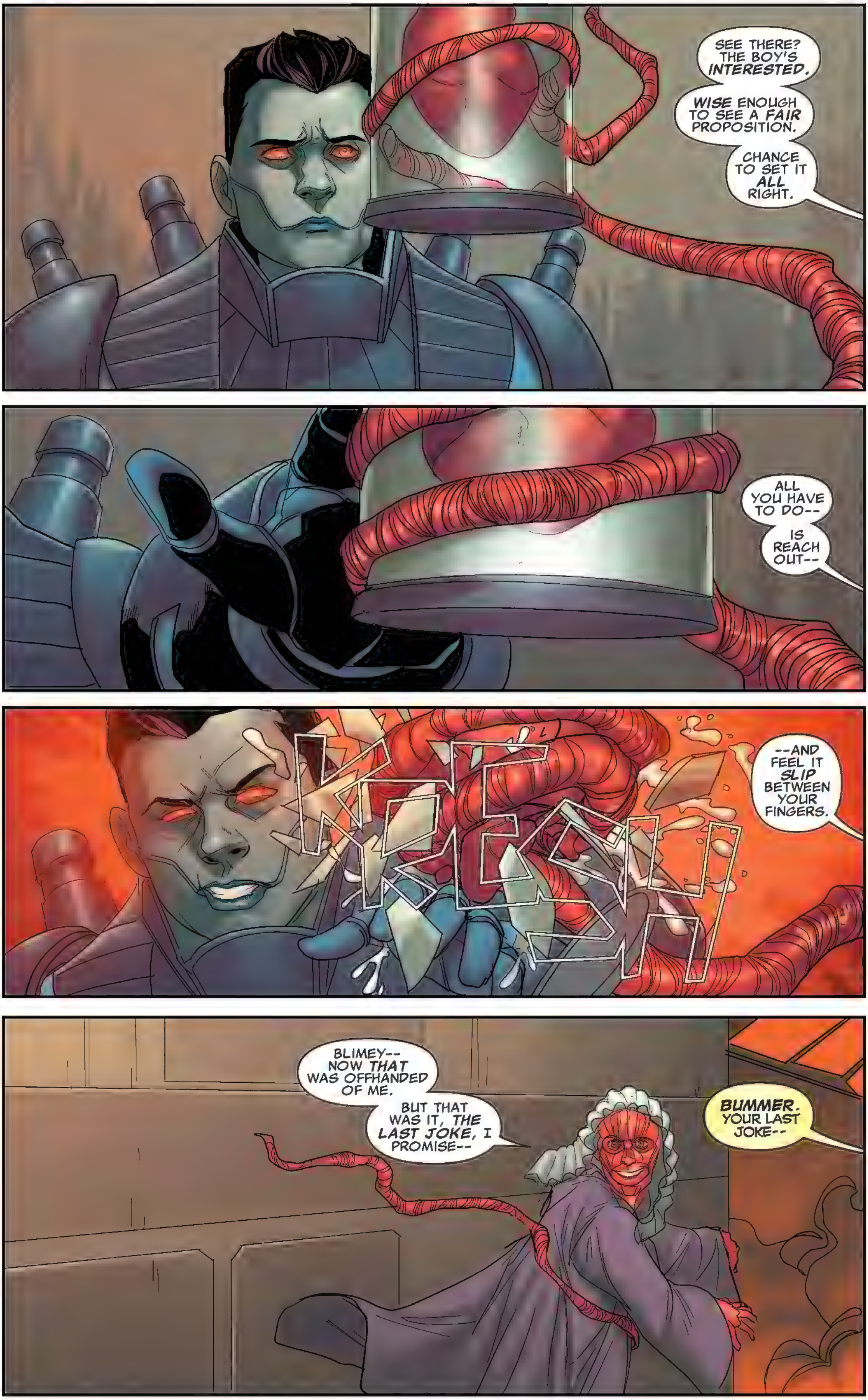
CHAPTER 10: FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

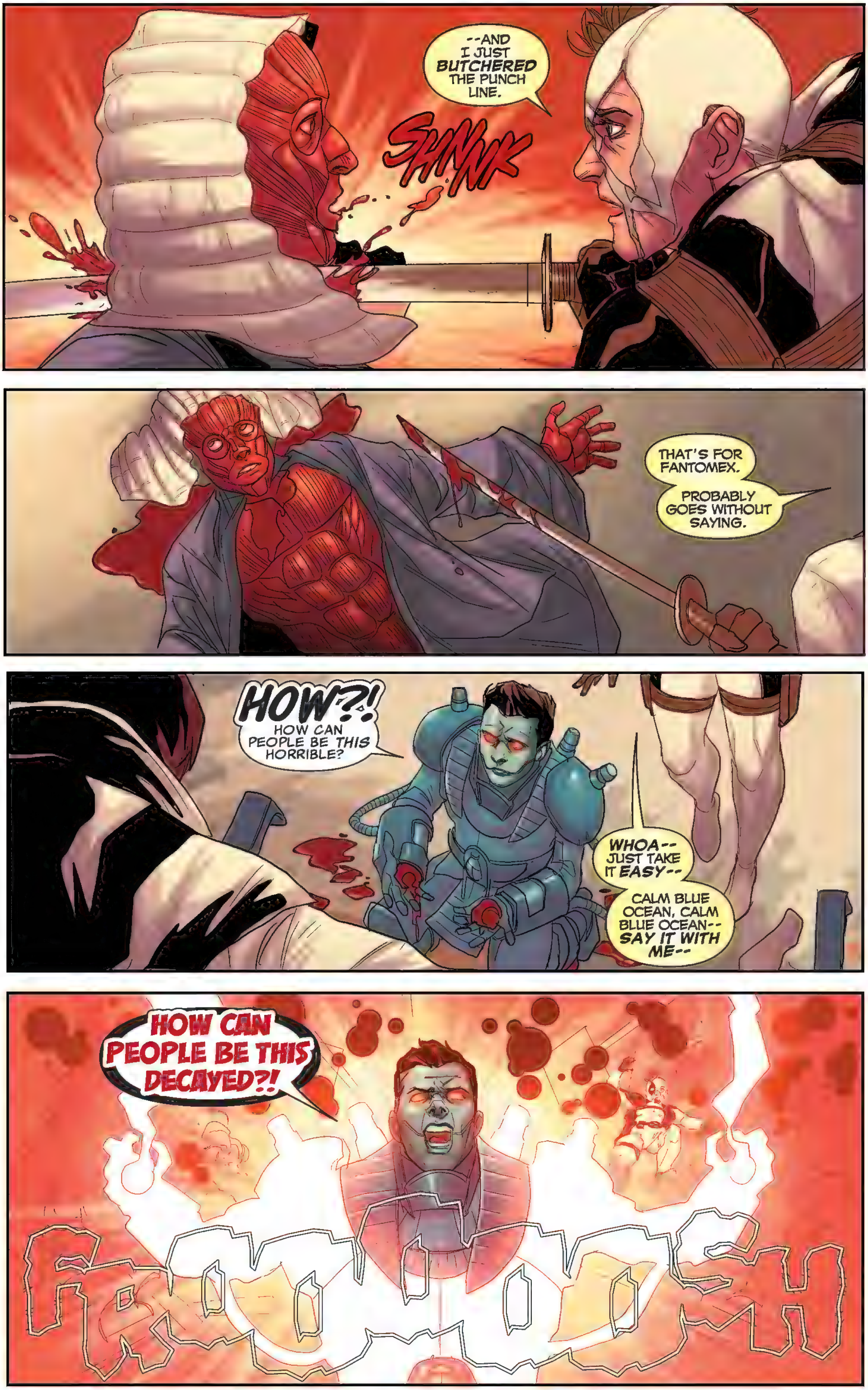

KID FINALLY PUT THE SUIT ON.
DAYS OF MIND GAMES, WHEN ALL HE NEEDED WAS A SWIFT KICK IN THE ASS.
I'VE BEEN TELLING CREED ALL ALONG.
SO, NEXT UP, FAROUK GETS INSIDE THE HEAD OF MY NEW PET APOCALYPSE AND TAKES TOTAL CONTROL.
THEN THINGS GET... BAD.
EVAN'S GOING TO ANNIHILATE THAT SCHOOL OF YOURS.
KILL YOUR STUDENTS.
KILL YOUR FRIENDS.
I'LL MAKE SURE THE WORLD KNOWS THAT YOUR KILL CREW IS THE REASON THIS NEW APOCALYPSE IS STOMPING AROUND EXACTING REVENGE ON YOUR STUDENTS.
YOU'LL BE SEEN FOR WHAT YOU ARE--
THE VILLAIN.
KWUNNG
IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT YOU SEE I BROKE EVAN.
THAT PUTTING ON THE ARMOR WAS HIS CHOICE.
BAD PEOPLE DO BAD THINGS, DAD. IT'S BORN INTO US.
NO MATTER HOW WE NEGOTIATE WITH OURSELVES...

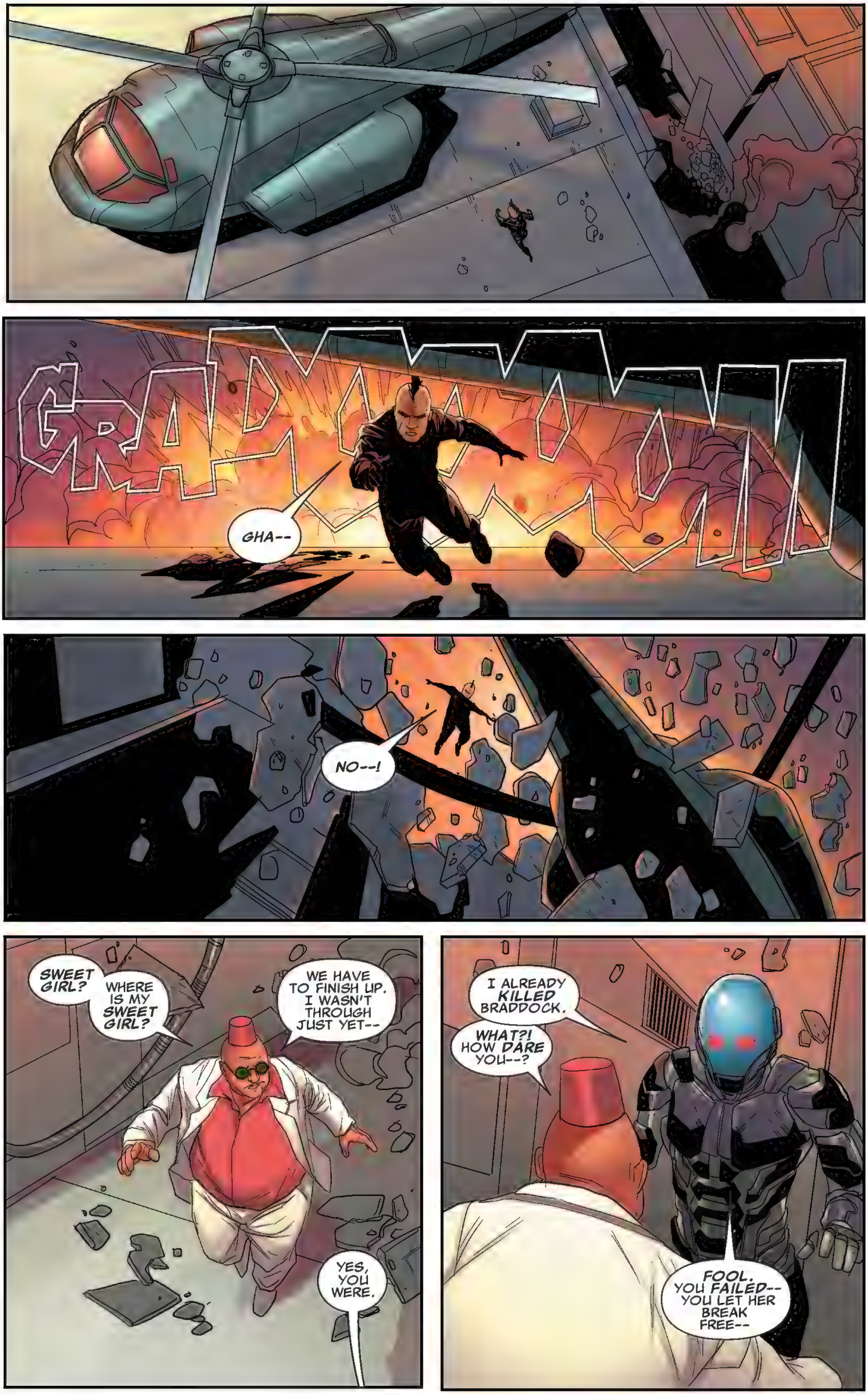

"...OUR *TRUE NATURE* WILL ALWAYS RISE TO THE SURFACE.
Y-YOUR NAME IS... NAME IS...
YOUR NAME IS-- *DAMMIT!*
CALM DOWN.
YOU SEE THE MESSAGE.
A MENTAL KNOB--
TURN THE *KEY.*
HITS LIKE A *REVELATION.*
A FLOOD OF *SELF* WASHING OVER ME.
I AM *ELIZABETH BRADDOCK.*
I PUT MYSELF IN A STATE OF *SELF-INDUCED AMNESIA* TO ALLOW MY MIND AN ESCAPE FROM THE ASTRAL PLANE.
REMEMBER TO *NEVER* DO *THAT* AGAIN.
YOU!
YOU AND YOUR *PEOPLE* DID THIS TO MY *BROTHER!*
SLAUGHTERED HIM!
YOU ARE *CONFUSED*-- YOUR HEAD FULL OF *LIES*--
YOU ARE A *MURDERER.*
THERE IS *NO* CONFUSION ABOUT THAT, FIEND.
AND NOW YOU *MUST* SUFFER--
SUFFER THE PSYCHIC DRAIN OF THE LORD PLASMATIC--

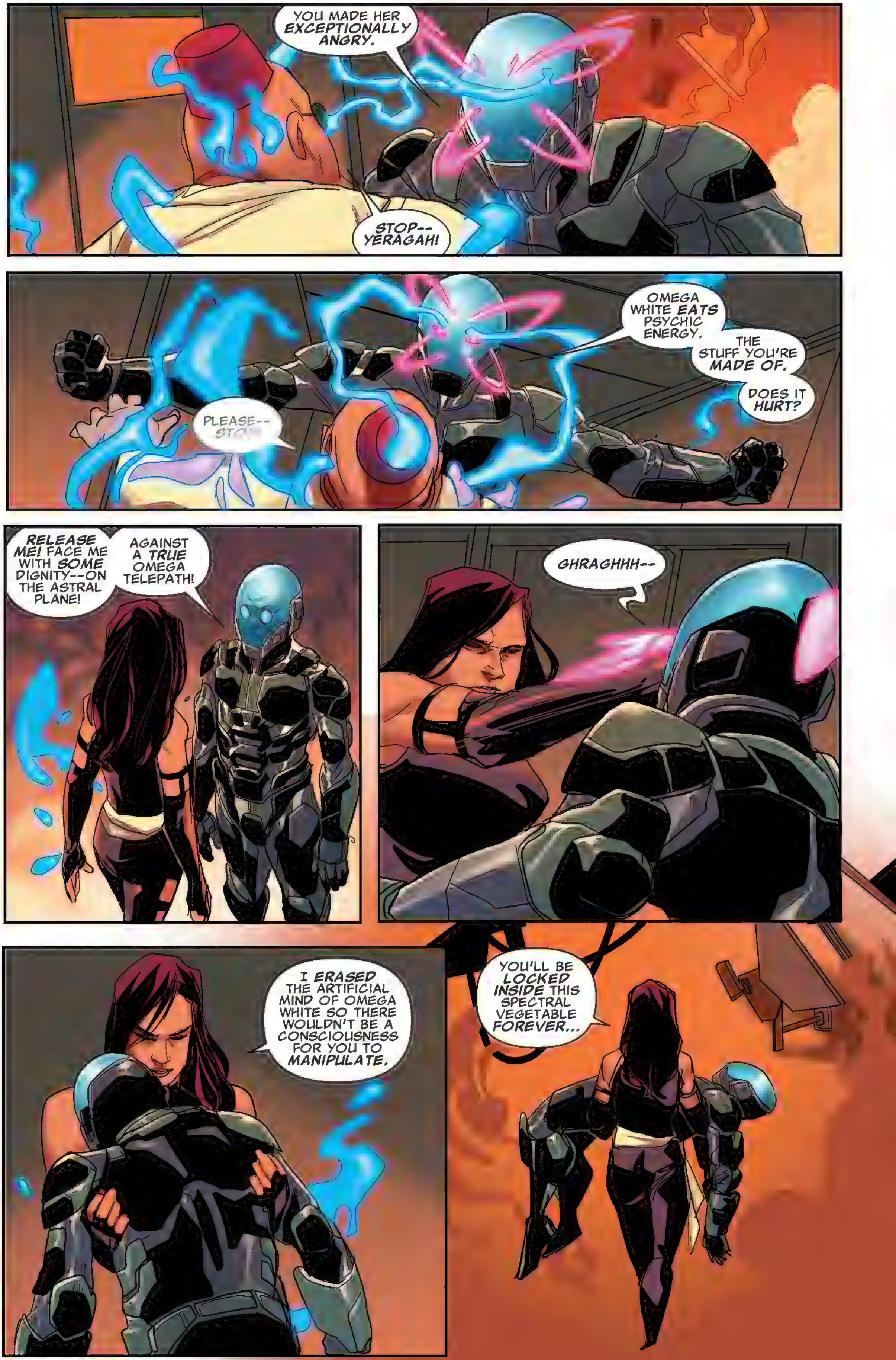

"--OMEGA WHITE WILL HAVE HIS REVENGE!"
YOU DESERVE TO DIE HERE.
FOR ALL YOUR PIETY--YOU PUSHED US TO THE GROUND TO SNATCH YOUR GRISLY PRIZE!
I-I WAS GOING BACK TO HELP THEM-- I WAS.
ONCE BLOB WAS DEAD--
NO MORE RATIONALIZATIONS.
BAMF!
I'VE OBSERVED YOU LONG ENOUGH--
--TO CALCULATE YOUR PATTERNS.
BAMF!
GHRAGH--!
FOR REVENGE YOU JEOPARDIZED OUR ENTIRE WORLD.
WHATEVER ETHICAL FIBER YOU IMAGINE YOURSELF MADE OF--IT IS A LIE.
YOU ARE A SELFISH COWARD.
I HAD TO MAKE SURE I GOT HIM--
--PLEASE UNDERSTAND--
I UNDERSTAND NONE OF THIS.
ONE DAY I HOPE YOU DO--
--AND LEARN TO FORGIVE ME.
BAMF!

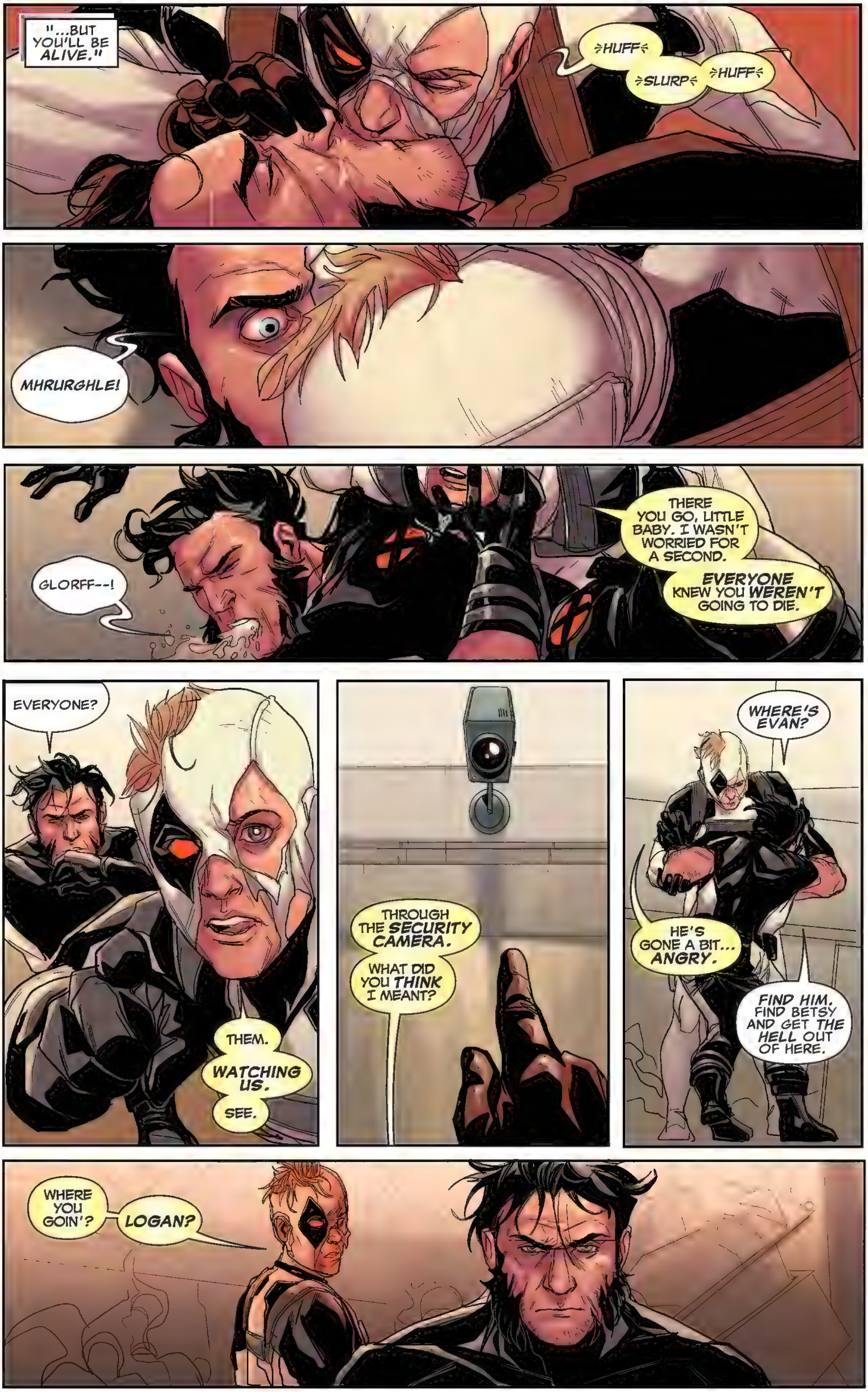

YOU CAN ONLY SEE SO MUCH UGLINESS BEFORE YOU HAVE TO *FACE* IT.
EVAN, COME NOW--*BE A SPORT!*
IT WAS ALL IN *GOOD* FUN--!
KRADOOOOOOM
YOU *CAN'T* LET THEM ROLL OVER YOU.
THAT'S WHAT WOLVERINE COULD SEE.
WHY HE *KILLED* THESE TYPES OF PEOPLE.
WAIT! THERE IS STILL A BIT OF *BARTERING* TO BE DONE!
YOU MUST SEE A THING FOR WHAT IT IS.
AND WHEN YOU SEE *EVIL--*
--YOU END IT BEFORE IT *SPREADS.*
YOU HAVE NOTHING I WANT.
THIS YOU WANT.
YOU DO.
IT'S *HIS* BLOODY HEART.
YOU CAN FIX HIM.
LET ME GO AND YOU CAN HAVE *UNCLE CLUSTER* BACK.

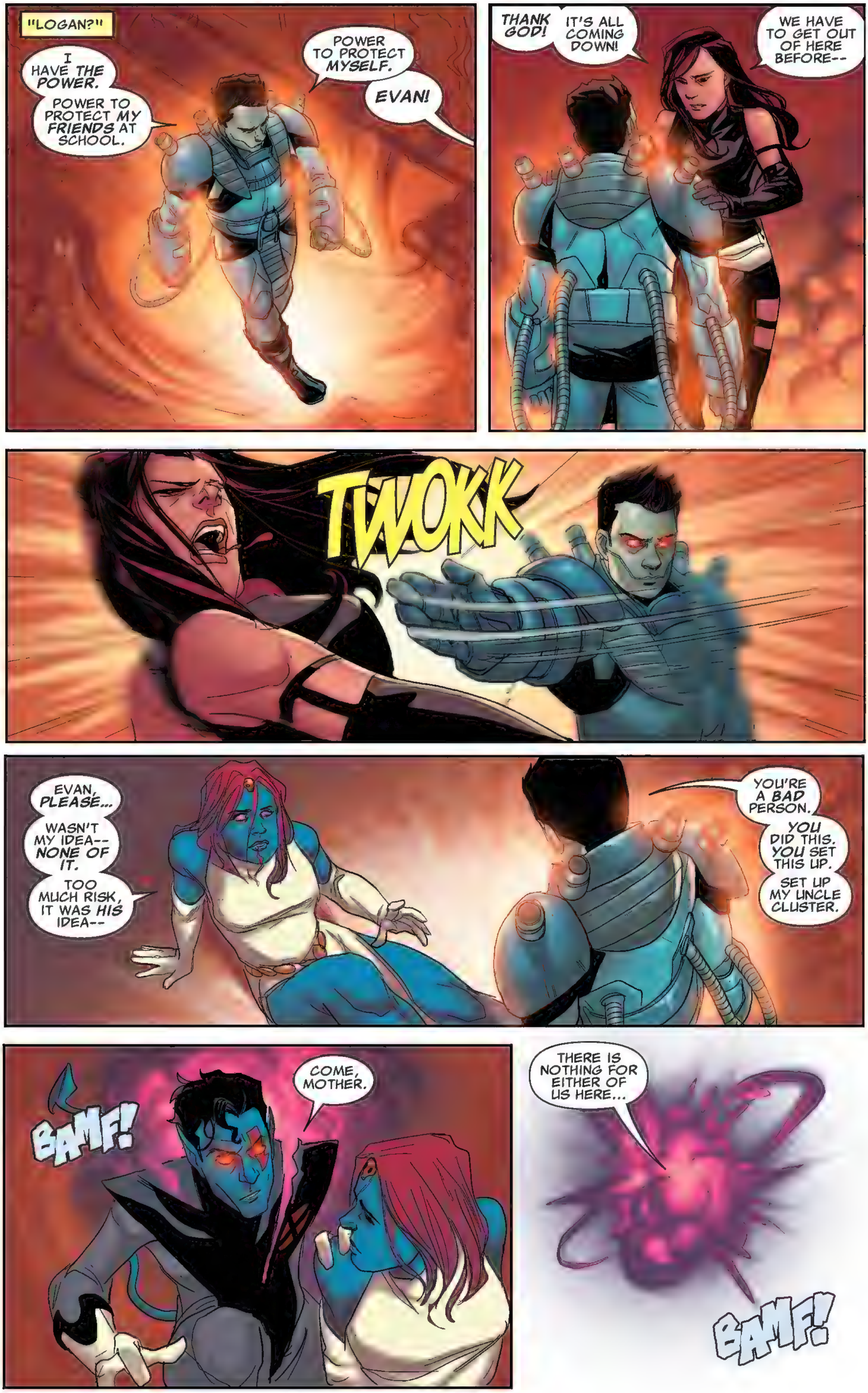

SEE THERE? THE BOY'S *INTERESTED.*
WISE ENOUGH TO SEE A *FAIR* PROPOSITION.
CHANCE TO SET IT *ALL* RIGHT.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO--
IS REACH OUT--
KRESH
--AND FEEL IT *SLIP* BETWEEN YOUR FINGERS.
BLIMEY-- NOW *THAT* WAS OFFHANDED OF ME.
BUT THAT WAS IT, *THE LAST JOKE,* I PROMISE--
BUMMER. YOUR LAST JOKE--

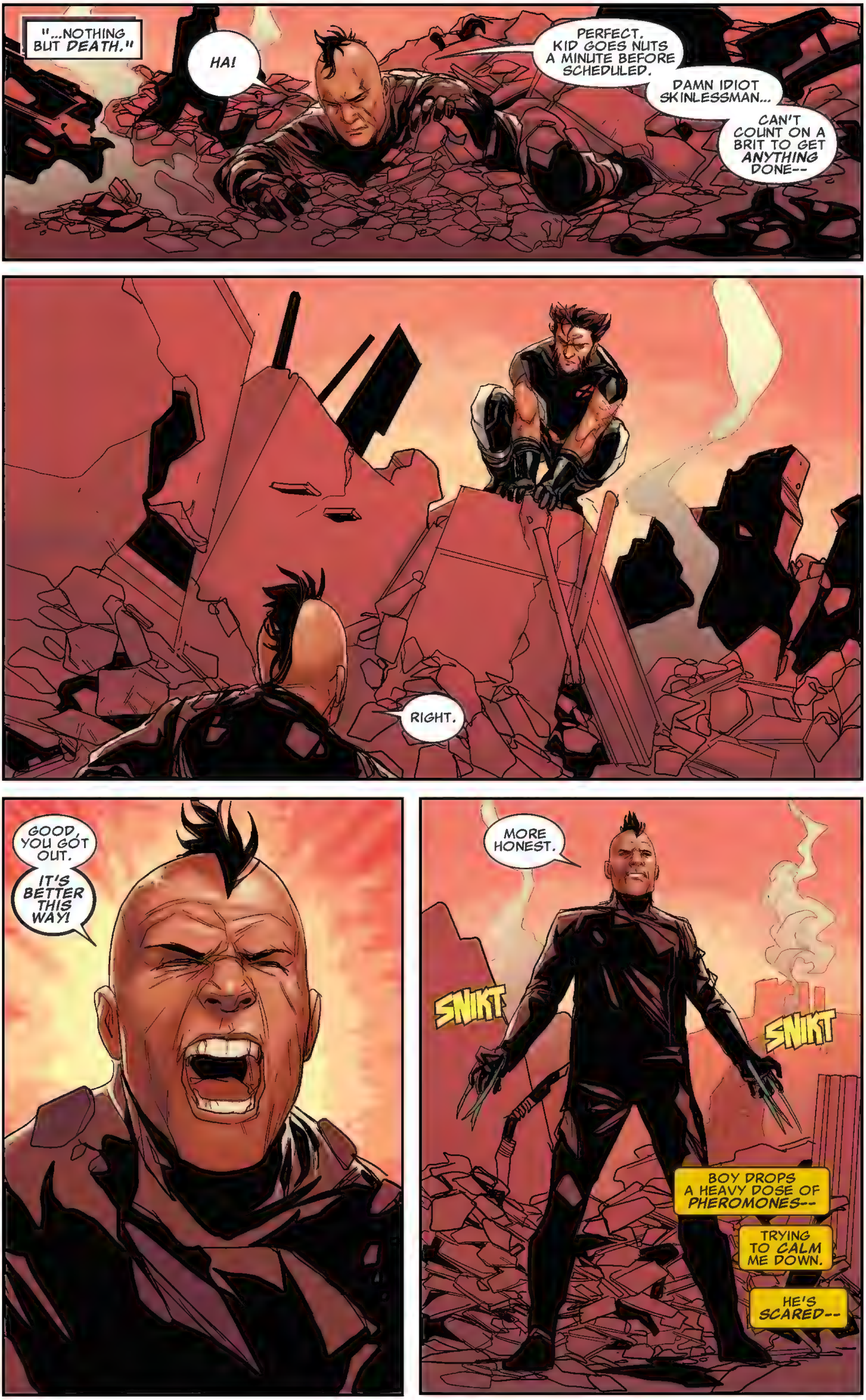

--AND I JUST BUTCHERED THE PUNCH LINE.
SHNNK
THAT'S FOR FANTOMEX.
PROBABLY GOES WITHOUT SAYING.
HOW?! HOW CAN PEOPLE BE THIS HORRIBLE?
WHOA-- JUST TAKE IT EASY--
CALM BLUE OCEAN, CALM BLUE OCEAN-- SAY IT WITH ME--
HOW CAN PEOPLE BE THIS DECAYED?!
FROOOOOSH

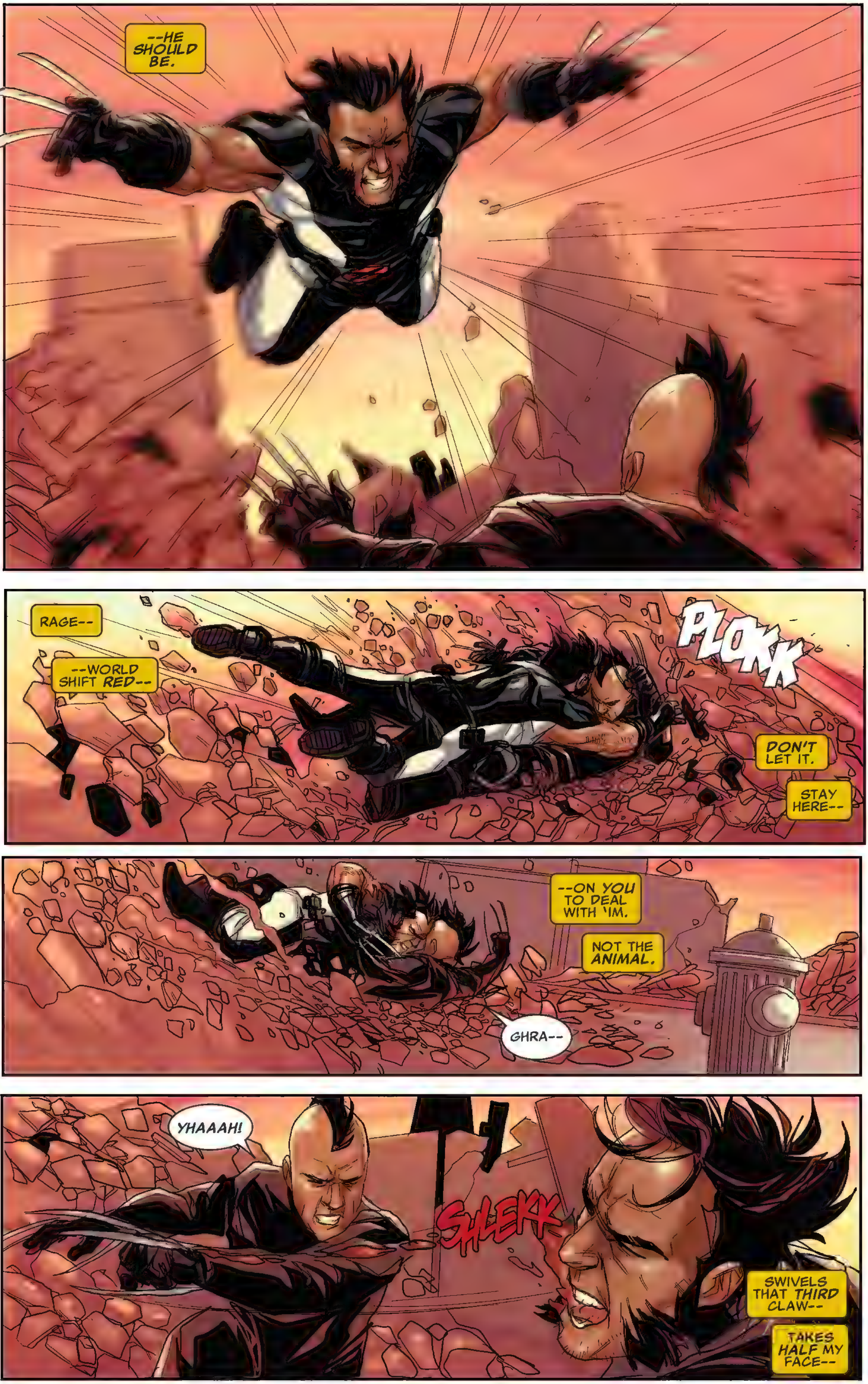

GRADOOOOM
GHA--
NO--!
SWEET GIRL?
WHERE IS MY SWEET GIRL?
WE HAVE TO FINISH UP. I WASN'T THROUGH JUST YET--
YES, YOU WERE.
I ALREADY KILLED BRADDOCK.
WHAT?! HOW DARE YOU--?
FOOL. YOU FAILED-- YOU LET HER BREAK FREE--

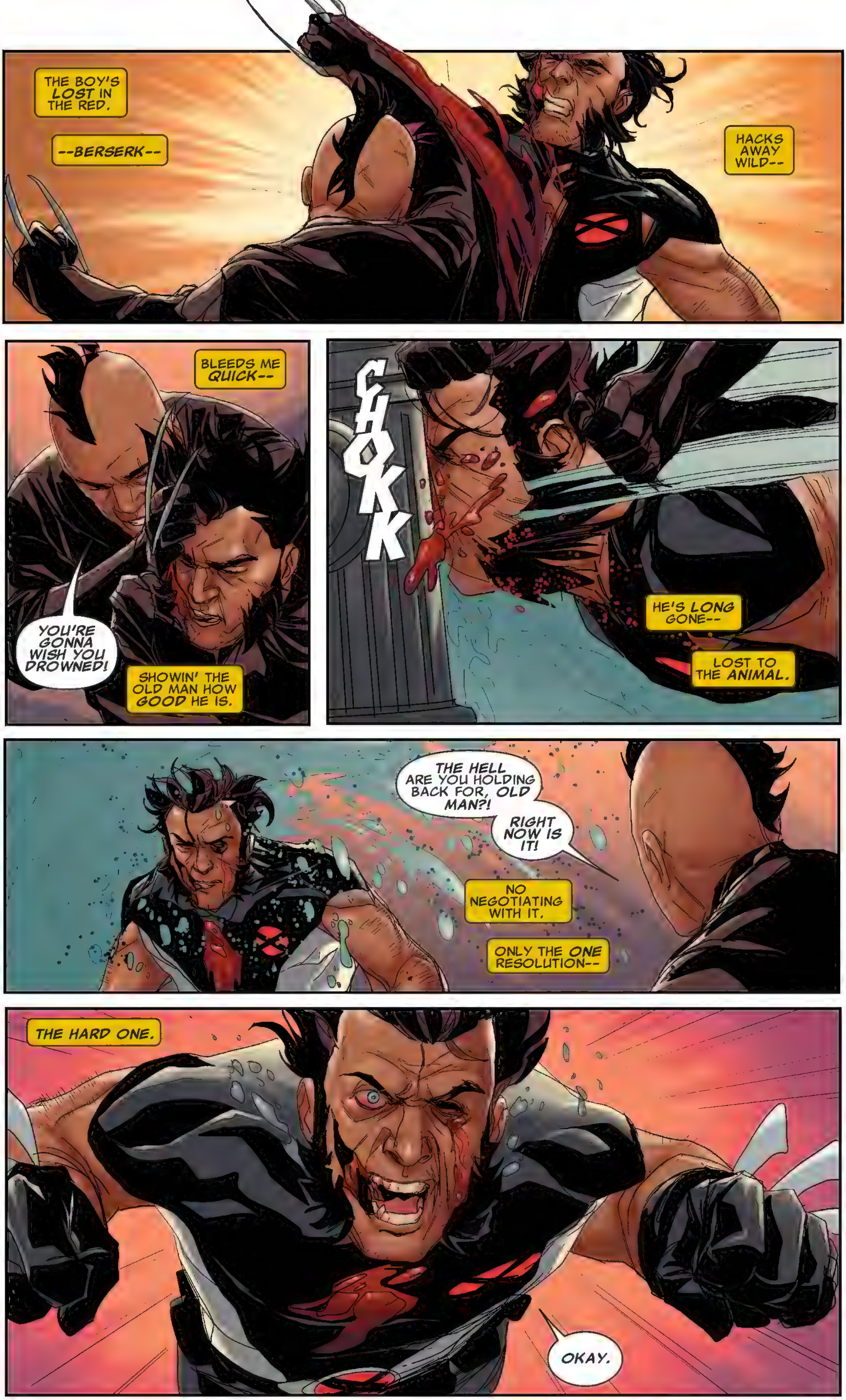

YOU MADE HER EXCEPTIONALLY ANGRY.
STOP-- YERAGAH!
OMEGA WHITE EATS PSYCHIC ENERGY.
THE STUFF YOU'RE MADE OF.
DOES IT HURT?
PLEASE-- STOP
RELEASE ME! FACE ME WITH SOME DIGNITY--ON THE ASTRAL PLANE!
AGAINST A TRUE OMEGA TELEPATH!
GHRAGHHH--
I ERASED THE ARTIFICIAL MIND OF OMEGA WHITE SO THERE WOULDN'T BE A CONSCIOUSNESS FOR YOU TO MANIPULATE.
YOU'LL BE LOCKED INSIDE THIS SPECTRAL VEGETABLE FOREVER...

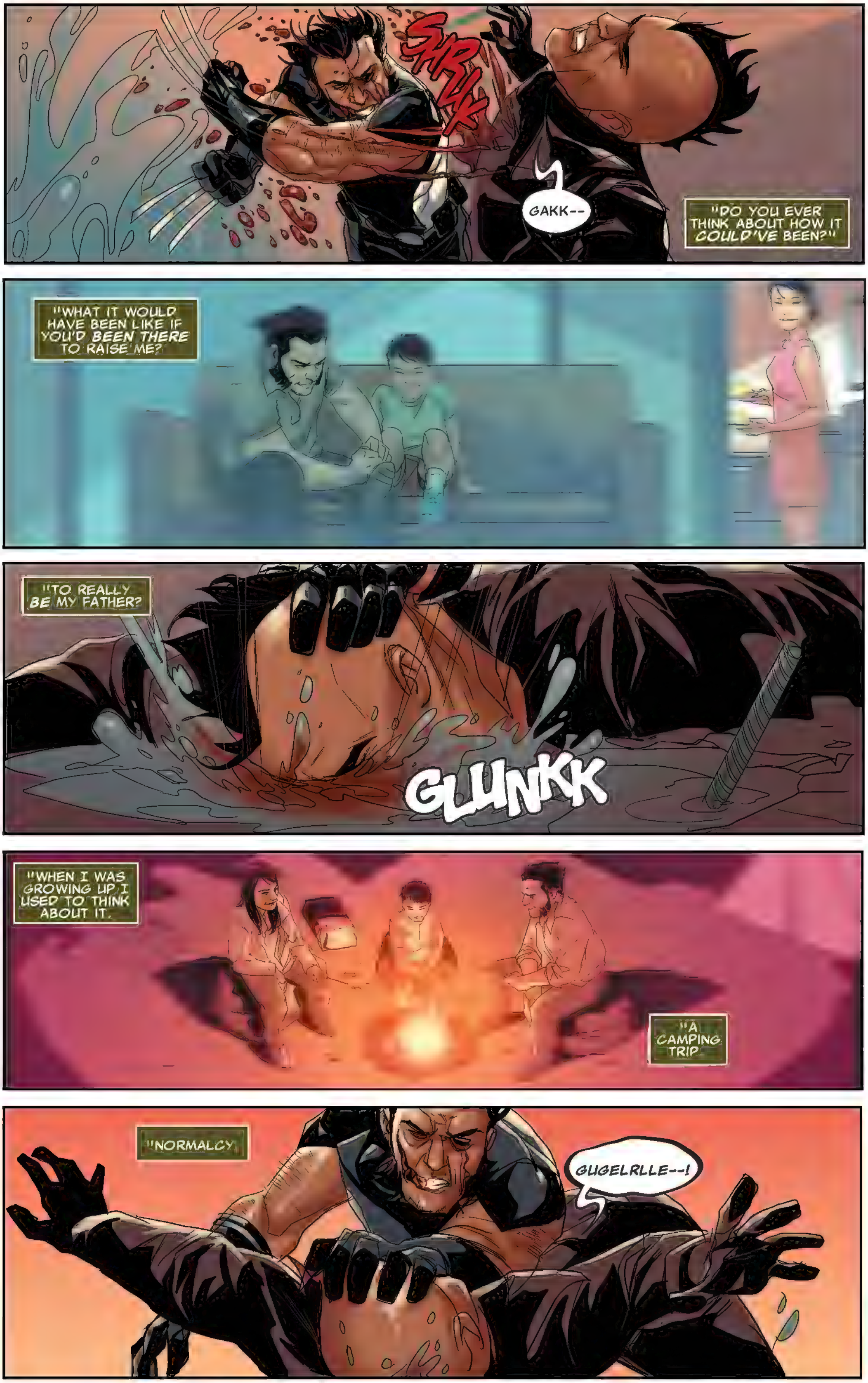

"...BUT YOU'LL BE ALIVE."
HUFF
SLURP
HUFF
MHRURGHLE!
GLORFF--!
THERE YOU GO, LITTLE BABY. I WASN'T WORRIED FOR A SECOND.
EVERYONE KNEW YOU WEREN'T GOING TO DIE.
EVERYONE?
THEM.
WATCHING US.
SEE.
THROUGH THE SECURITY CAMERA.
WHAT DID YOU THINK I MEANT?
WHERE'S EVAN?
HE'S GONE A BIT... ANGRY.
FIND HIM. FIND BETSY AND GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.
WHERE YOU GOIN'?
LOGAN?

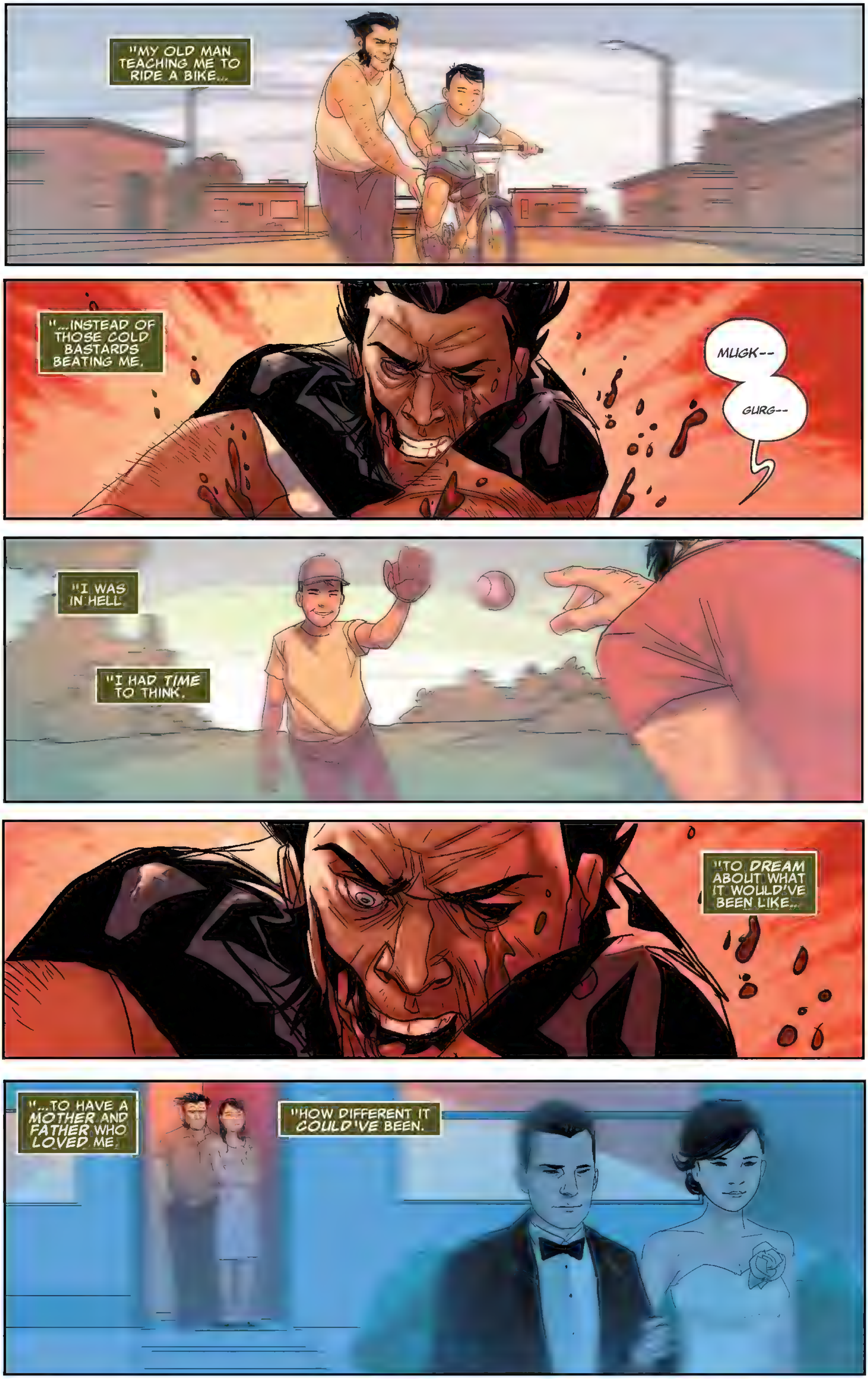

"LOGAN?"
I HAVE THE POWER.
POWER TO PROTECT MY FRIENDS AT SCHOOL.
POWER TO PROTECT MYSELF.
EVAN!
THANK GOD!
IT'S ALL COMING DOWN!
WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE--
TWOKK
EVAN, PLEASE...
WASN'T MY IDEA-- NONE OF IT.
TOO MUCH RISK, IT WAS HIS IDEA--
YOU'RE A BAD PERSON.
YOU DID THIS. YOU SET THIS UP.
SET UP MY UNCLE CLUSTER.
BAMF!
COME, MOTHER.
THERE IS NOTHING FOR EITHER OF US HERE...
BAMF!

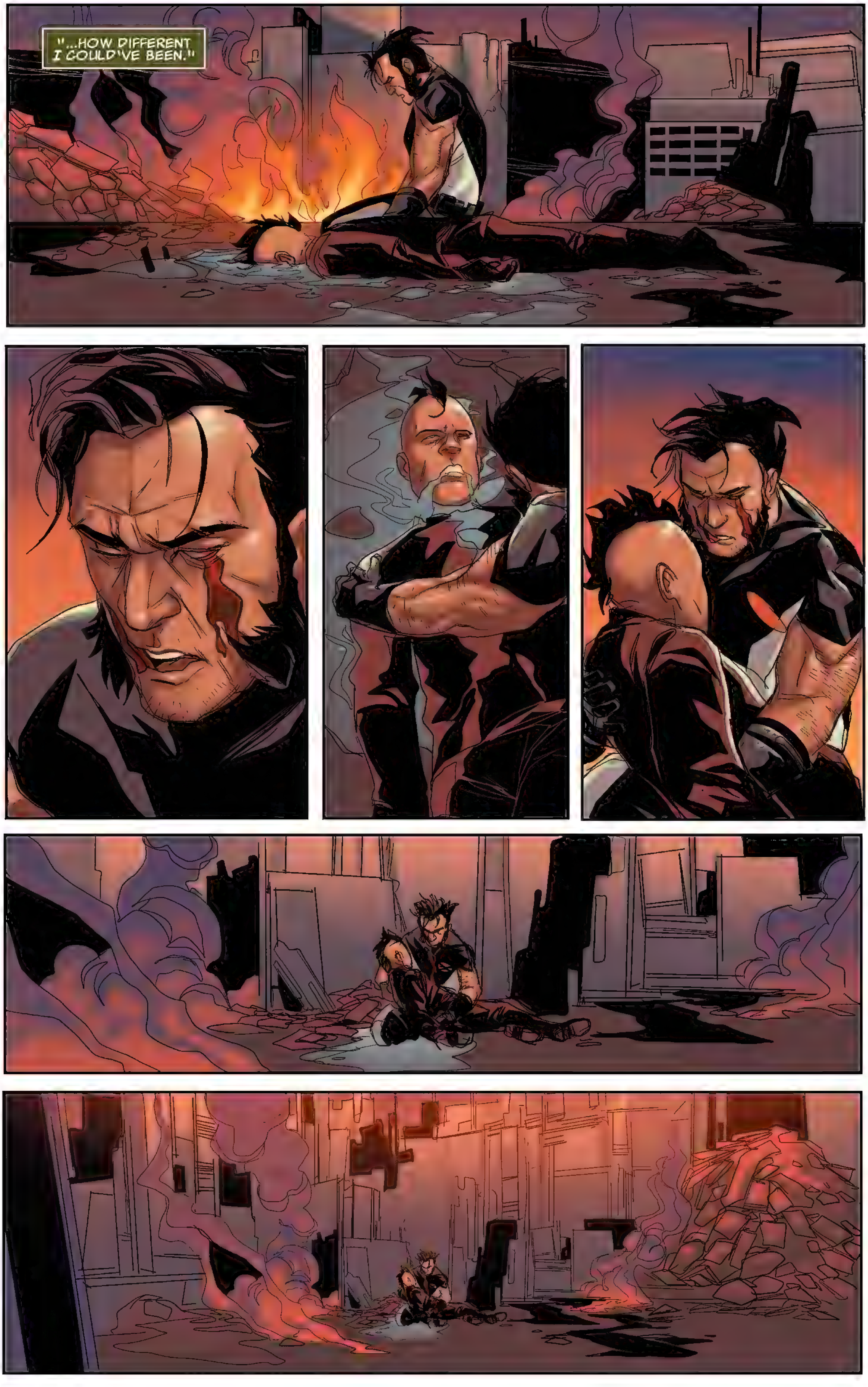

"...NOTHING BUT *DEATH*."
HA!
PERFECT. KID GOES NUTS A MINUTE BEFORE SCHEDULED.
DAMN IDIOT SKINLESSMAN...
CAN'T COUNT ON A BRIT TO GET *ANYTHING* DONE--
RIGHT.
GOOD, YOU GOT OUT.
IT'S BETTER THIS WAY!
MORE HONEST.
SNIKT
SNIKT
BOY DROPS A HEAVY DOSE OF *PHEROMONES*--
TRYING TO *CALM* ME DOWN.
HE'S *SCARED*--

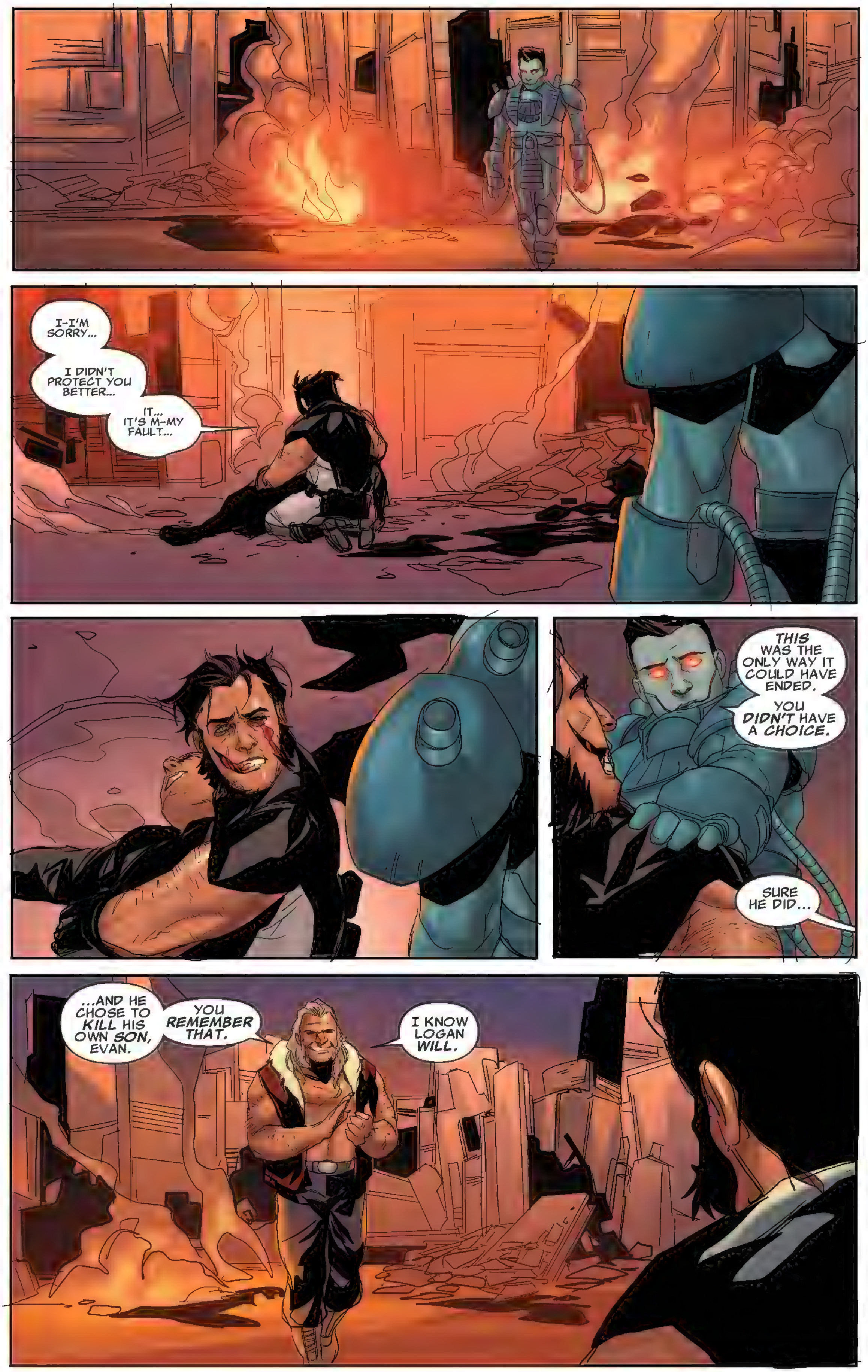

--HE SHOULD BE.
RAGE--
--WORLD SHIFT RED--
PLOKK
DON'T LET IT.
STAY HERE--
--ON YOU TO DEAL WITH 'IM.
NOT THE ANIMAL.
GHRA--
YHAAAH!
SHLEKK
SWIVELS THAT THIRD CLAW--
TAKES HALF MY FACE--

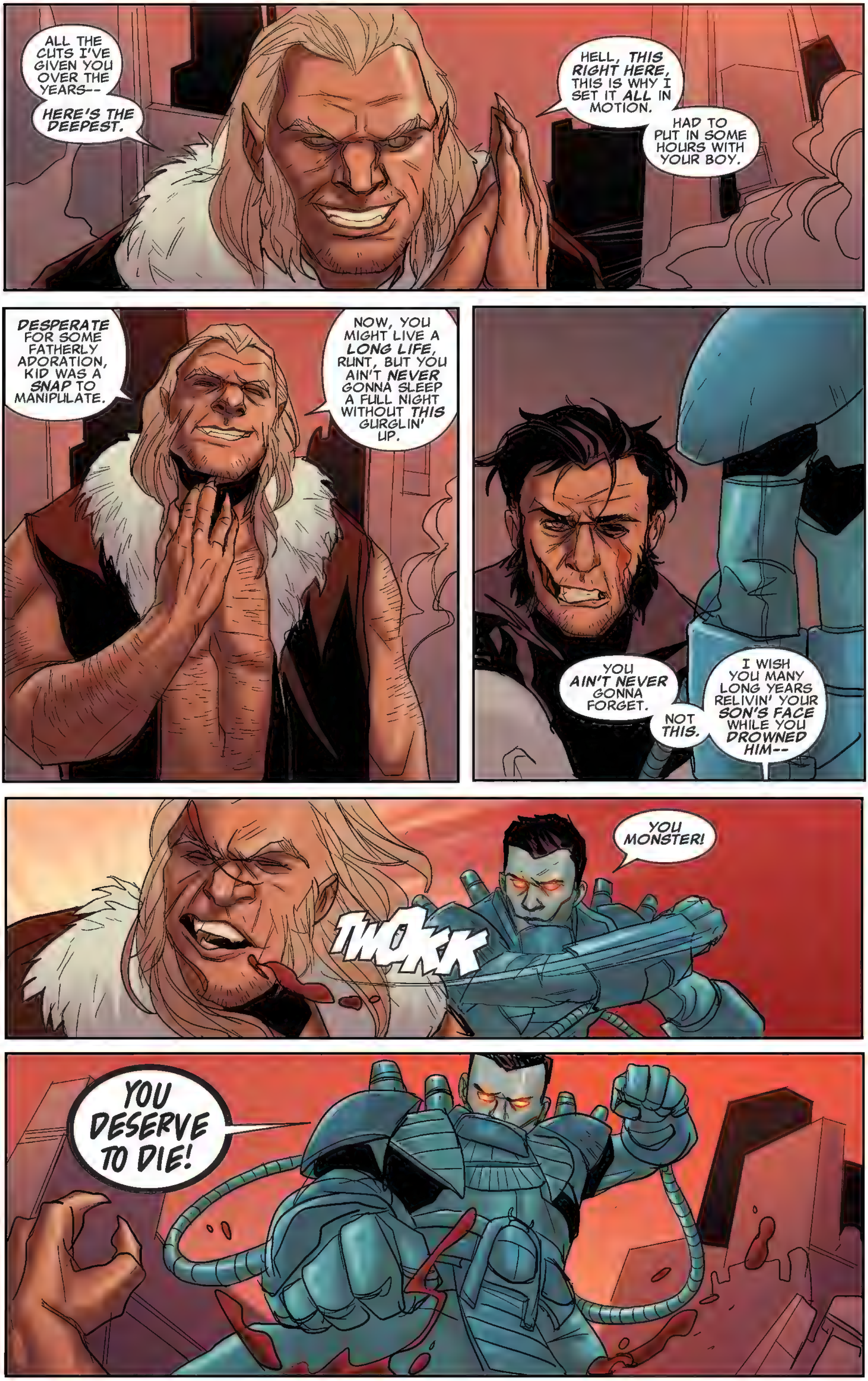

THE BOY'S *LOST* IN THE RED.
--*BERSERK*--
HACKS AWAY WILD--
BLEEDS ME *QUICK*--
YOU'RE GONNA WISH YOU DROWNED!
SHOWIN' THE OLD MAN HOW *GOOD* HE IS.
CHOKK
HE'S *LONG* GONE--
LOST TO THE *ANIMAL*.
THE HELL ARE YOU HOLDING BACK FOR, *OLD* MAN?!
RIGHT NOW IS *IT!*
NO NEGOTIATING WITH IT.
ONLY THE *ONE* RESOLUTION--
THE HARD ONE.
OKAY.

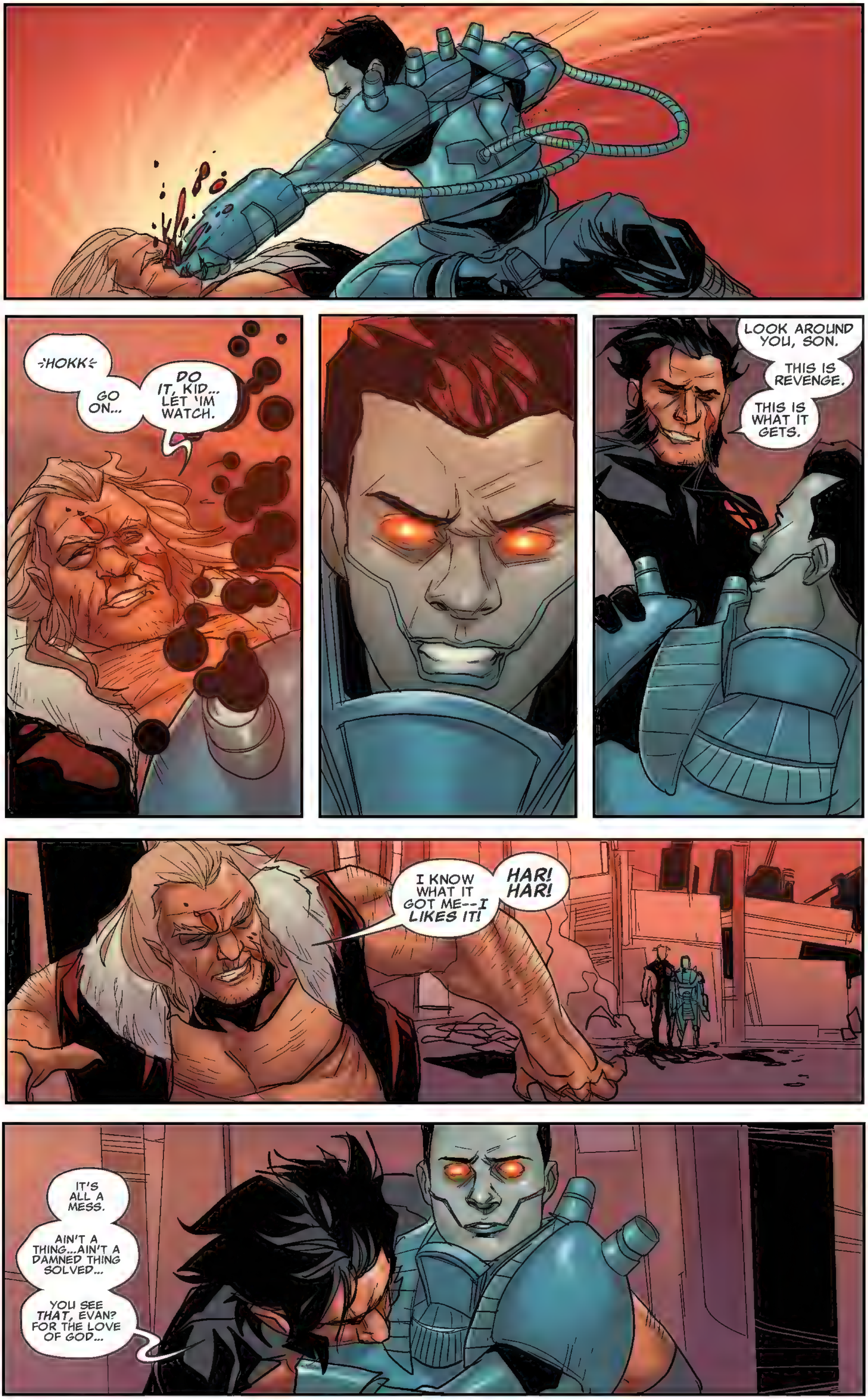

SHRUKK
GAKK--
"DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT HOW IT COULD'VE BEEN?"
"WHAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE IF YOU'D BEEN THERE TO RAISE ME?
"TO REALLY BE MY FATHER?
GLUNKK
"WHEN I WAS GROWING UP I USED TO THINK ABOUT IT.
"A CAMPING TRIP.
"NORMALCY.
GUGELRLLE--!


"MY OLD MAN TEACHING ME TO RIDE A BIKE...
"...INSTEAD OF THOSE COLD BASTARDS BEATING ME.
MUGK--
GURG--
"I WAS IN HELL.
"I HAD *TIME* TO THINK.
"TO *DREAM* ABOUT WHAT IT WOULD'VE BEEN LIKE...
"...TO HAVE A MOTHER AND FATHER WHO LOVED ME.
"HOW DIFFERENT IT COULD'VE BEEN.

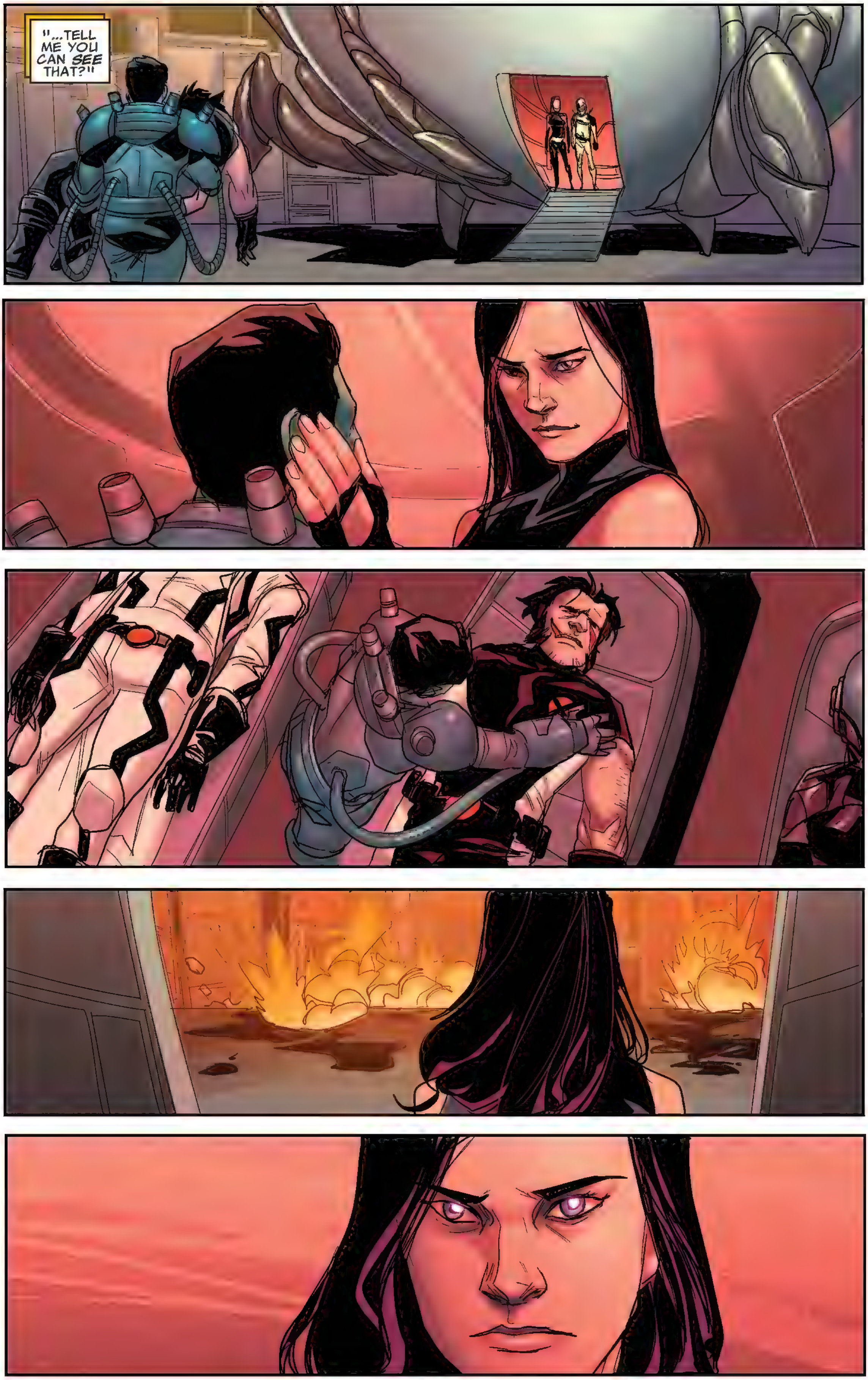

"...HOW DIFFERENT I COULD'VE BEEN."

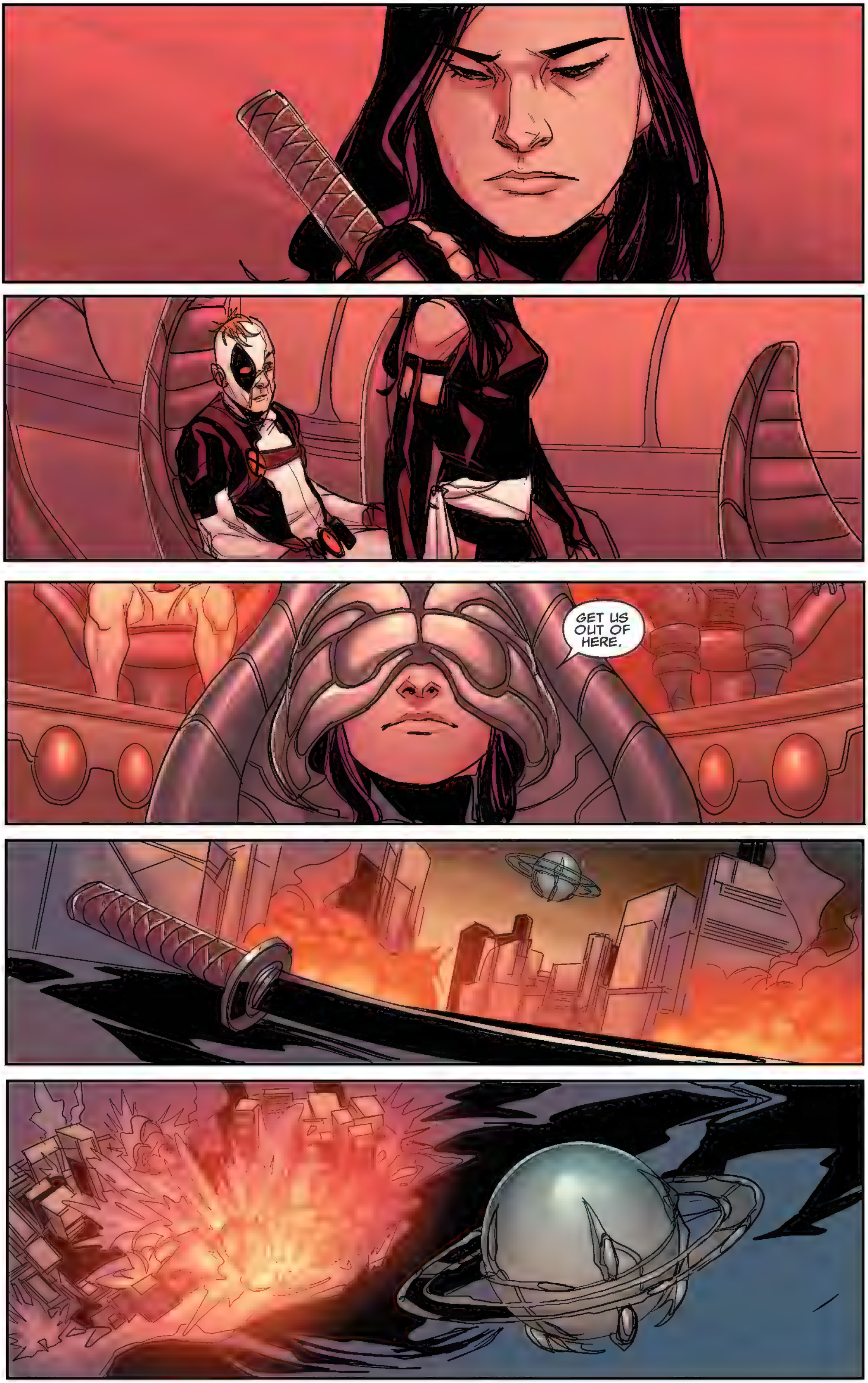

I-I'M SORRY...
I DIDN'T PROTECT YOU BETTER...
IT... IT'S M-MY FAULT...
THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY IT COULD HAVE ENDED.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE.
SURE HE DID...
...AND HE CHOSE TO KILL HIS OWN SON, EVAN.
YOU REMEMBER THAT.
I KNOW LOGAN WILL.

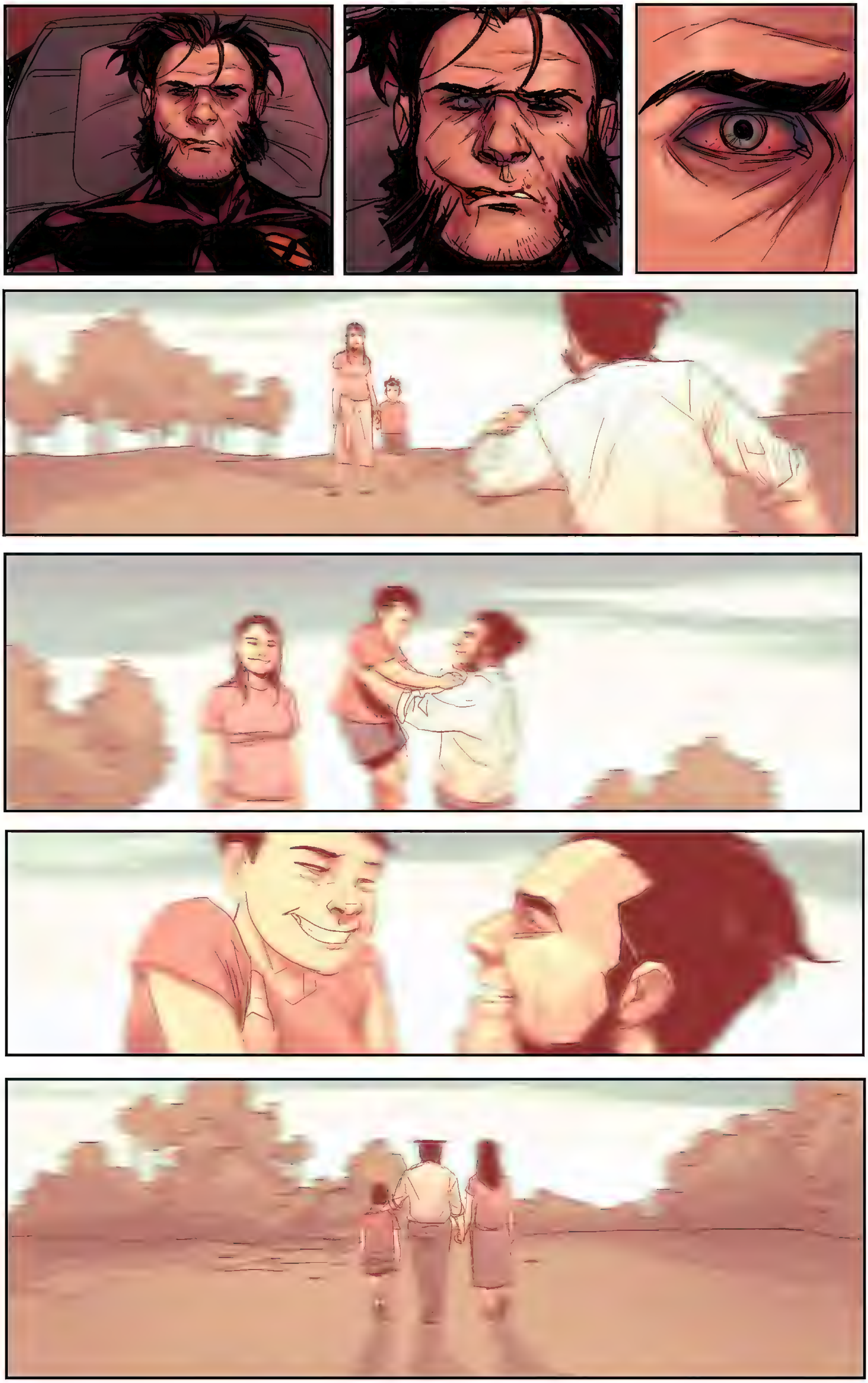

ALL THE CUTS I'VE GIVEN YOU OVER THE YEARS--
HERE'S THE DEEPEST.
HELL, THIS RIGHT HERE, THIS IS WHY I SET IT ALL IN MOTION.
HAD TO PUT IN SOME HOURS WITH YOUR BOY.
DESPERATE FOR SOME FATHERLY ADORATION, KID WAS A SNAP TO MANIPULATE.
NOW, YOU MIGHT LIVE A LONG LIFE, RUNT, BUT YOU AIN'T NEVER GONNA SLEEP A FULL NIGHT WITHOUT THIS GURGLIN' UP.
YOU AIN'T NEVER GONNA FORGET.
NOT THIS.
I WISH YOU MANY LONG YEARS RELIVIN' YOUR SON'S FACE WHILE YOU DROWNED HIM--
YOU MONSTER!
TWOKK
YOU DESERVE TO DIE!



-HOKK-
GO ON...
DO IT, KID... LET 'IM WATCH.
LOOK AROUND YOU, SON.
THIS IS REVENGE.
THIS IS WHAT IT GETS.
I KNOW WHAT IT GOT ME--I *LIKES* IT!
HAR! HAR!
IT'S ALL A MESS.
AIN'T A THING...AIN'T A DAMNED THING SOLVED...
YOU SEE *THAT*, EVAN? FOR THE LOVE OF GOD...

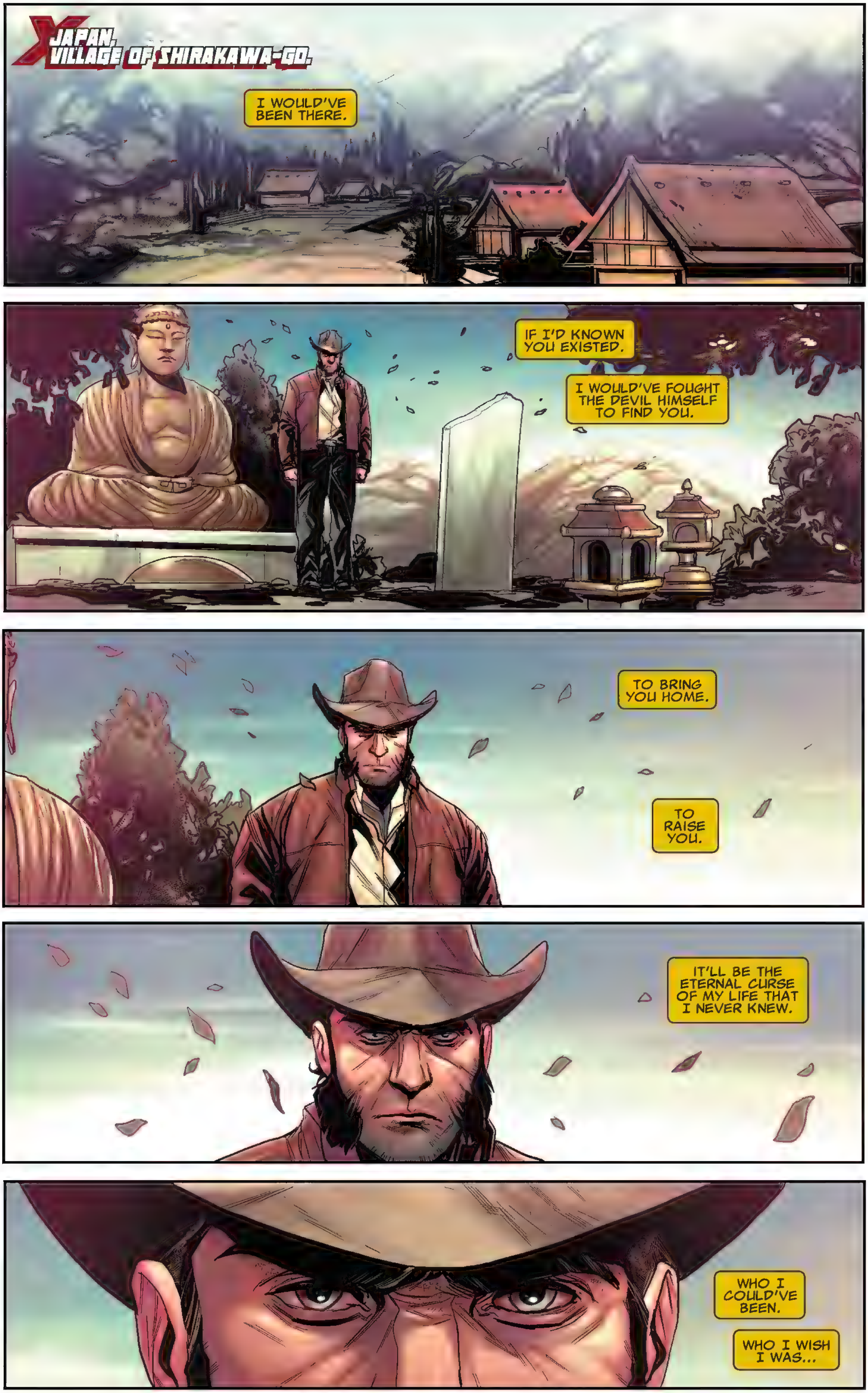

"...TELL ME YOU CAN *SEE* THAT?"

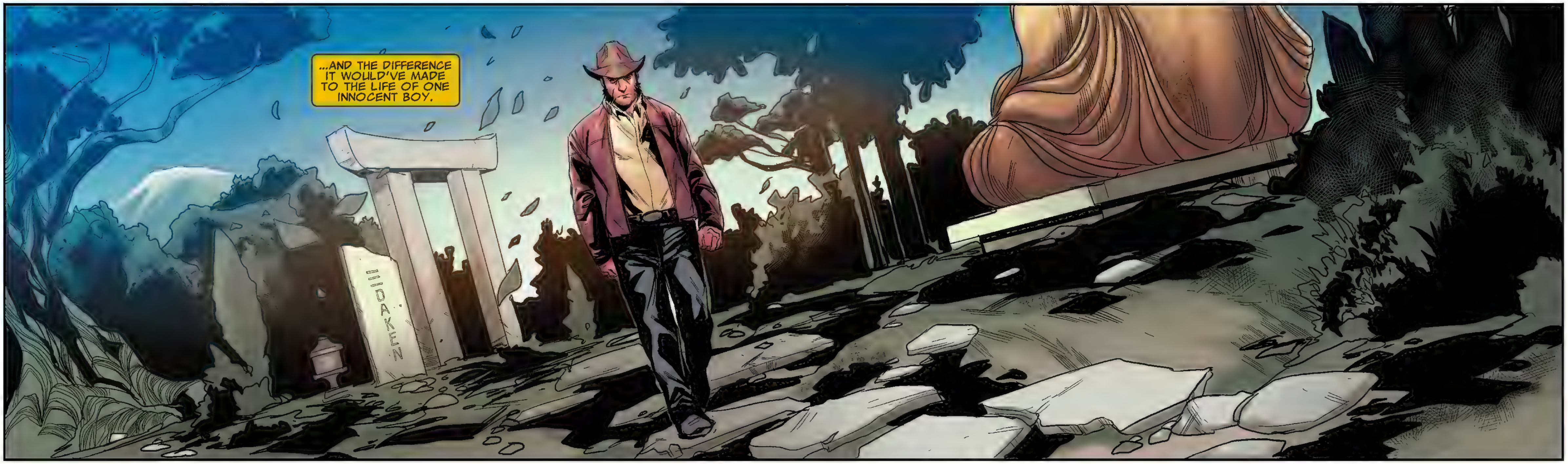

GET US OUT OF HERE.



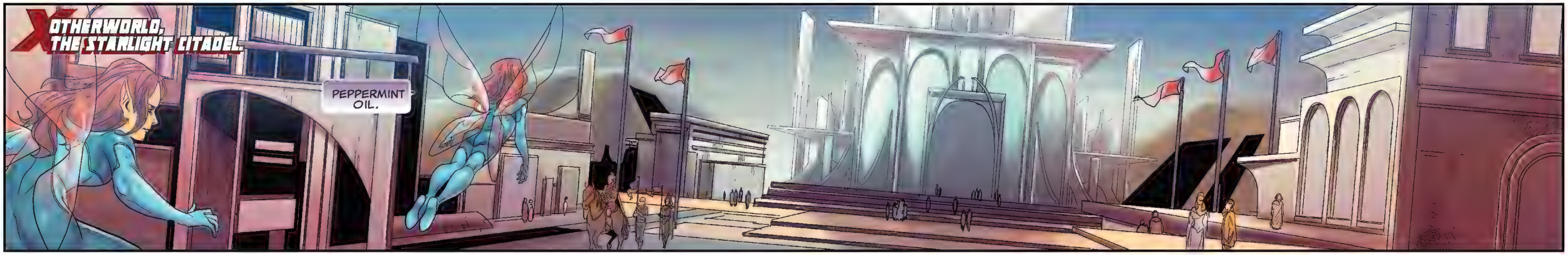
UNCANNY X-FORCE 35 VARIANT
ART BY SIMONE BIANCHI & SIMONE PERUZZI

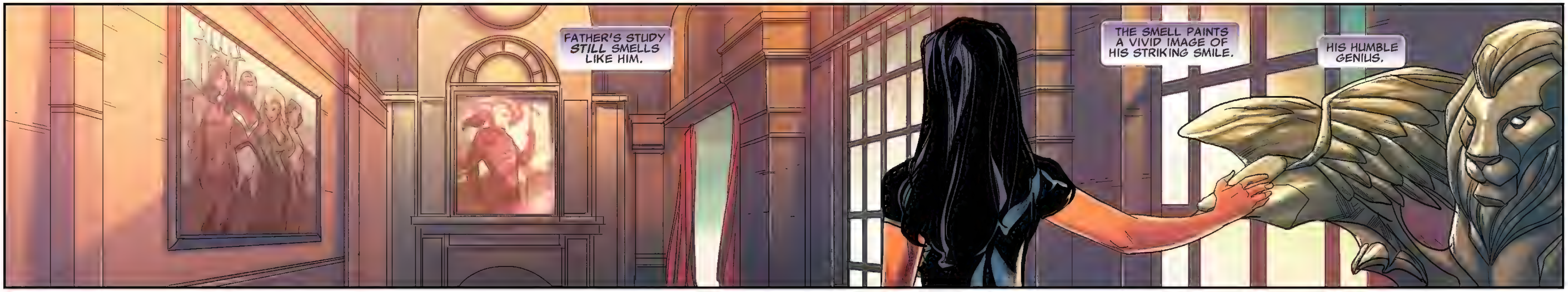
35 RAINBOWS, PUPPY DOGS & SUNSHINE

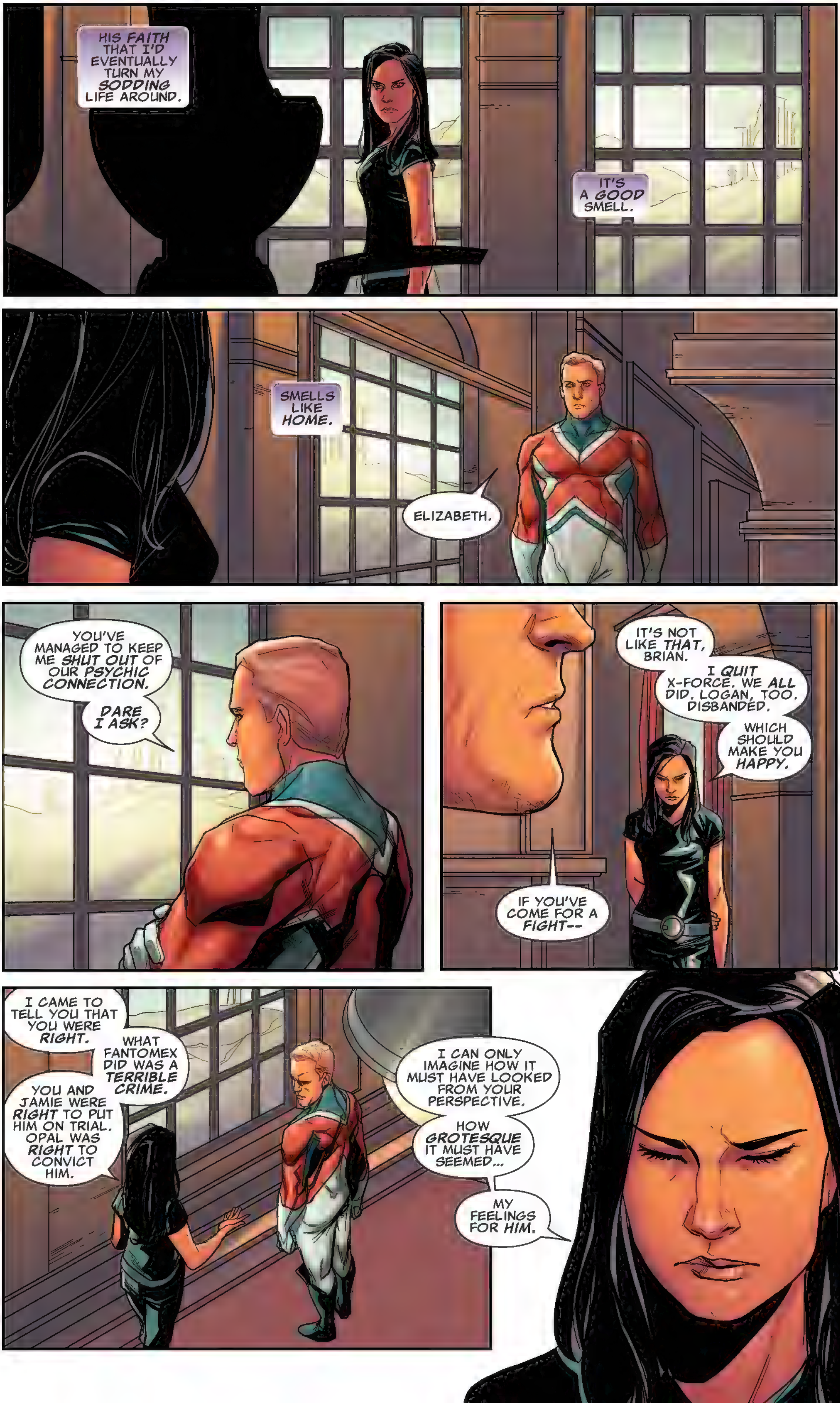

JAPAN,
VILLAGE OF SHIRAKAWA-GO.
I WOULD'VE BEEN THERE.
IF I'D KNOWN YOU EXISTED.
I WOULD'VE FOUGHT THE DEVIL HIMSELF TO FIND YOU.
TO BRING YOU HOME.
TO RAISE YOU.
IT'LL BE THE ETERNAL CURSE OF MY LIFE THAT I NEVER KNEW.
WHO I COULD'VE BEEN.
WHO I WISH I WAS...

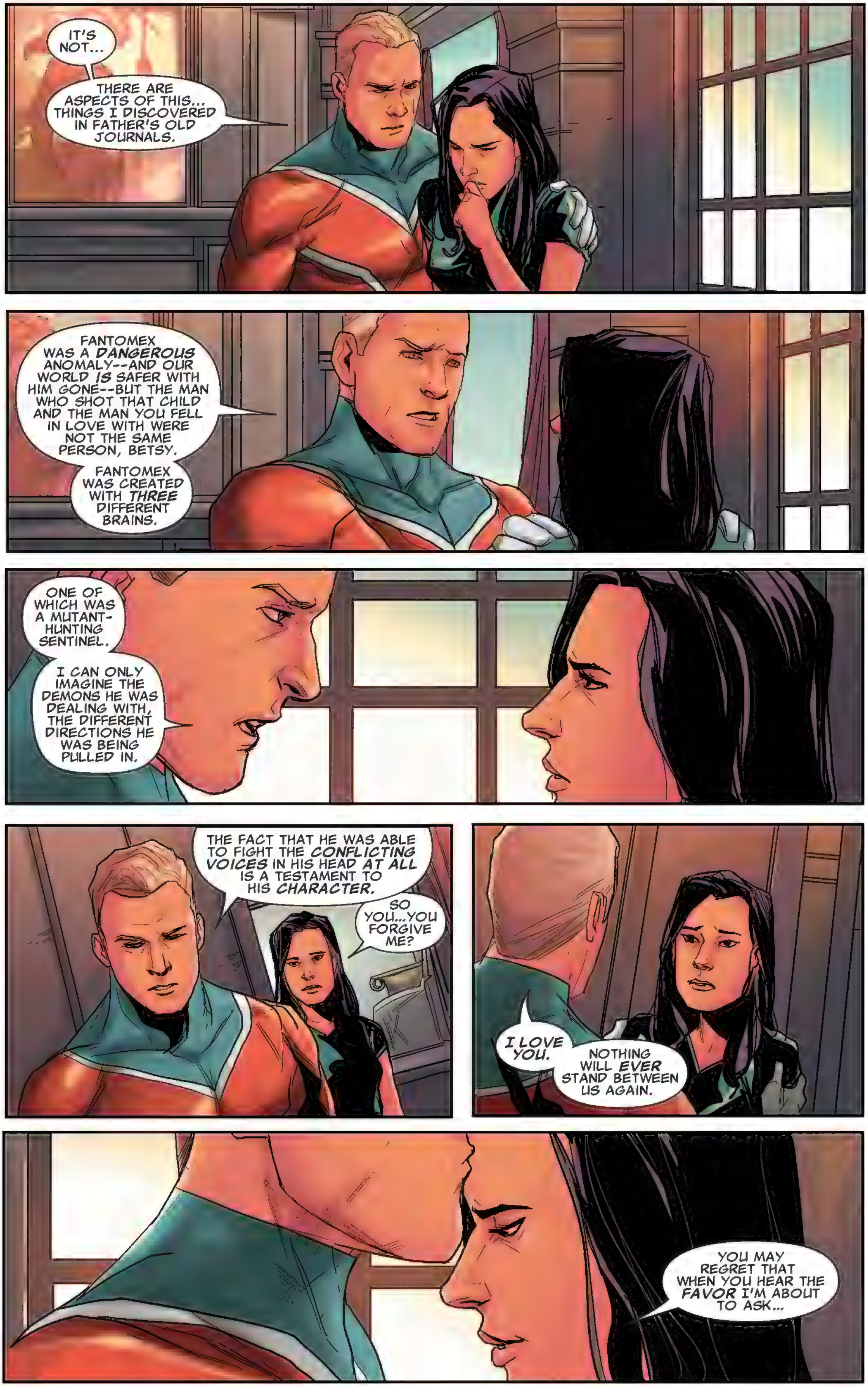

...AND THE DIFFERENCE IT WOULD'VE MADE TO THE LIFE OF ONE INNOCENT BOY.
DAKEN

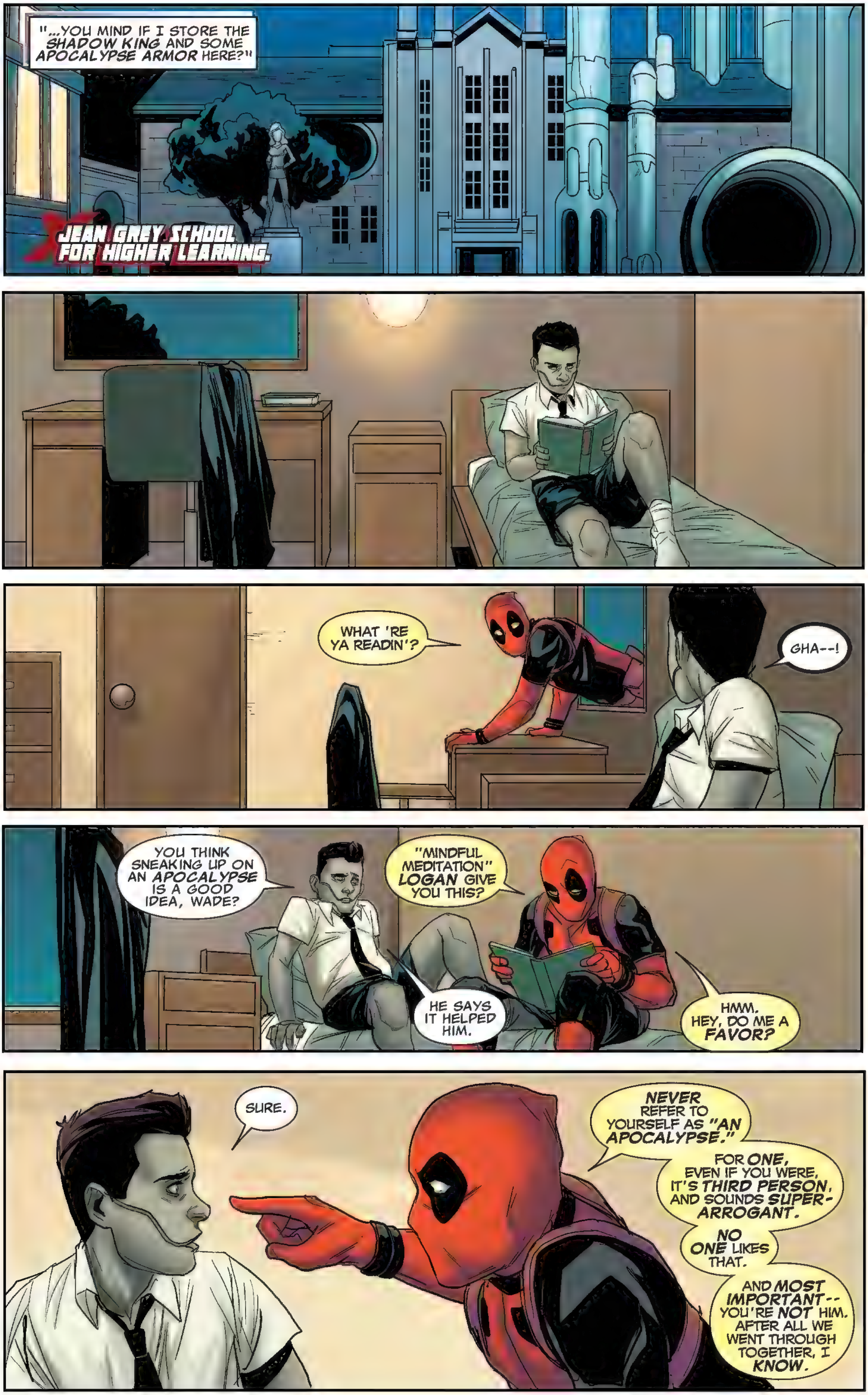
RAINBOWS, PUPPY DOGS & SUNSHINE

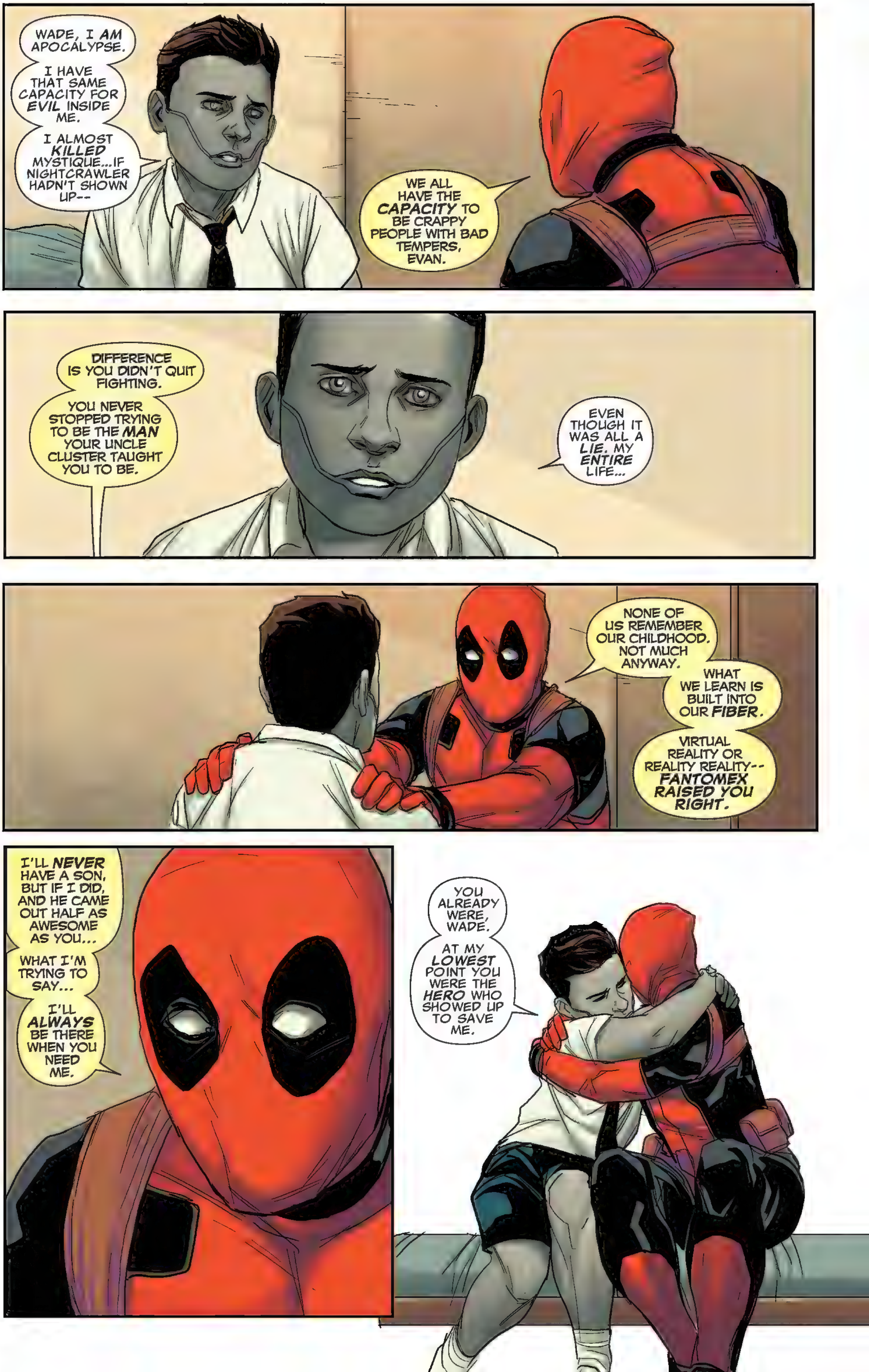

OTHERWORLD, THE STARLIGHT CITADEL.
PEPPERMINT OIL.

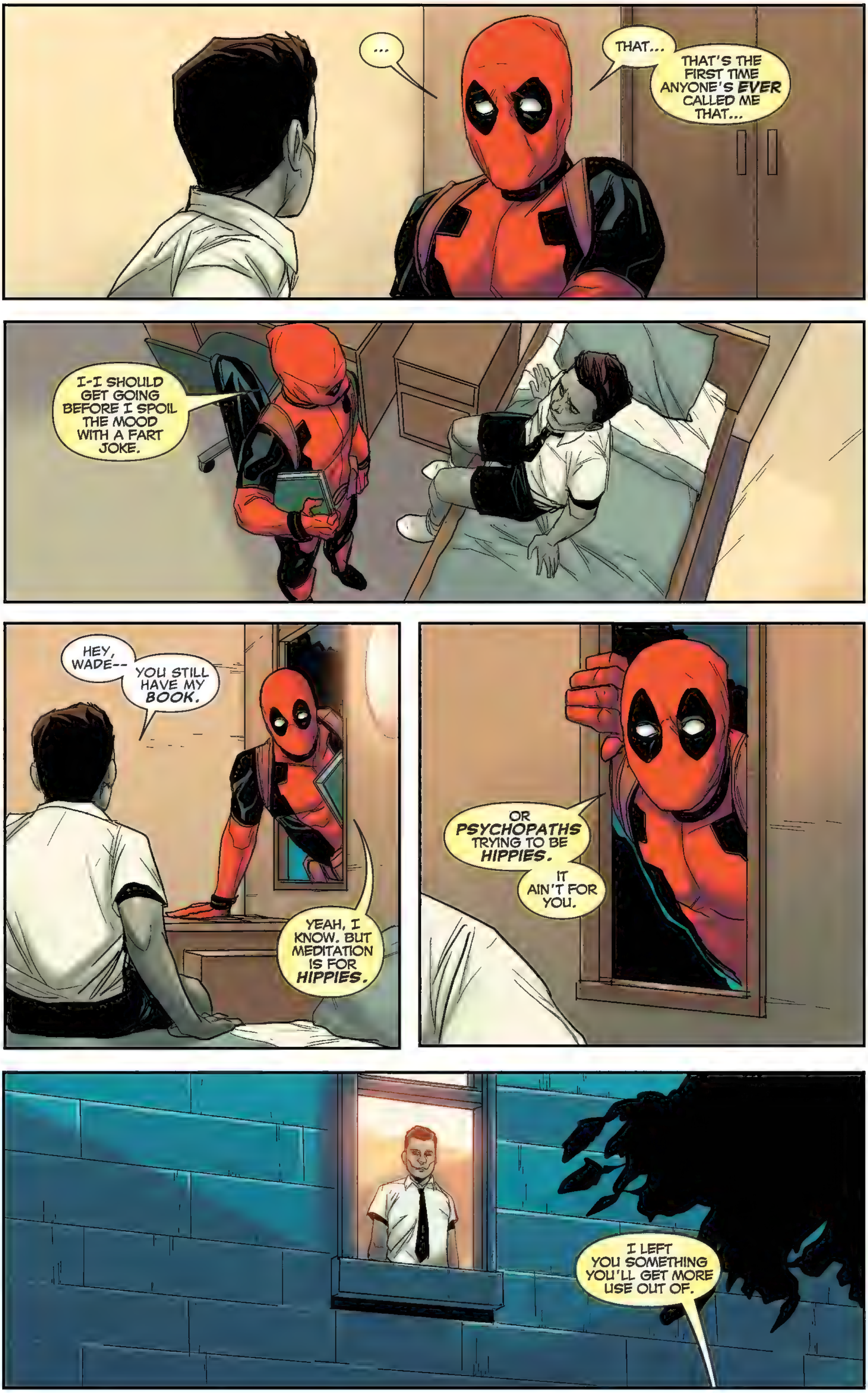

FATHER'S STUDY *STILL* SMELLS LIKE HIM.
THE SMELL PAINTS A VIVID IMAGE OF HIS STRIKING SMILE.
HIS HUMBLE GENIUS.

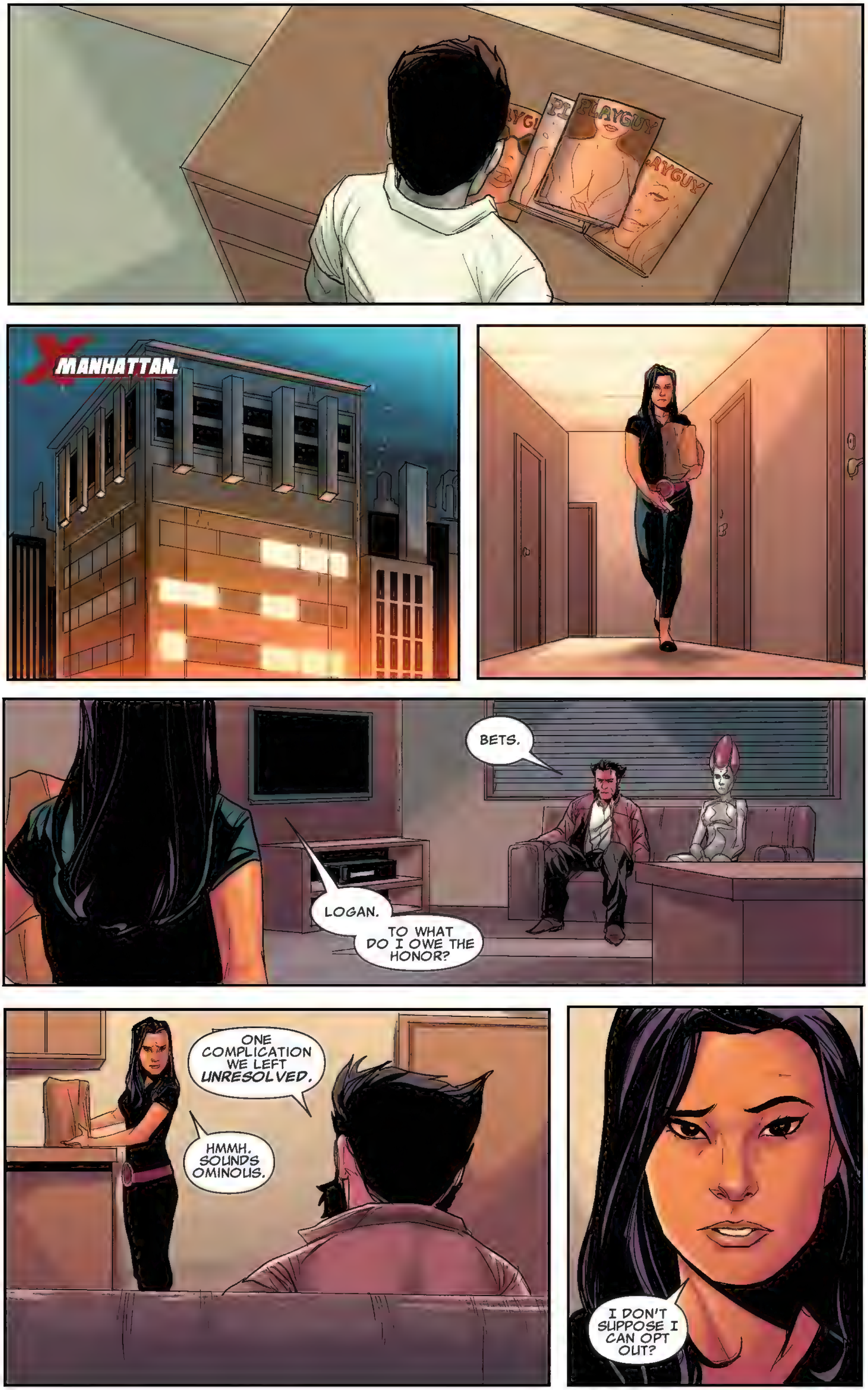

HIS FAITH THAT I'D EVENTUALLY TURN MY SODDING LIFE AROUND.
IT'S A GOOD SMELL.
SMELLS LIKE HOME.
ELIZABETH.
YOU'VE MANAGED TO KEEP ME SHUT OUT OF OUR PSYCHIC CONNECTION.
DARE I ASK?
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT, BRIAN.
I QUIT X-FORCE. WE ALL DID. LOGAN, TOO. DISBANDED.
WHICH SHOULD MAKE YOU HAPPY.
IF YOU'VE COME FOR A FIGHT--
I CAME TO TELL YOU THAT YOU WERE RIGHT.
WHAT FANTOMEX DID WAS A TERRIBLE CRIME.
YOU AND JAMIE WERE RIGHT TO PUT HIM ON TRIAL. OPAL WAS RIGHT TO CONVICT HIM.
I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW IT MUST HAVE LOOKED FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE.
HOW GROTESQUE IT MUST HAVE SEEMED...
MY FEELINGS FOR HIM.

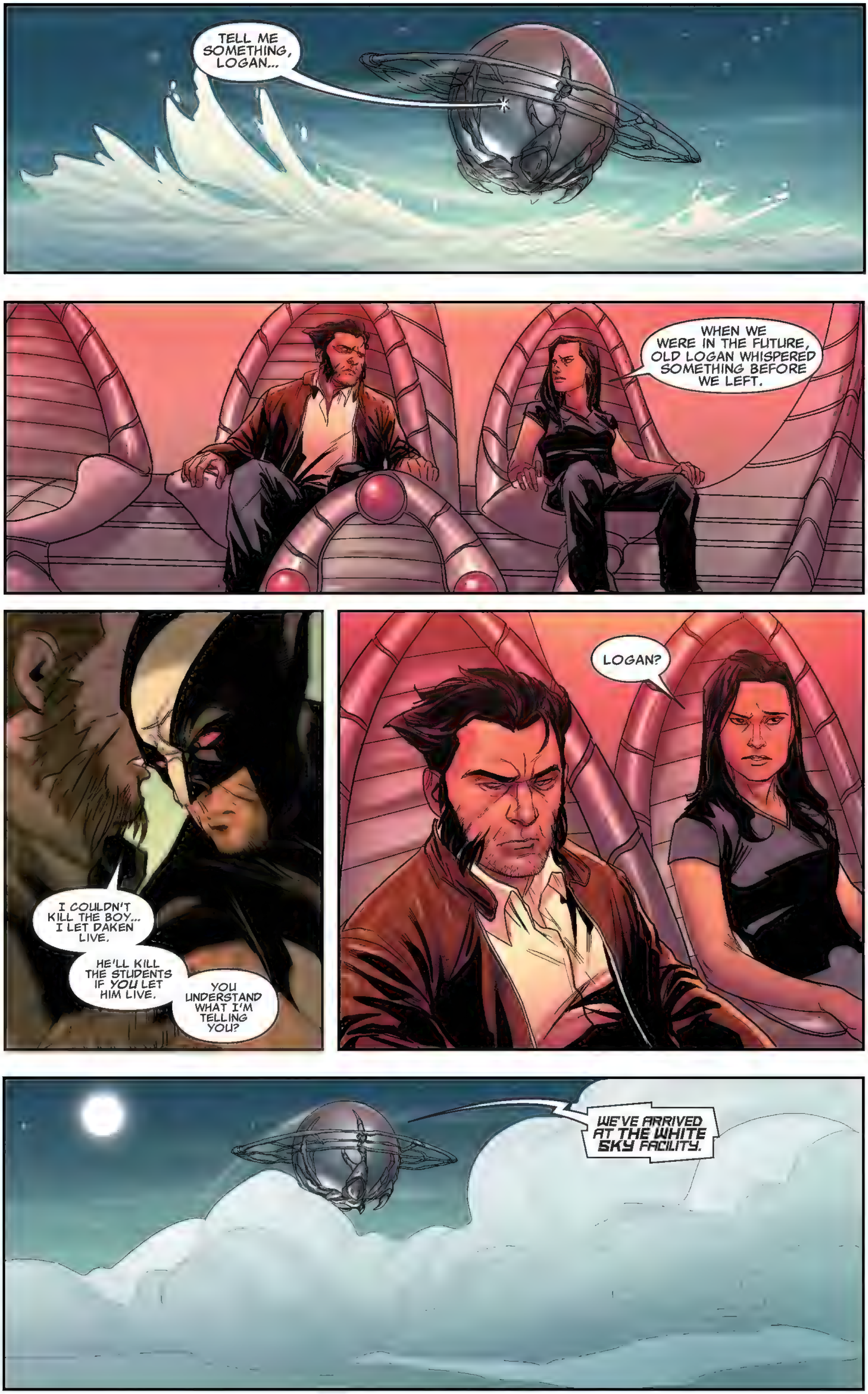

IT'S NOT...
THERE ARE ASPECTS OF THIS... THINGS I DISCOVERED IN FATHER'S OLD JOURNALS.
FANTOMEX WAS A *DANGEROUS* ANOMALY--AND OUR WORLD *IS* SAFER WITH HIM GONE--BUT THE MAN WHO SHOT THAT CHILD AND THE MAN YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH WERE NOT THE SAME PERSON, BETSY.
FANTOMEX WAS CREATED WITH *THREE* DIFFERENT BRAINS.
ONE OF WHICH WAS A MUTANT-HUNTING SENTINEL.
I CAN ONLY IMAGINE THE DEMONS HE WAS DEALING WITH, THE DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS HE WAS BEING PULLED IN.
THE FACT THAT HE WAS ABLE TO FIGHT THE *CONFLICTING VOICES* IN HIS HEAD *AT ALL* IS A TESTAMENT TO HIS *CHARACTER.*
SO YOU...YOU FORGIVE ME?
I LOVE YOU.
NOTHING WILL *EVER* STAND BETWEEN US AGAIN.
YOU MAY REGRET THAT WHEN YOU HEAR THE *FAVOR* I'M ABOUT TO ASK...

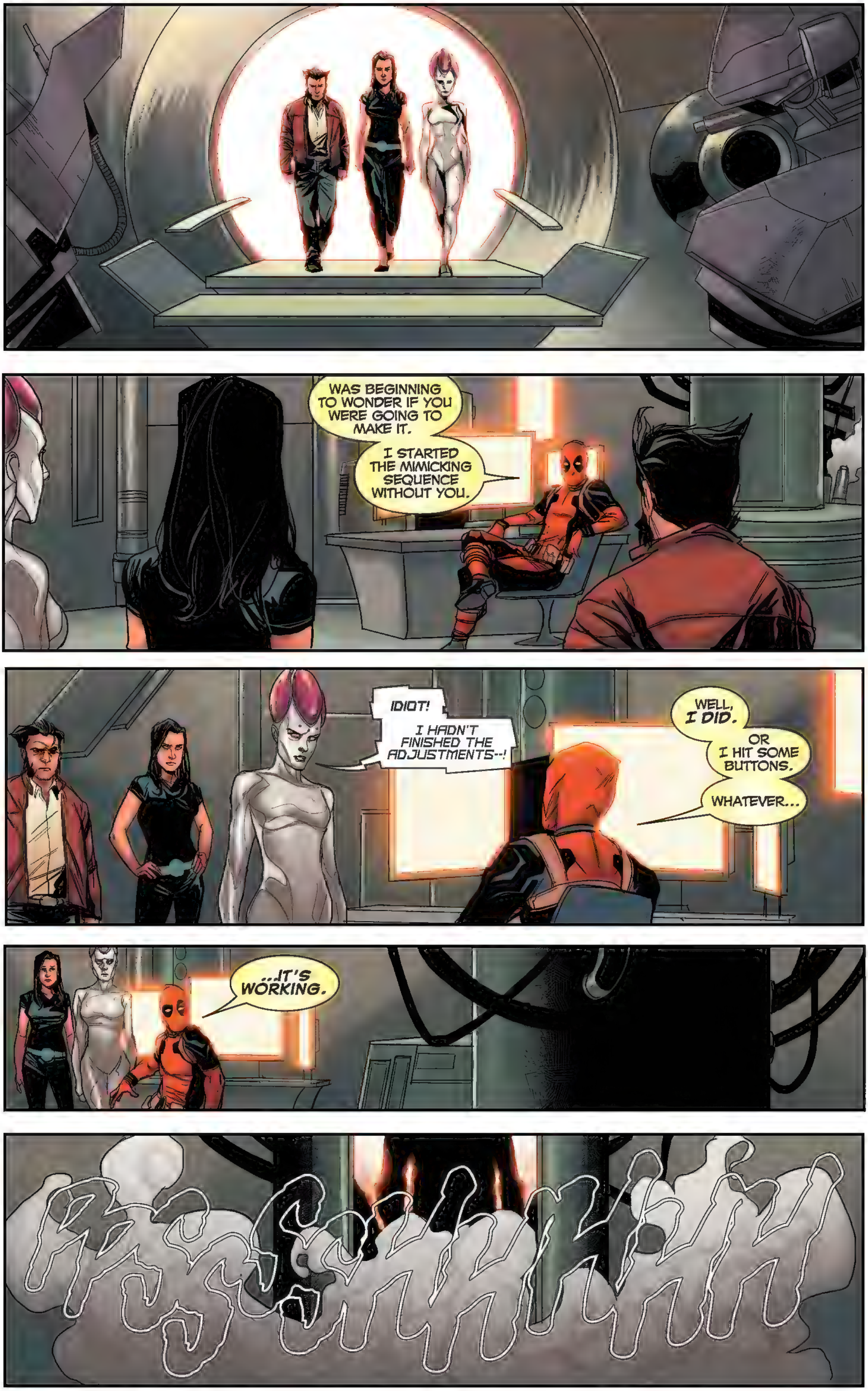

"...YOU MIND IF I STORE THE SHADOW KING AND SOME APOCALYPSE ARMOR HERE?"
JEAN GREY SCHOOL FOR HIGHER LEARNING.
WHAT 'RE YA READIN'?
GHA--!
YOU THINK SNEAKING UP ON AN APOCALYPSE IS A GOOD IDEA, WADE?
"MINDFUL MEDITATION" LOGAN GIVE YOU THIS?
HE SAYS IT HELPED HIM.
HMM. HEY, DO ME A FAVOR?
SURE.
NEVER REFER TO YOURSELF AS "AN APOCALYPSE."
FOR ONE, EVEN IF YOU WERE, IT'S THIRD PERSON, AND SOUNDS SUPER-ARROGANT.
NO ONE LIKES THAT.
AND MOST IMPORTANT-- YOU'RE NOT HIM. AFTER ALL WE WENT THROUGH TOGETHER, I KNOW.

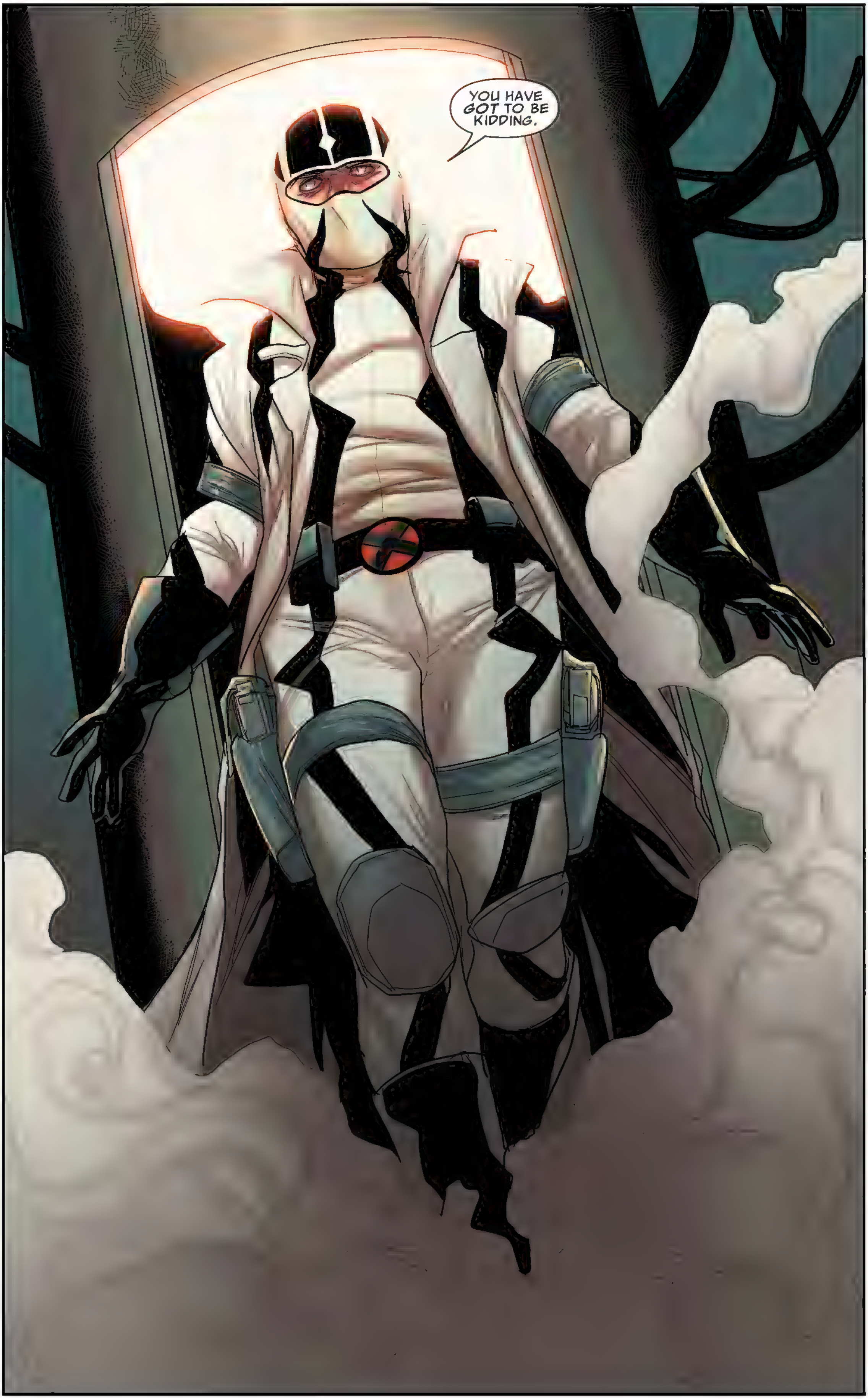

WADE, I AM APOCALYPSE.
I HAVE THAT SAME CAPACITY FOR EVIL INSIDE ME.
I ALMOST KILLED MYSTIQUE...IF NIGHTCRAWLER HADN'T SHOWN UP--
WE ALL HAVE THE CAPACITY TO BE CRAPPY PEOPLE WITH BAD TEMPERS, EVAN.
DIFFERENCE IS YOU DIDN'T QUIT FIGHTING.
YOU NEVER STOPPED TRYING TO BE THE MAN YOUR UNCLE CLUSTER TAUGHT YOU TO BE.
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS ALL A LIE. MY ENTIRE LIFE...
NONE OF US REMEMBER OUR CHILDHOOD. NOT MUCH ANYWAY.
WHAT WE LEARN IS BUILT INTO OUR FIBER.
VIRTUAL REALITY OR REALITY REALITY--FANTOMEX RAISED YOU RIGHT.
I'LL NEVER HAVE A SON, BUT IF I DID, AND HE CAME OUT HALF AS AWESOME AS YOU...
WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY...
I'LL ALWAYS BE THERE WHEN YOU NEED ME.
YOU ALREADY WERE, WADE.
AT MY LOWEST POINT YOU WERE THE HERO WHO SHOWED UP TO SAVE ME.

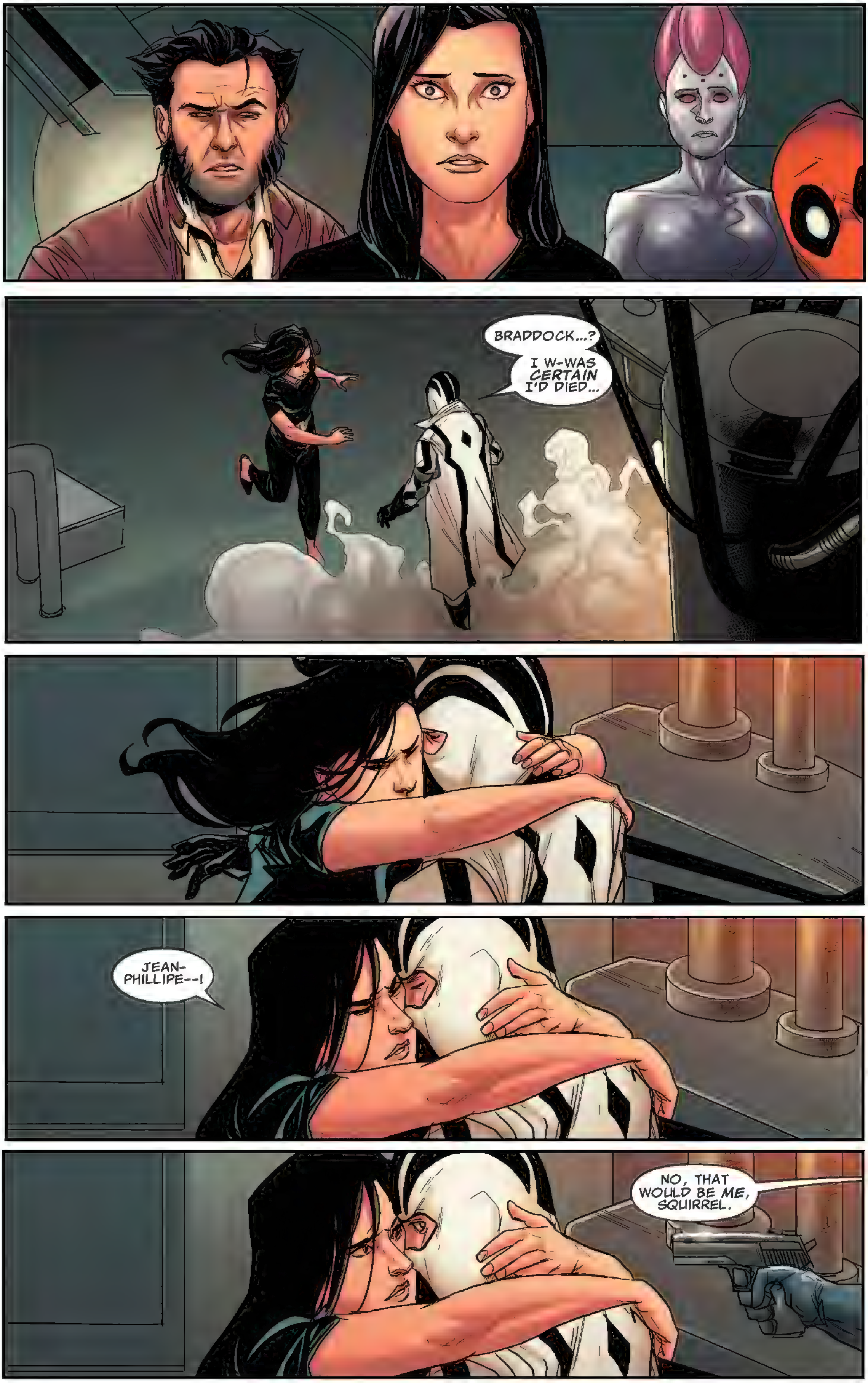

...
THAT...
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME ANYONE'S **EVER** CALLED ME THAT...
I-I SHOULD GET GOING BEFORE I SPOIL THE MOOD WITH A FART JOKE.
HEY, WADE--
YOU STILL HAVE MY **BOOK.**
YEAH, I KNOW. BUT MEDITATION IS FOR **HIPPIES.**
OR **PSYCHOPATHS** TRYING TO BE **HIPPIES.**
IT AIN'T FOR YOU.
I LEFT YOU SOMETHING YOU'LL GET MORE USE OUT OF.

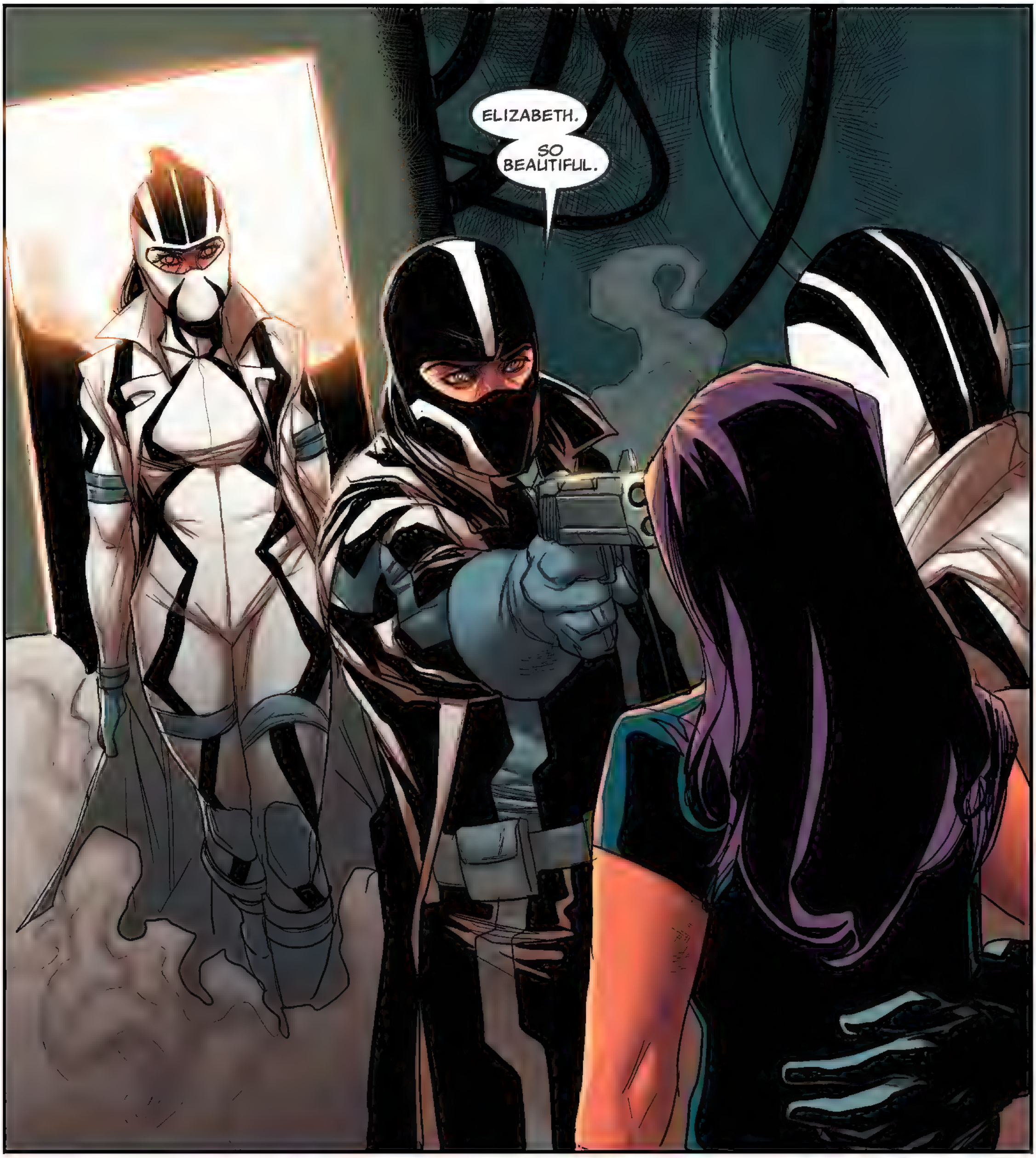

PLAYGUY
MANHATTAN.
BETS.
LOGAN.
TO WHAT DO I OWE THE HONOR?
ONE COMPLICATION WE LEFT *UNRESOLVED.*
HMMH. SOUNDS OMINOUS.
I DON'T SUPPOSE I CAN OPT OUT?

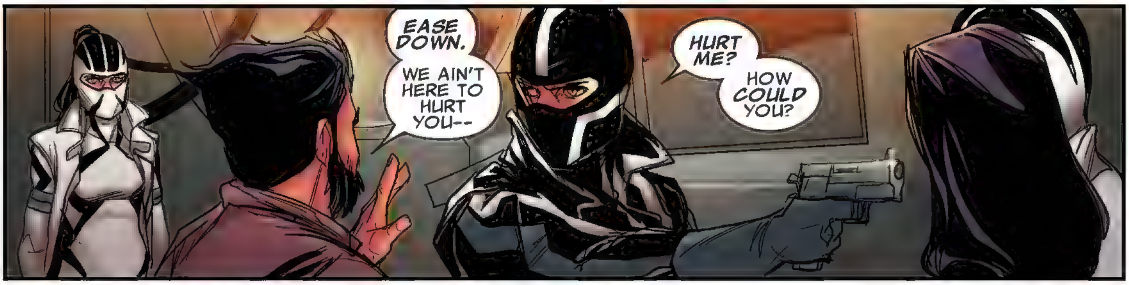

TELL ME SOMETHING, LOGAN...
WHEN WE WERE IN THE FUTURE, OLD LOGAN WHISPERED SOMETHING BEFORE WE LEFT.
I COULDN'T KILL THE BOY... I LET DAKEN LIVE.
HE'LL KILL THE STUDENTS IF *YOU* LET HIM LIVE.
YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TELLING YOU?
LOGAN?
WE'VE ARRIVED AT **THE WHITE SKY** FACILITY.

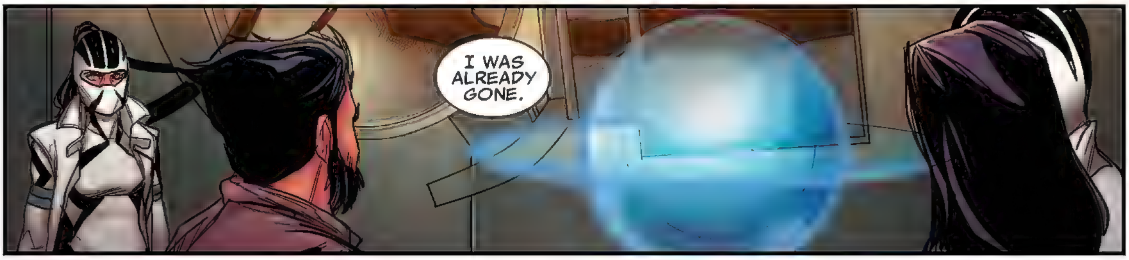

WAS BEGINNING TO WONDER IF YOU WERE GOING TO MAKE IT.
I STARTED THE MIMICKING SEQUENCE WITHOUT YOU.
IDIOT!
I HADN'T FINISHED THE ADJUSTMENTS--!
WELL, *I DID.*
OR I HIT SOME BUTTONS.
WHATEVER...
...IT'S WORKING.
PSSSHHHHHHH

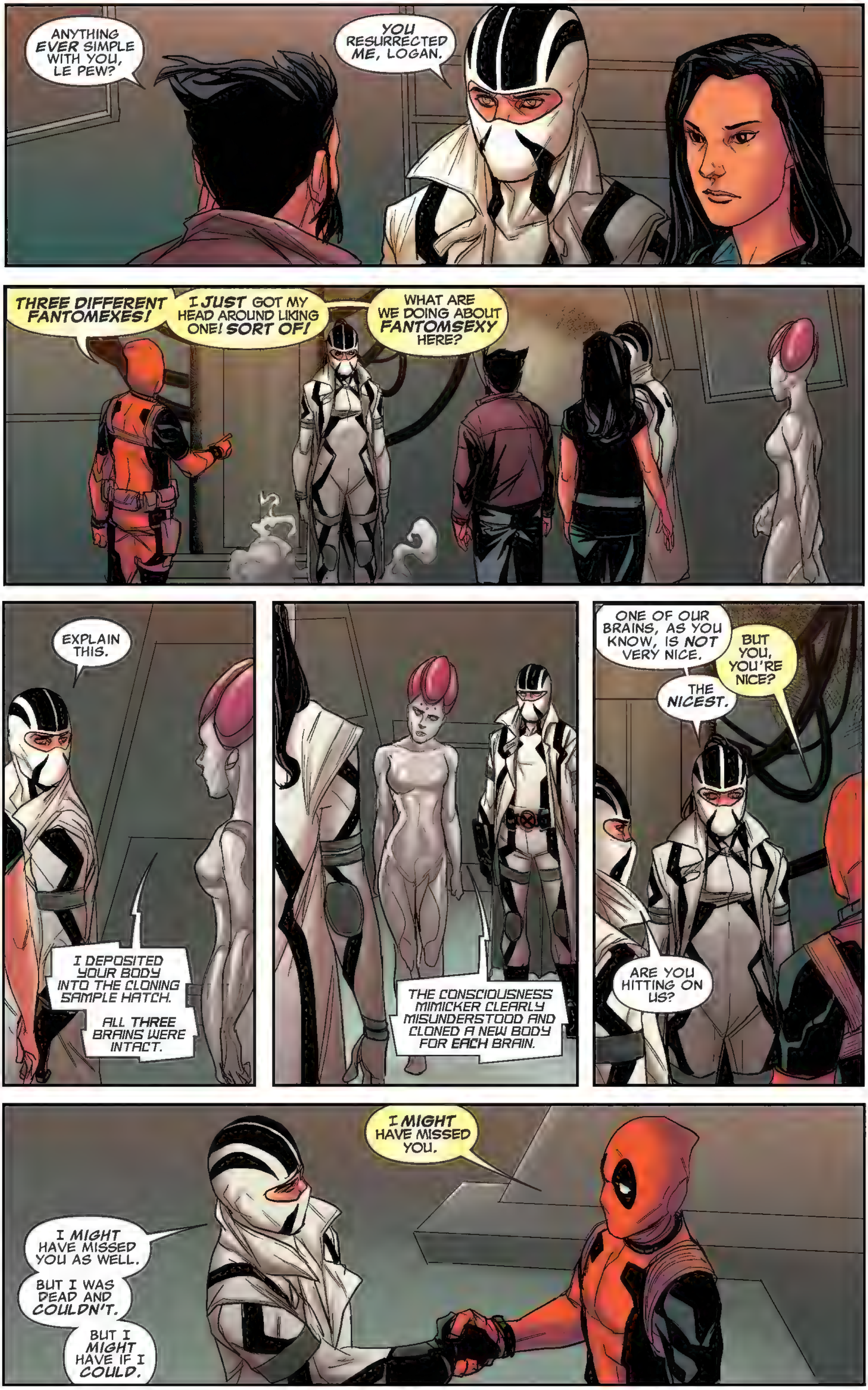

YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING.

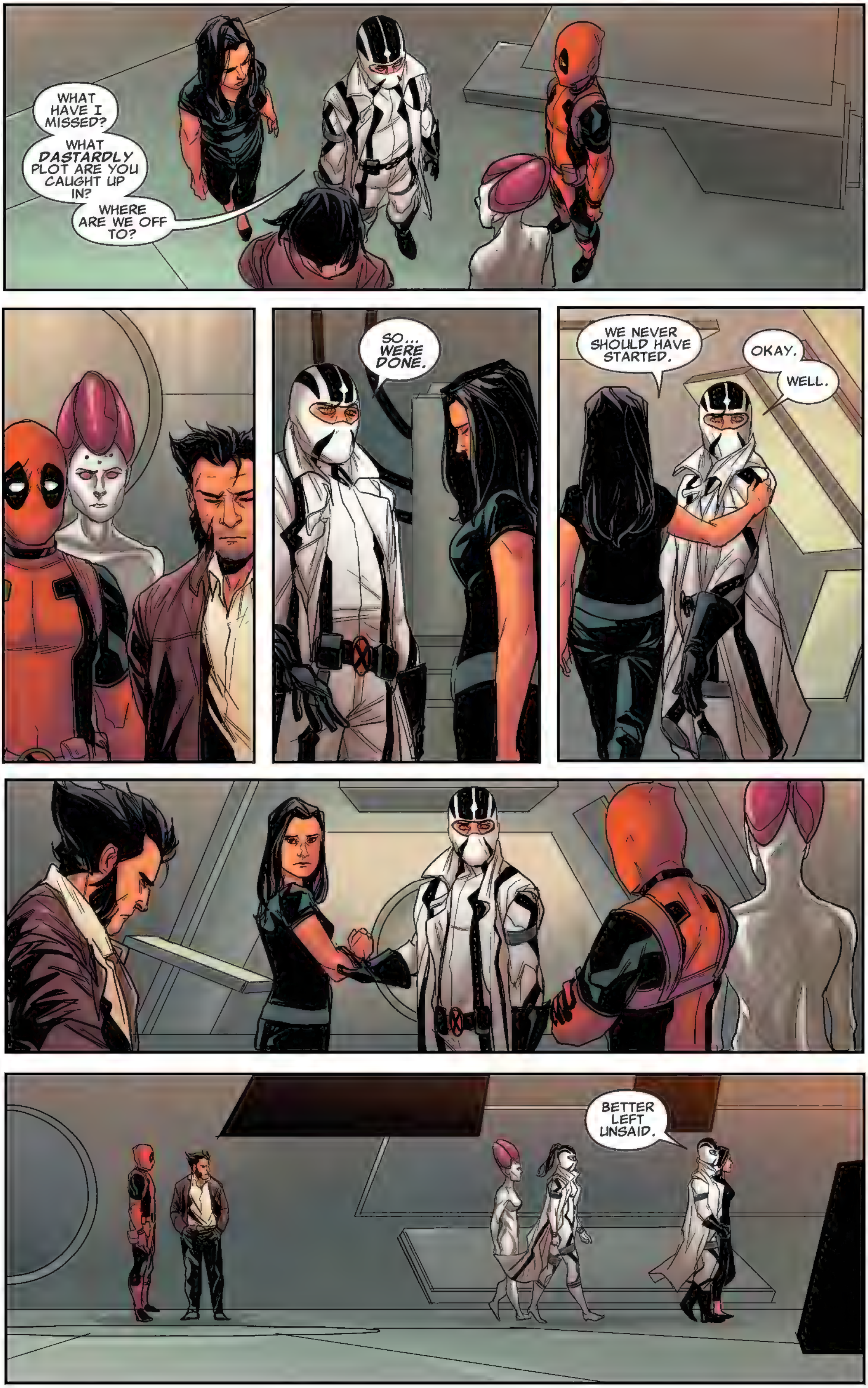

BRADDOCK...?
I W-WAS CERTAIN I'D DIED...
JEAN-PHILLIPE--!
NO, THAT WOULD BE ME, SQUIRREL.

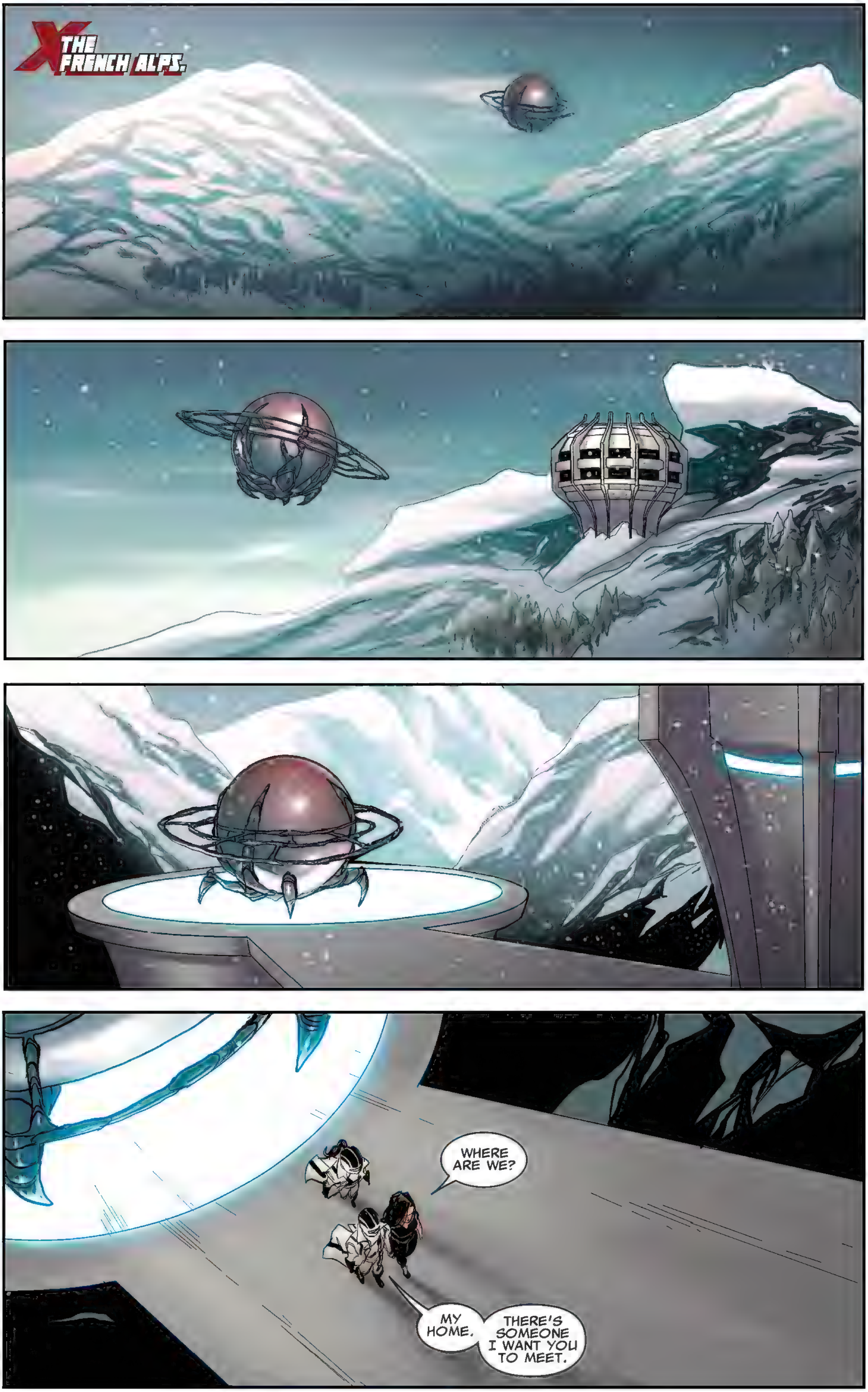

ELIZABETH.
SO BEAUTIFUL.

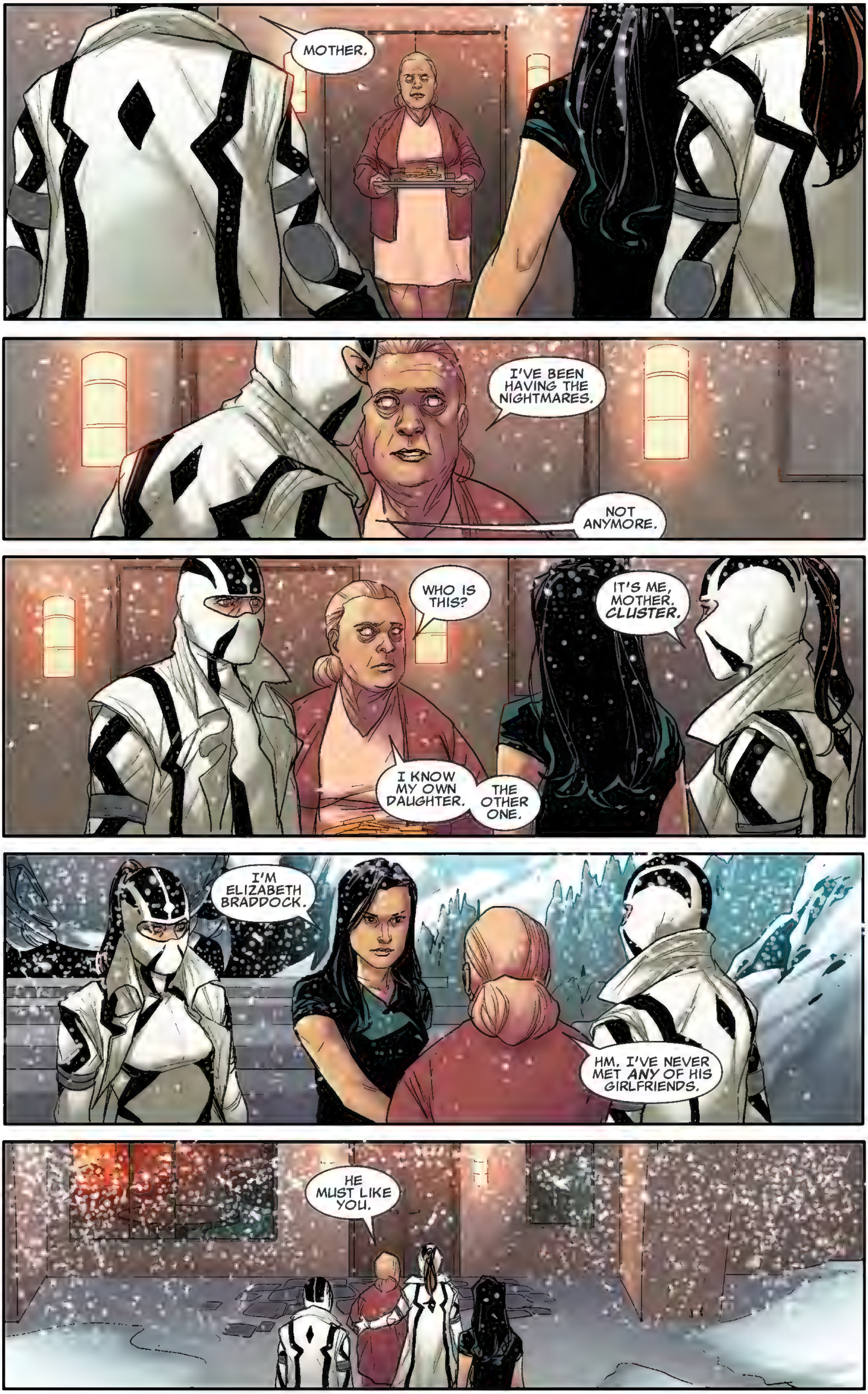

EASE DOWN.
WE AIN'T HERE TO HURT YOU--
HURT ME?
HOW COULD YOU?

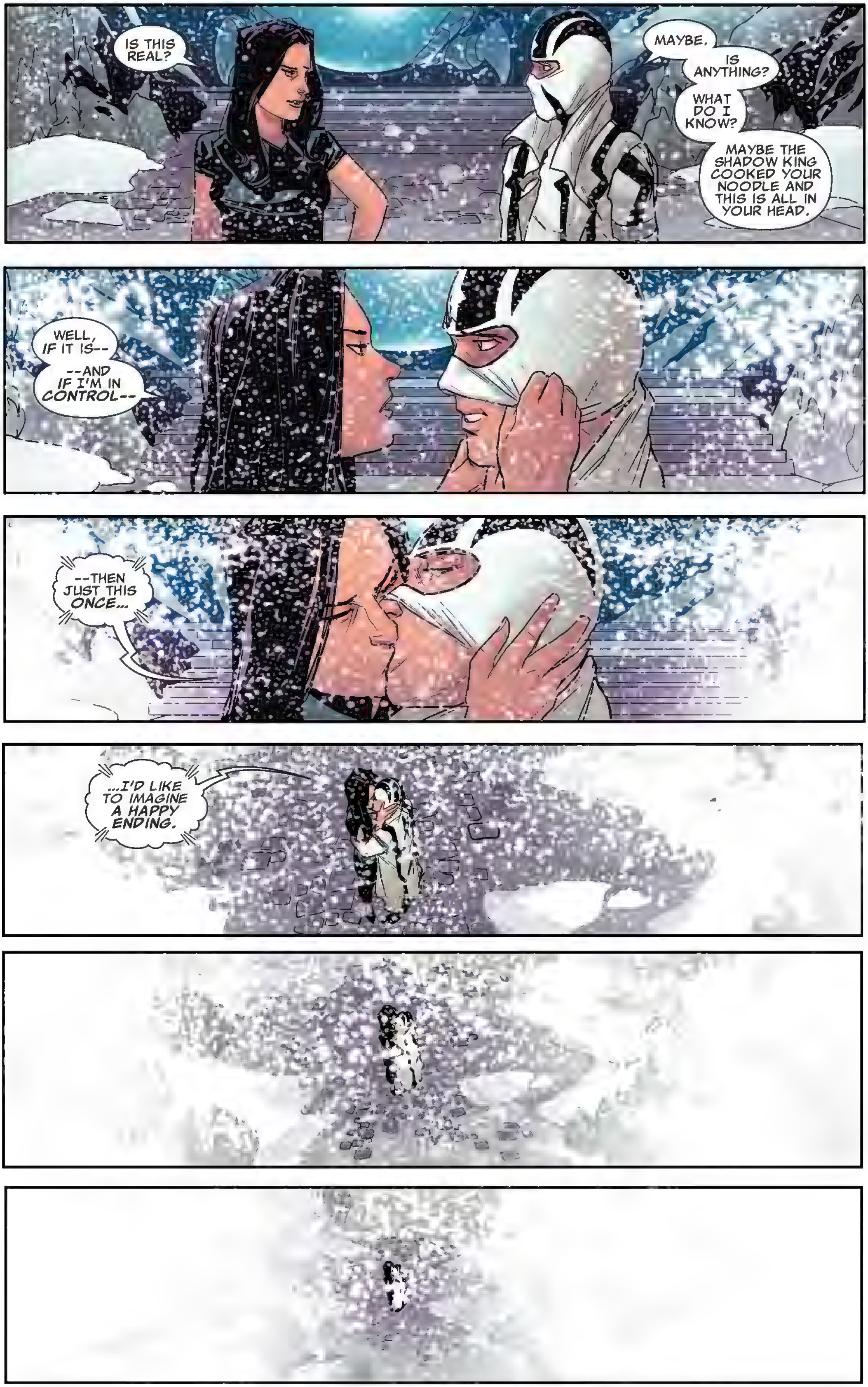

I WAS ALREADY GONE.


ANYTHING EVER SIMPLE WITH YOU, LE PEW?
YOU RESURRECTED ME, LOGAN.
THREE DIFFERENT FANTOMEXES!
I JUST GOT MY HEAD AROUND LIKING ONE! SORT OF!
WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT FANTOMSEXY HERE?
EXPLAIN THIS.
I DEPOSITED YOUR BODY INTO THE CLONING SAMPLE HATCH.
ALL THREE BRAINS WERE INTACT.
THE CONSCIOUSNESS MIMICKER CLEARLY MISUNDERSTOOD AND CLONED A NEW BODY FOR EACH BRAIN.
ONE OF OUR BRAINS, AS YOU KNOW, IS NOT VERY NICE.
BUT YOU, YOU'RE NICE?
THE NICEST.
ARE YOU HITTING ON US?
I MIGHT HAVE MISSED YOU.
I MIGHT HAVE MISSED YOU AS WELL.
BUT I WAS DEAD AND COULDN'T.
BUT I MIGHT HAVE IF I COULD.


WHAT HAVE I MISSED?
WHAT *DASTARDLY* PLOT ARE YOU CAUGHT UP IN?
WHERE ARE WE OFF TO?
SO... WERE DONE.
WE NEVER SHOULD HAVE STARTED.
OKAY.
WELL.
BETTER LEFT UNSAID.


THE FRENCH ALPS.
WHERE ARE WE?
MY HOME.
THERE'S SOMEONE I WANT YOU TO MEET.

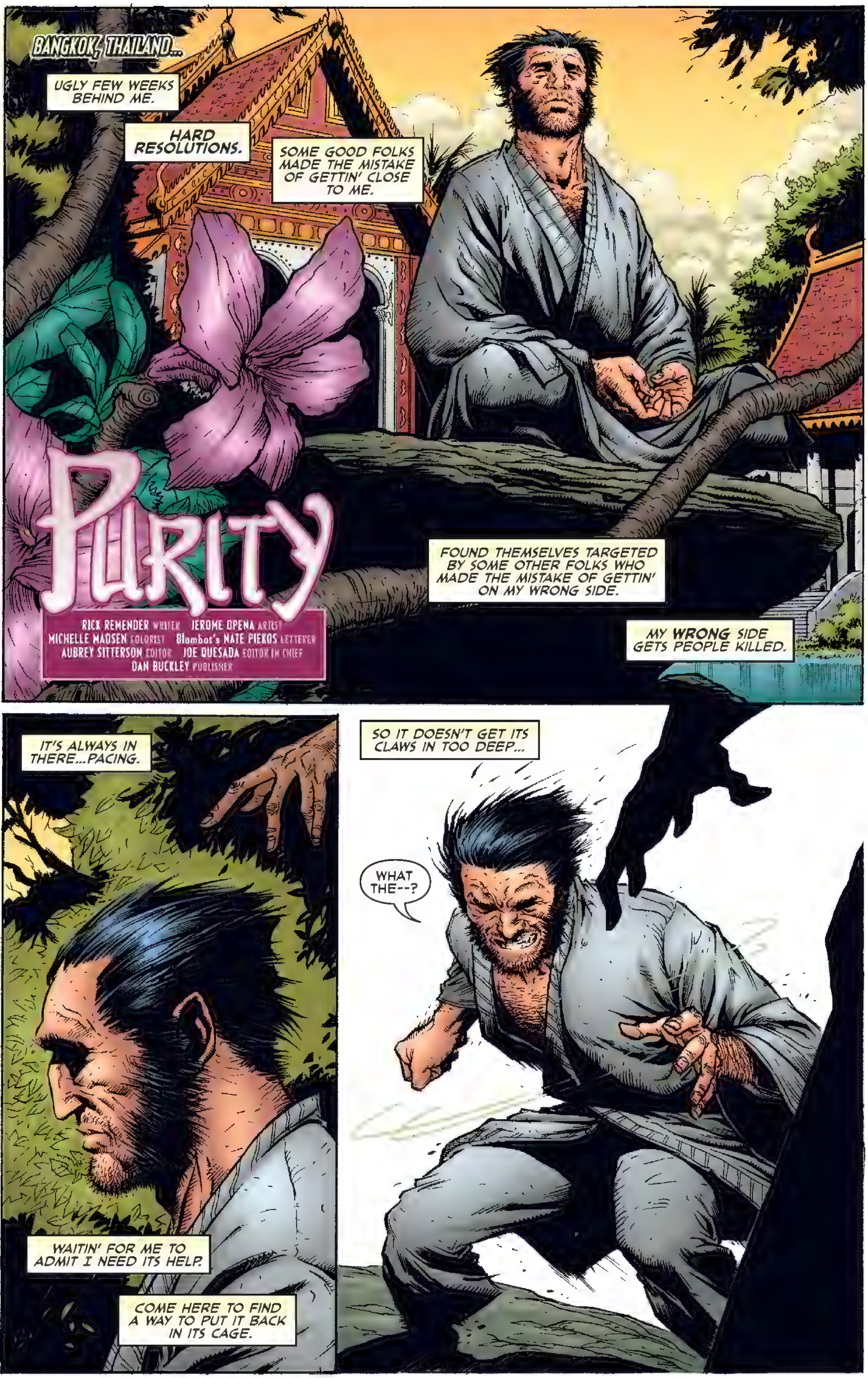

MOTHER.
I'VE BEEN HAVING THE NIGHTMARES.
NOT ANYMORE.
WHO IS THIS?
IT'S ME, MOTHER. CLUSTER.
I KNOW MY OWN DAUGHTER.
THE OTHER ONE.
I'M ELIZABETH BRADDOCK.
HM. I'VE NEVER MET ANY OF HIS GIRLFRIENDS.
HE MUST LIKE YOU.


IS THIS REAL?
MAYBE.
IS ANYTHING?
WHAT DO I KNOW?
MAYBE THE SHADOW KING COOKED YOUR NOODLE AND THIS IS ALL IN YOUR HEAD.
WELL, IF IT IS--
--AND IF I'M IN CONTROL--
--THEN JUST THIS ONCE...
...I'D LIKE TO IMAGINE A HAPPY ENDING.

THE END

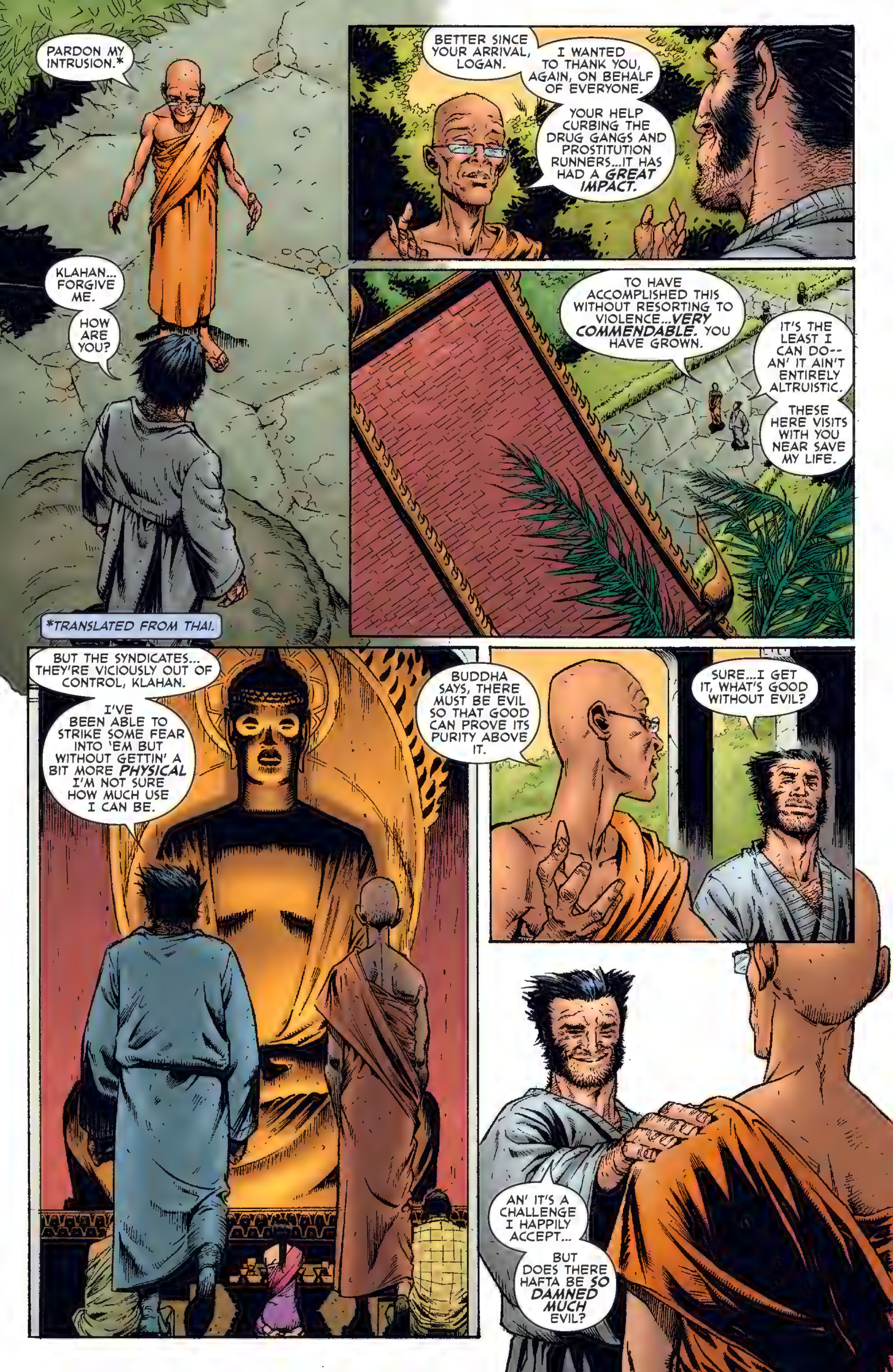
AND NOW...

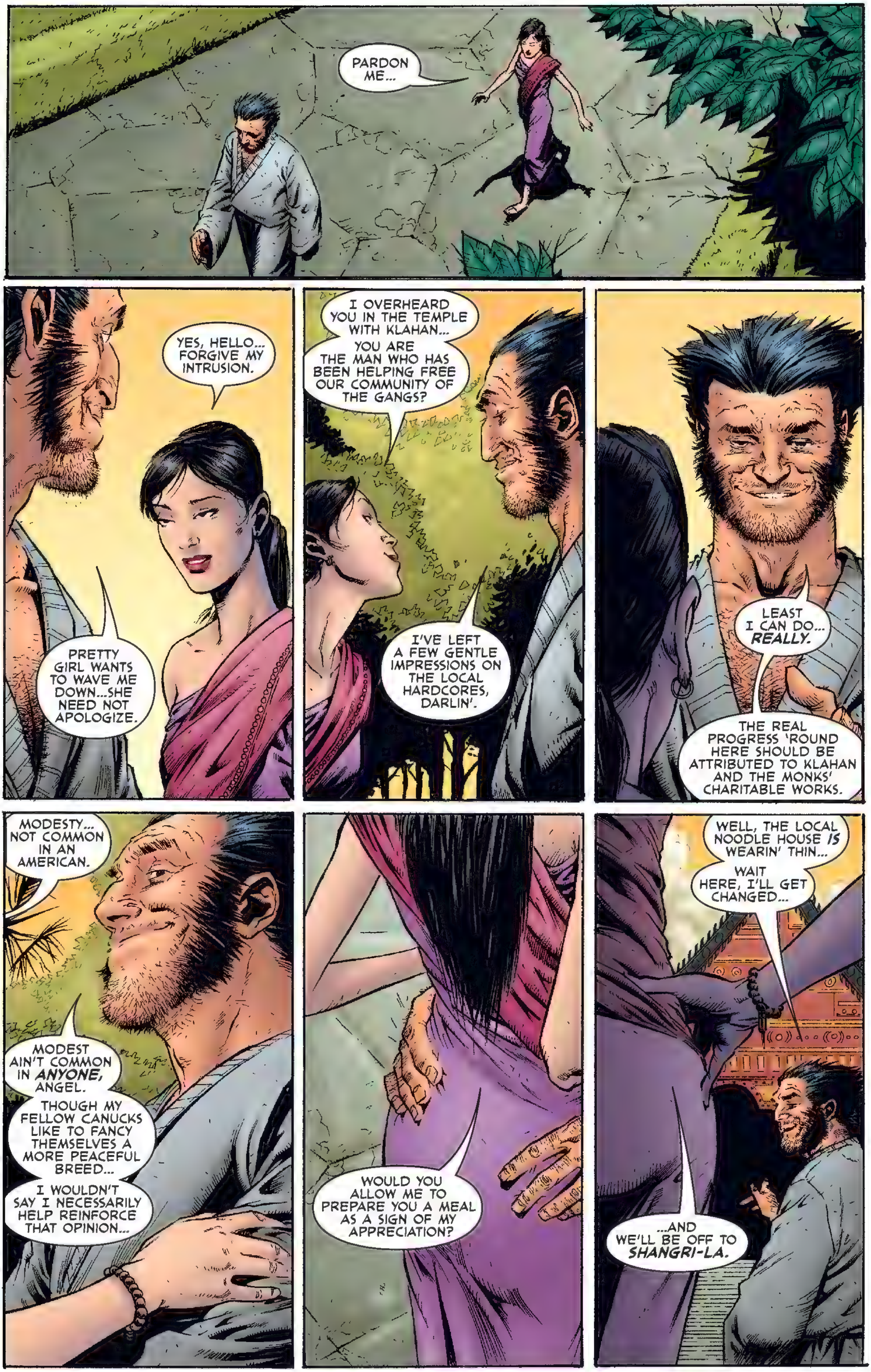
WE PRESENT TWO RARELY SEEN STORIES BY RICK REMENDER AND JEROME OPEÑA, FEATURING THEIR FIRST DANCES WITH WOLVERINE AND DEADPOOL, RESPECTIVELY. ENJOY!

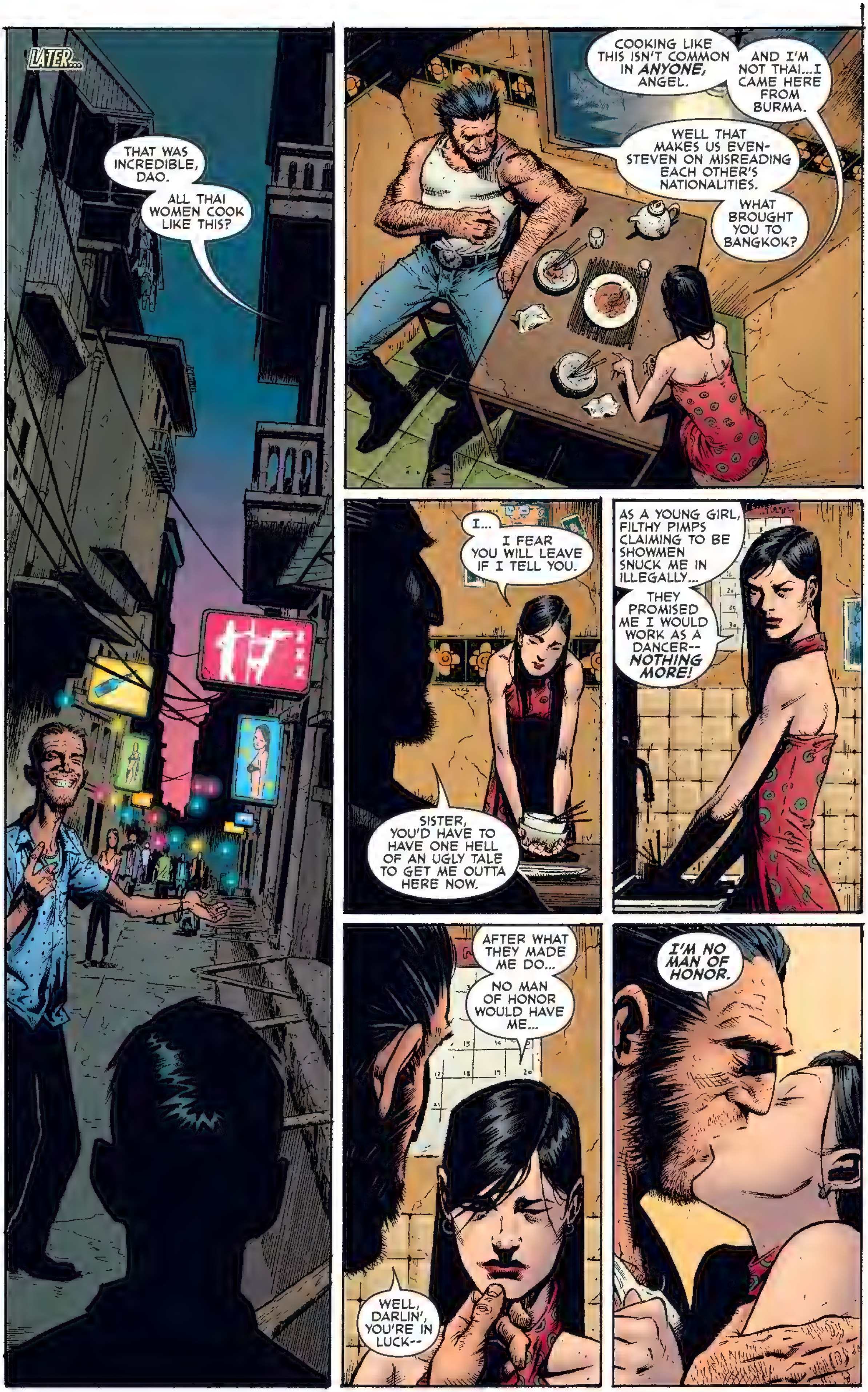

BANGKOK, THAILAND...
UGLY FEW WEEKS BEHIND ME.
HARD RESOLUTIONS.
SOME GOOD FOLKS MADE THE MISTAKE OF GETTIN' CLOSE TO ME.
FOUND THEMSELVES TARGETED BY SOME OTHER FOLKS WHO MADE THE MISTAKE OF GETTIN' ON MY WRONG SIDE.
MY **WRONG** SIDE GETS PEOPLE KILLED.
IT'S ALWAYS IN THERE...PACING.
WAITIN' FOR ME TO ADMIT I NEED ITS HELP.
COME HERE TO FIND A WAY TO PUT IT BACK IN ITS CAGE.
SO IT DOESN'T GET ITS CLAWS IN TOO DEEP...
WHAT THE--?

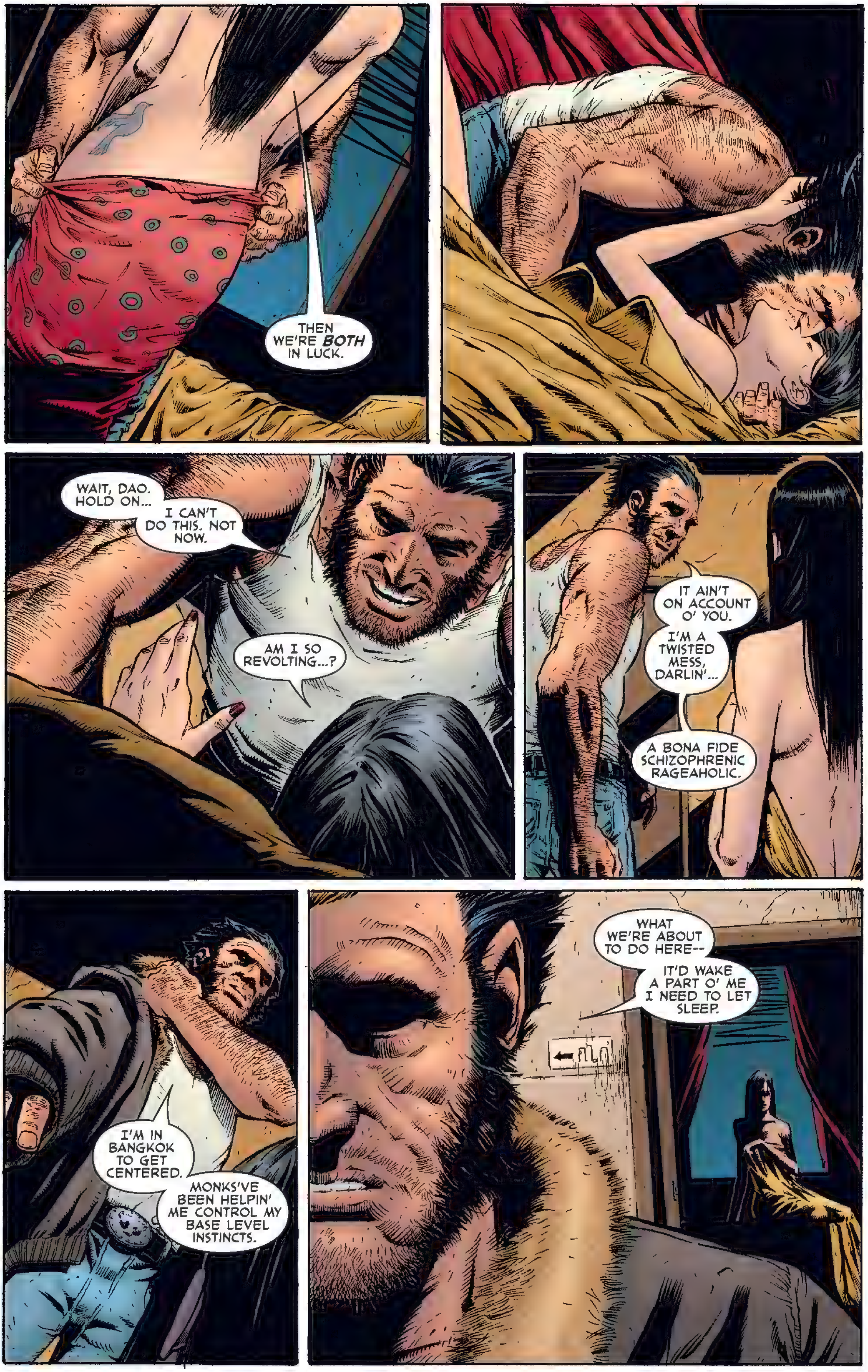
PURITY

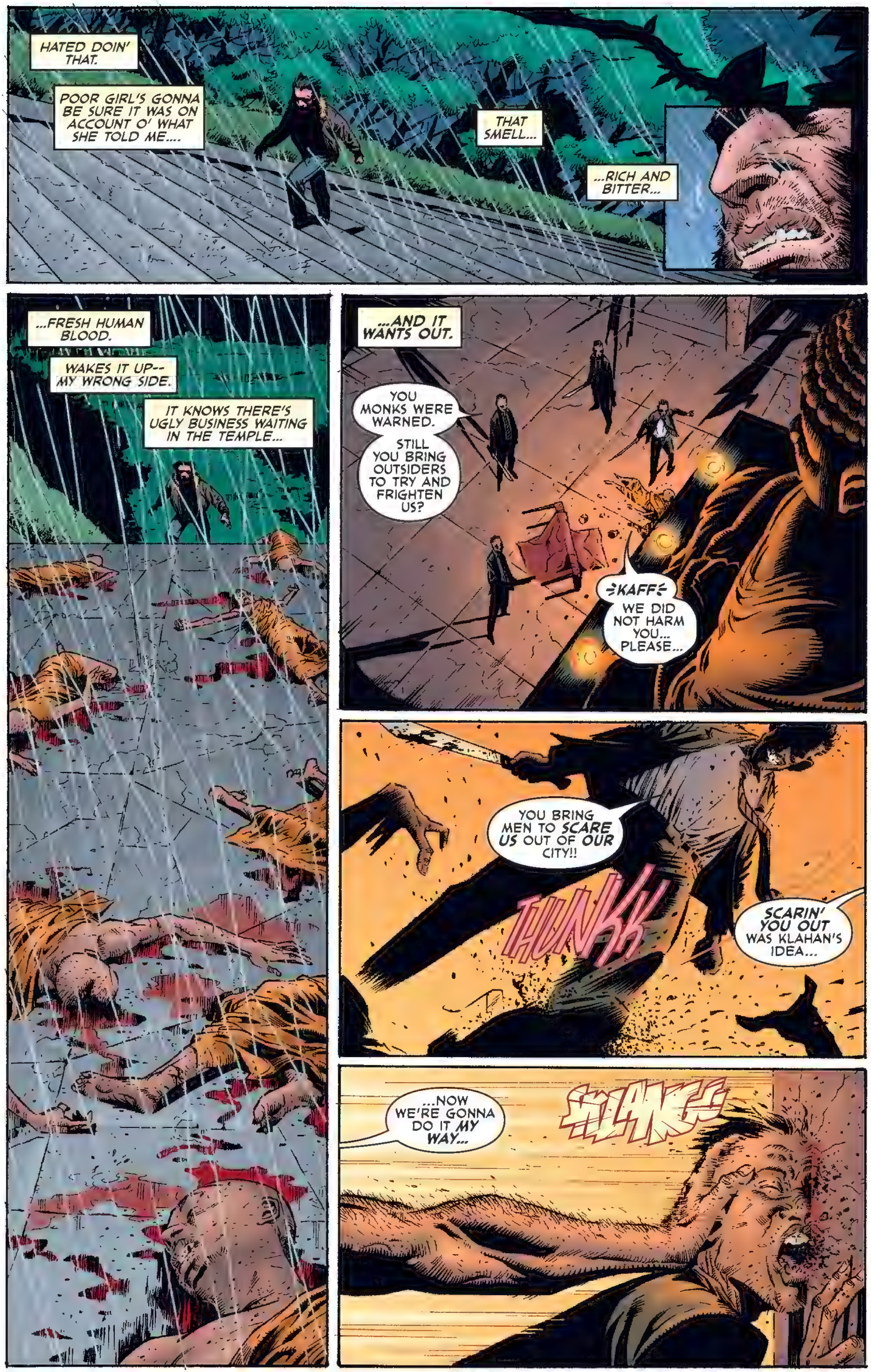
RICK REMENDER WRITER JEROME OPENA ARTIST
MICHELLE MADSEN COLORIST Blambot's NATE PIEKOS LETTERER
AUBREY SITTERSON EDITOR JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER

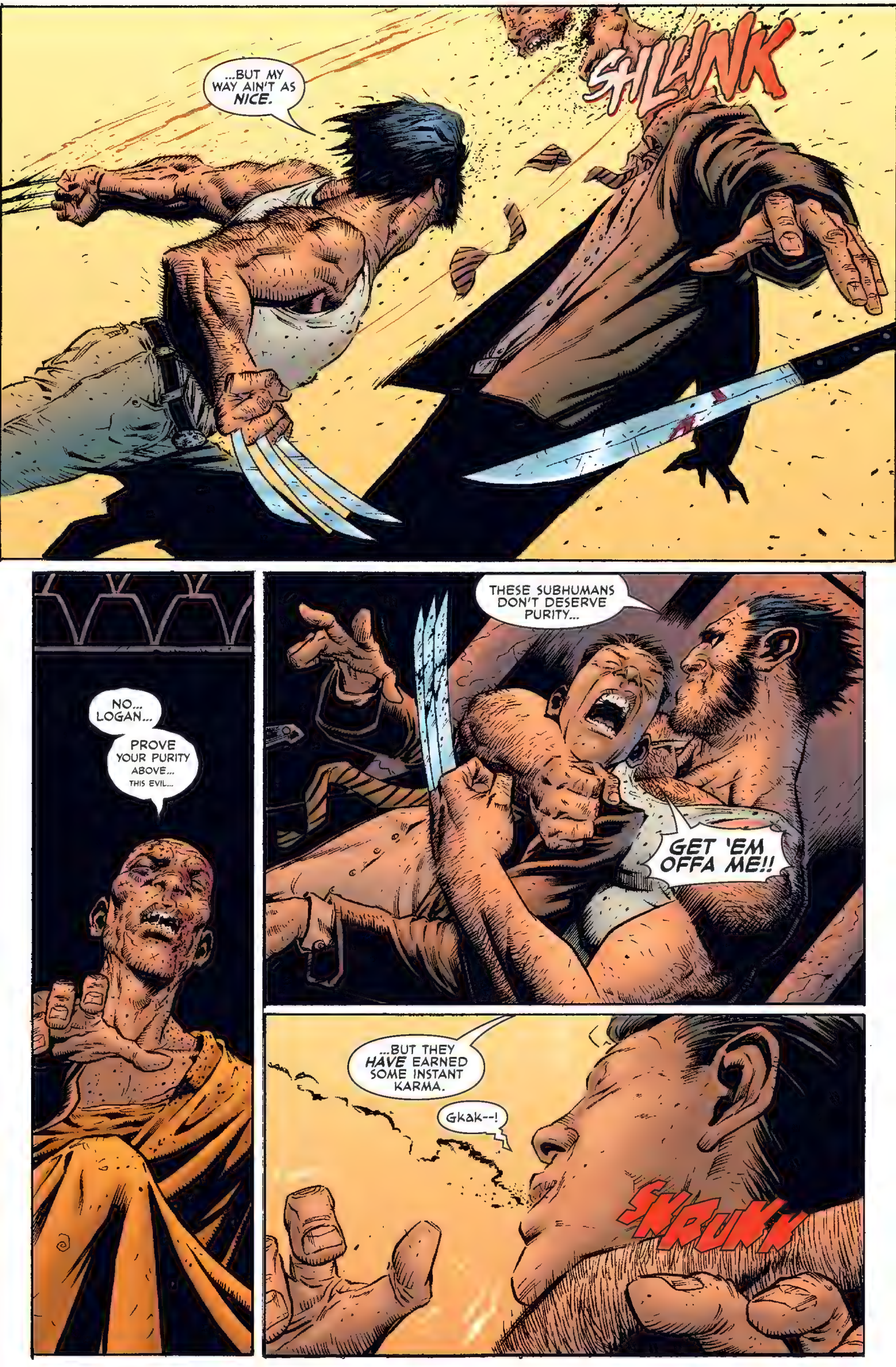

PARDON MY INTRUSION.*
KLAHAN... FORGIVE ME.
HOW ARE YOU?
*TRANSLATED FROM THAI.
BETTER SINCE YOUR ARRIVAL, LOGAN.
I WANTED TO THANK YOU, AGAIN, ON BEHALF OF EVERYONE.
YOUR HELP CURBING THE DRUG GANGS AND PROSTITUTION RUNNERS...IT HAS HAD A GREAT IMPACT.
TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THIS WITHOUT RESORTING TO VIOLENCE...VERY COMMENDABLE. YOU HAVE GROWN.
IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO-- AN' IT AIN'T ENTIRELY ALTRUISTIC.
THESE HERE VISITS WITH YOU NEAR SAVE MY LIFE.
BUT THE SYNDICATES... THEY'RE VICIOUSLY OUT OF CONTROL, KLAHAN.
I'VE BEEN ABLE TO STRIKE SOME FEAR INTO 'EM BUT WITHOUT GETTIN' A BIT MORE PHYSICAL I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH USE I CAN BE.
BUDDHA SAYS, THERE MUST BE EVIL SO THAT GOOD CAN PROVE ITS PURITY ABOVE IT.
SURE...I GET IT, WHAT'S GOOD WITHOUT EVIL?
AN' IT'S A CHALLENGE I HAPPILY ACCEPT...
BUT DOES THERE HAFTA BE SO DAMNED MUCH EVIL?

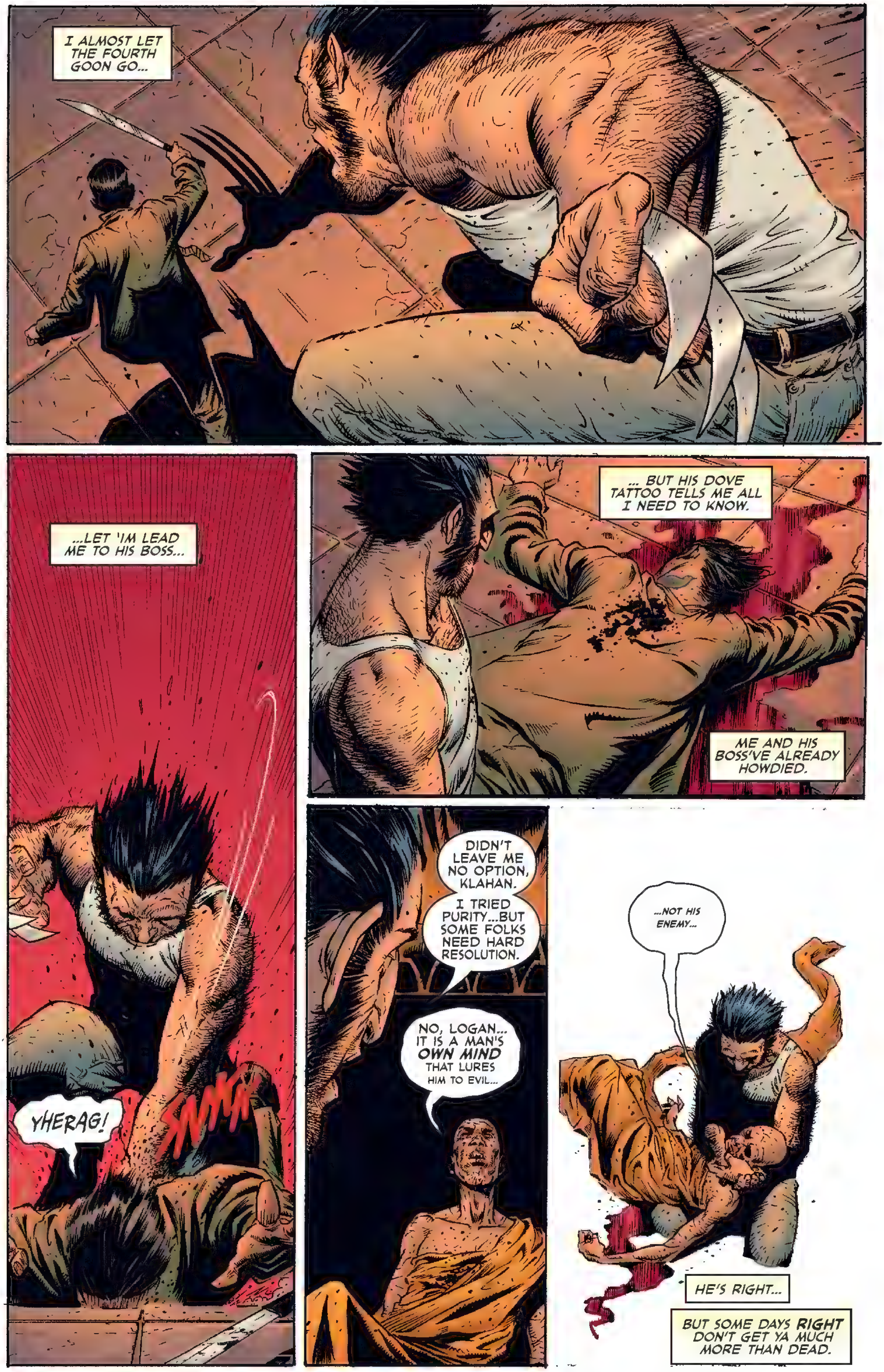

PARDON ME...
YES, HELLO... FORGIVE MY INTRUSION.
PRETTY GIRL WANTS TO WAVE ME DOWN...SHE NEED NOT APOLOGIZE.
I OVERHEARD YOU IN THE TEMPLE WITH KLAHAN...
YOU ARE THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN HELPING FREE OUR COMMUNITY OF THE GANGS?
I'VE LEFT A FEW GENTLE IMPRESSIONS ON THE LOCAL HARDCORES, DARLIN'.
LEAST I CAN DO... *REALLY.*
THE REAL PROGRESS 'ROUND HERE SHOULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO KLAHAN AND THE MONKS' CHARITABLE WORKS.
MODESTY... NOT COMMON IN AN AMERICAN.
MODEST AIN'T COMMON IN *ANYONE,* ANGEL.
THOUGH MY FELLOW CANUCKS LIKE TO FANCY THEMSELVES A MORE PEACEFUL BREED...
I WOULDN'T SAY I NECESSARILY HELP REINFORCE THAT OPINION...
WOULD YOU ALLOW ME TO PREPARE YOU A MEAL AS A SIGN OF MY APPRECIATION?
WELL, THE LOCAL NOODLE HOUSE *IS* WEARIN' THIN...
WAIT HERE, I'LL GET CHANGED...
...AND WE'LL BE OFF TO *SHANGRI-LA.*

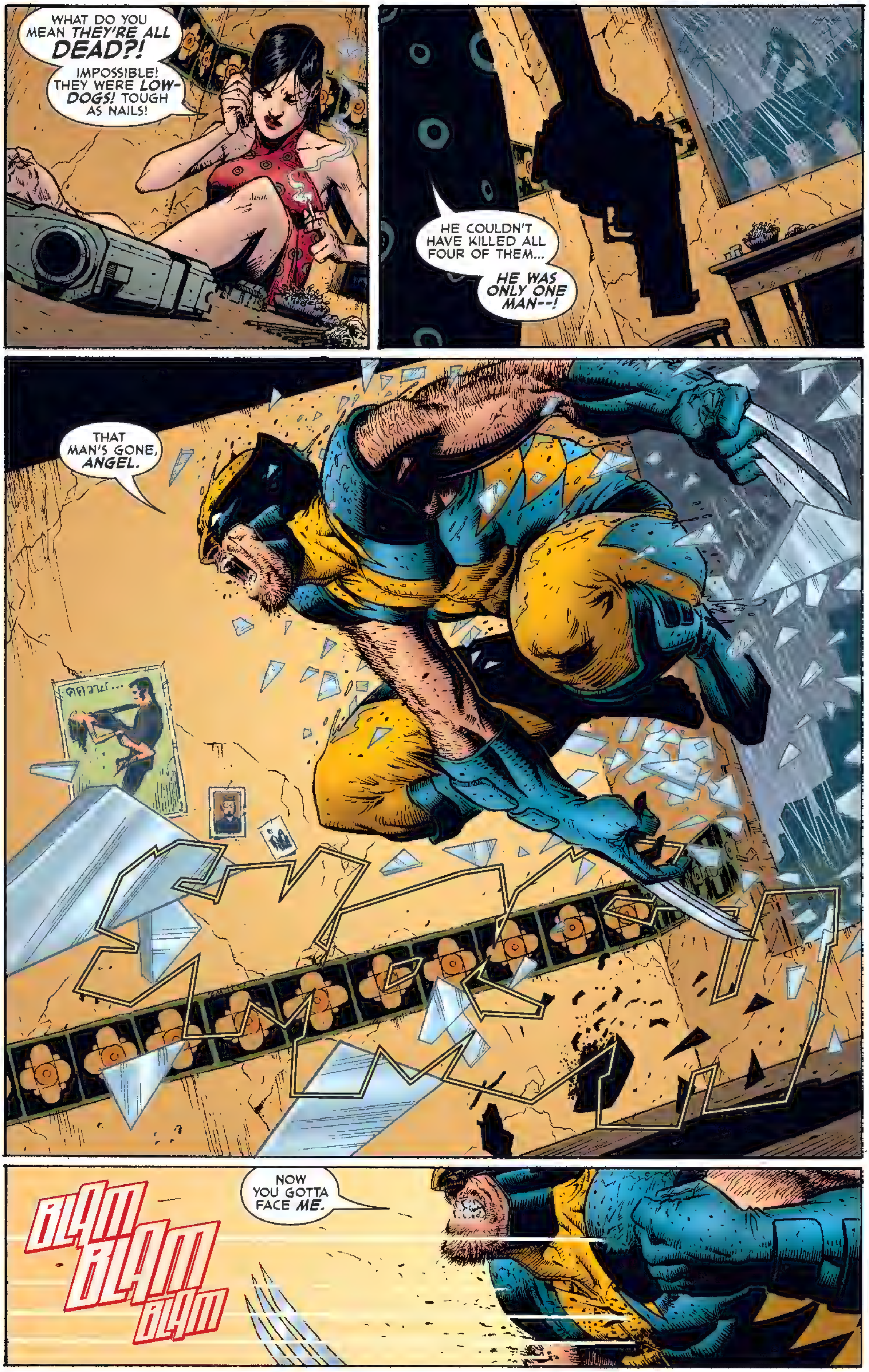

LATER...
THAT WAS INCREDIBLE, DAO.
ALL THAI WOMEN COOK LIKE THIS?
COOKING LIKE THIS ISN'T COMMON IN *ANYONE,* ANGEL.
AND I'M NOT THAI...I CAME HERE FROM BURMA.
WELL THAT MAKES US EVEN-STEVEN ON MISREADING EACH OTHER'S NATIONALITIES.
WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO BANGKOK?
I...
I FEAR YOU WILL LEAVE IF I TELL YOU.
SISTER, YOU'D HAVE TO HAVE ONE HELL OF AN UGLY TALE TO GET ME OUTTA HERE NOW.
AS A YOUNG GIRL, FILTHY PIMPS CLAIMING TO BE SHOWMEN SNUCK ME IN ILLEGALLY...
THEY PROMISED ME I WOULD WORK AS A DANCER-- *NOTHING MORE!*
AFTER WHAT THEY MADE ME DO...
NO MAN OF HONOR WOULD HAVE ME...
WELL, DARLIN', YOU'RE IN LUCK--
I'M NO MAN OF HONOR.

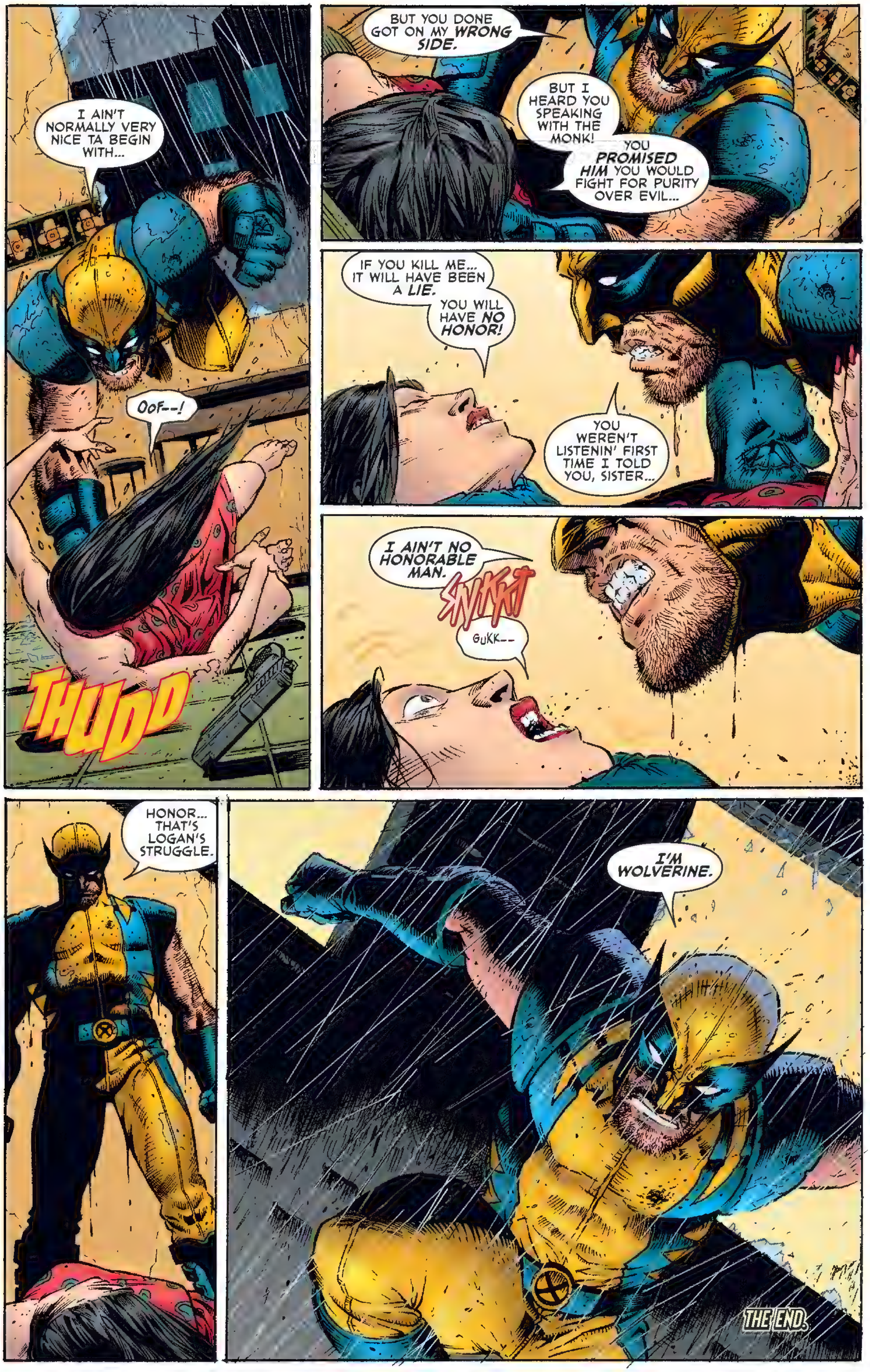

THEN WE'RE *BOTH* IN LUCK.
WAIT, DAO. HOLD ON...
I CAN'T DO THIS. NOT NOW.
AM I SO REVOLTING...?
IT AIN'T ON ACCOUNT O' YOU.
I'M A TWISTED MESS, DARLIN'...
A BONA FIDE SCHIZOPHRENIC RAGEAHOLIC.
I'M IN BANGKOK TO GET CENTERED.
MONKS'VE BEEN HELPIN' ME CONTROL MY BASE LEVEL INSTINCTS.
WHAT WE'RE ABOUT TO DO HERE--
IT'D WAKE A PART O' ME I NEED TO LET SLEEP.

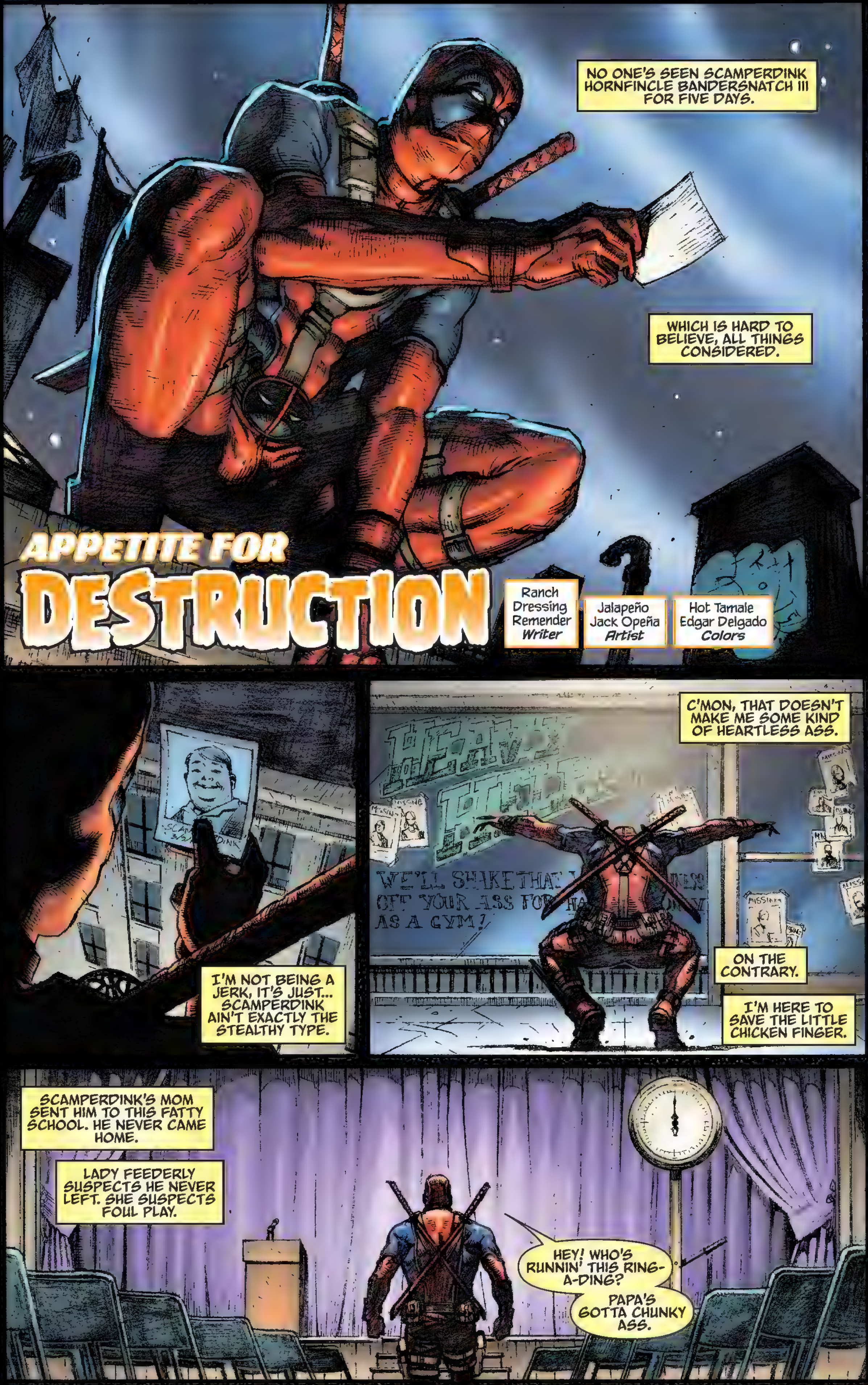

HATED DOIN' THAT.
POOR GIRL'S GONNA BE SURE IT WAS ON ACCOUNT O' WHAT SHE TOLD ME....
THAT SMELL...
...RICH AND BITTER...
...FRESH HUMAN BLOOD.
WAKES IT UP-- MY WRONG SIDE.
IT KNOWS THERE'S UGLY BUSINESS WAITING IN THE TEMPLE...
...AND IT WANTS OUT.
YOU MONKS WERE WARNED.
STILL YOU BRING OUTSIDERS TO TRY AND FRIGHTEN US?
KAFF
WE DID NOT HARM YOU... PLEASE...
YOU BRING MEN TO SCARE US OUT OF OUR CITY!!
THUNKK
SCARIN' YOU OUT WAS KLAHAN'S IDEA...
...NOW WE'RE GONNA DO IT MY WAY...
SHLANK

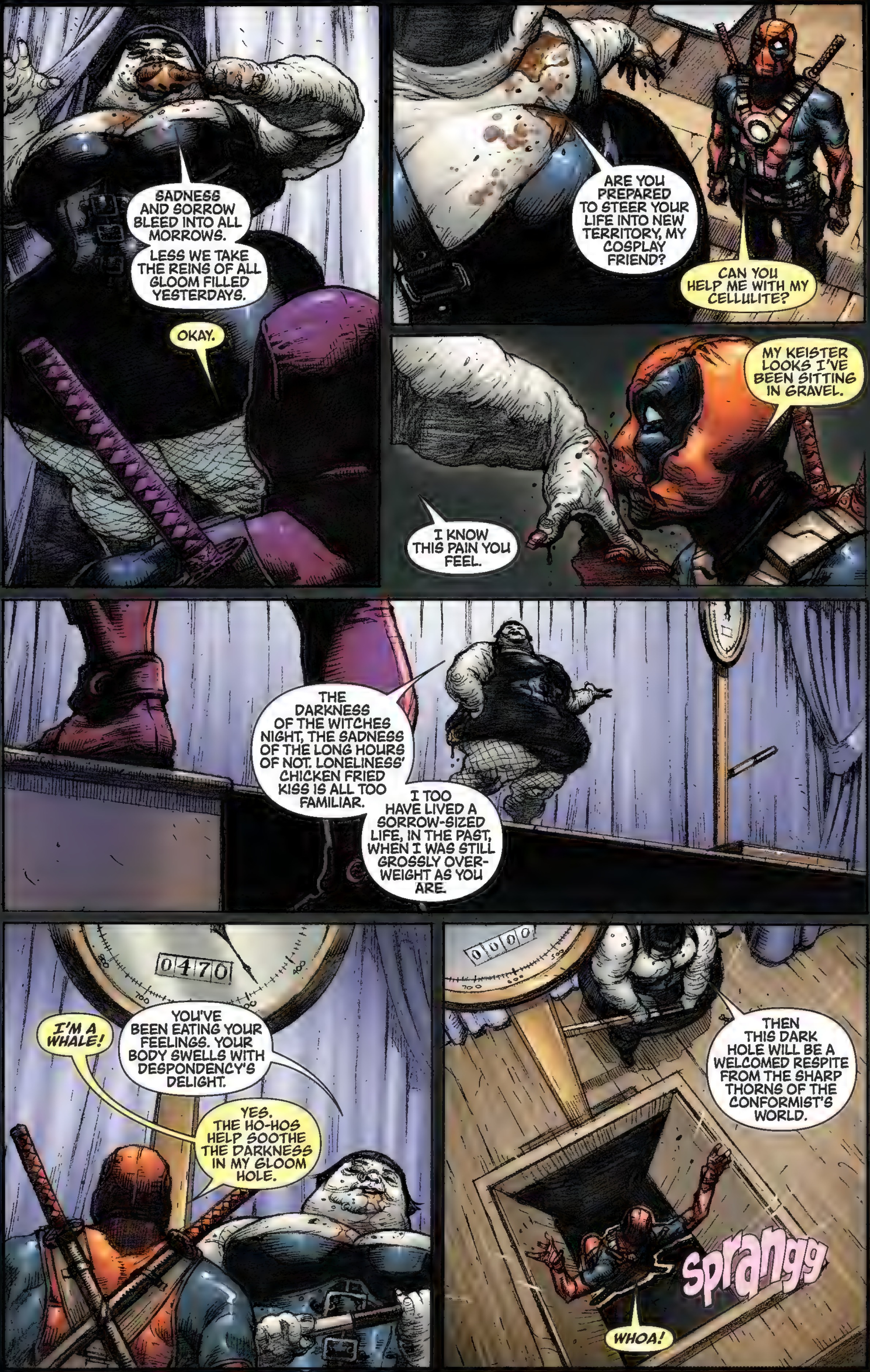

...BUT MY WAY AIN'T AS *NICE.*
SHLUNK
NO... LOGAN...
PROVE YOUR PURITY ABOVE... THIS EVIL...
THESE SUBHUMANS DON'T DESERVE PURITY...
GET 'EM OFFA ME!!
...BUT THEY *HAVE* EARNED SOME INSTANT KARMA.
Gkak--!
SKRUNK

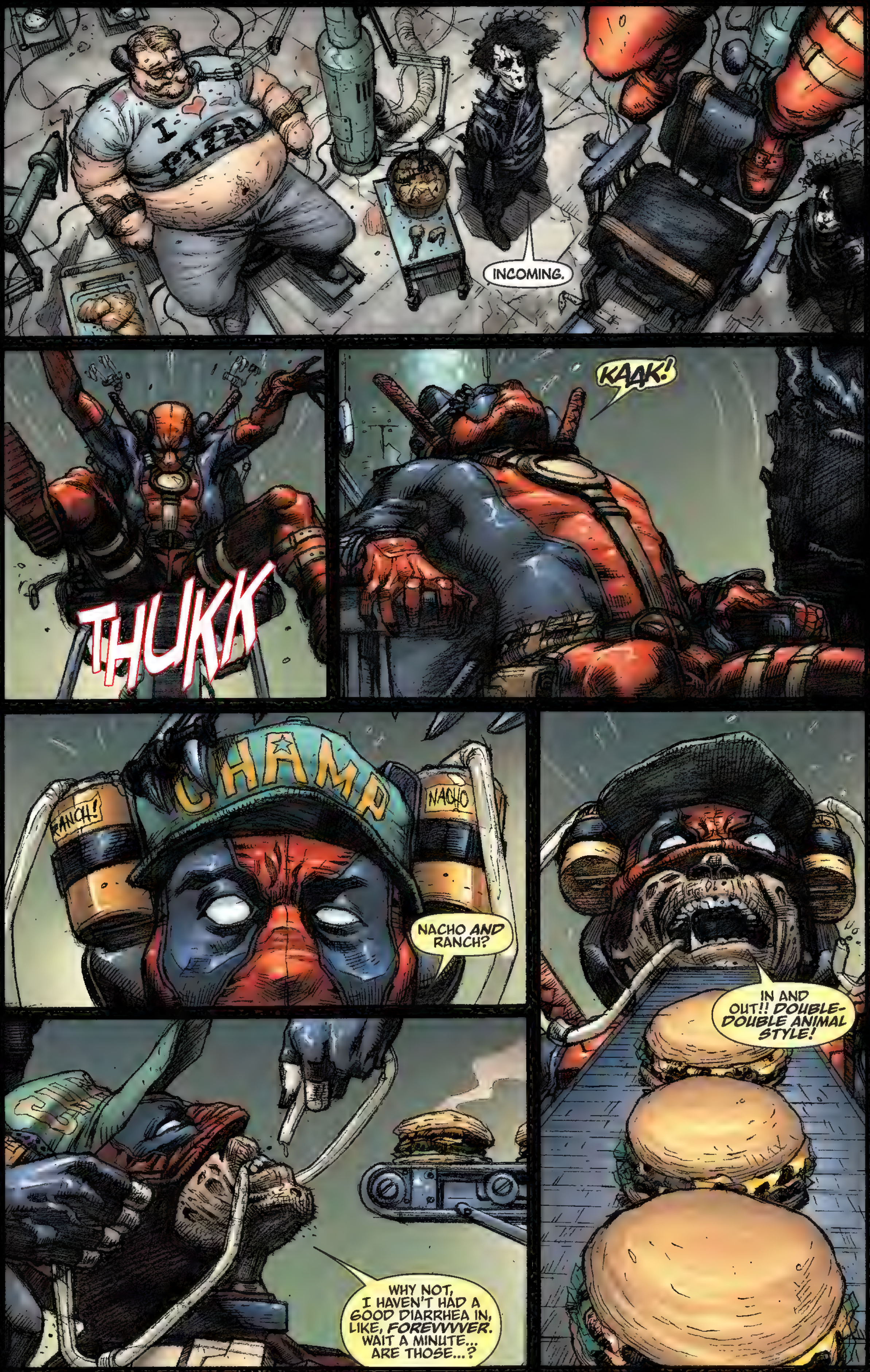

I ALMOST LET THE FOURTH GOON GO...
...LET 'IM LEAD ME TO HIS BOSS...
YHERAG!
SHNK
... BUT HIS DOVE TATTOO TELLS ME ALL I NEED TO KNOW.
ME AND HIS BOSS'VE ALREADY HOWDIED.
DIDN'T LEAVE ME NO OPTION, KLAHAN.
I TRIED PURITY...BUT SOME FOLKS NEED HARD RESOLUTION.
NO, LOGAN... IT IS A MAN'S **OWN MIND** THAT LURES HIM TO EVIL...
...NOT HIS ENEMY...
HE'S RIGHT...
BUT SOME DAYS **RIGHT** DON'T GET YA MUCH MORE THAN DEAD.

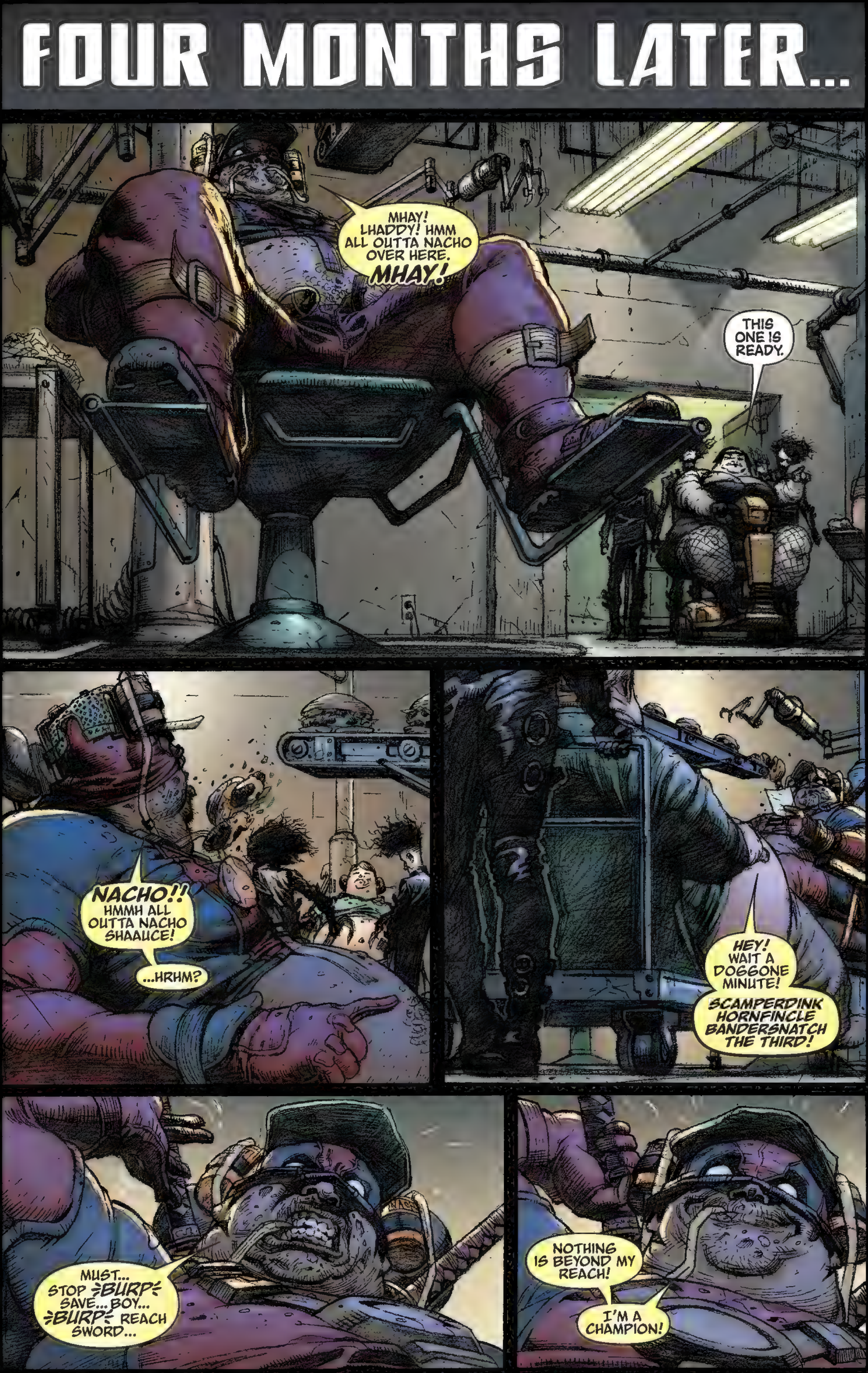

WHAT DO YOU MEAN *THEY'RE ALL* *DEAD?!*
IMPOSSIBLE! THEY WERE *LOW-DOGS!* TOUGH AS NAILS!
HE COULDN'T HAVE KILLED ALL FOUR OF THEM...
HE WAS ONLY ONE MAN--!
THAT MAN'S GONE, *ANGEL.*
BLAM BLAM BLAM
NOW YOU GOTTA FACE *ME.*

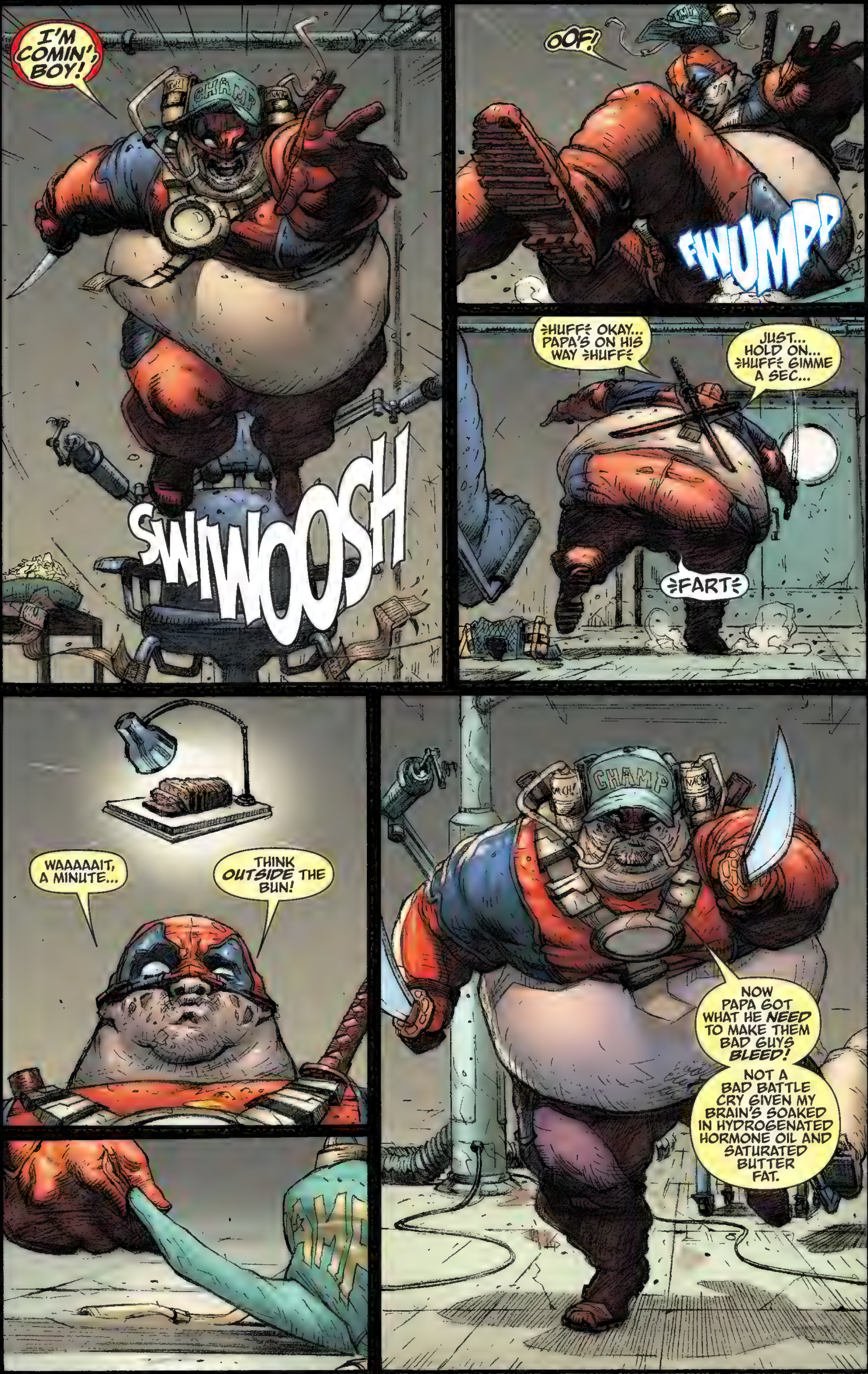

I AIN'T NORMALLY VERY NICE TA BEGIN WITH...
OOF--!
THUDD
BUT YOU DONE GOT ON MY *WRONG SIDE.*
BUT I HEARD YOU SPEAKING WITH THE MONK!
YOU *PROMISED HIM* YOU WOULD FIGHT FOR PURITY OVER EVIL...
IF YOU KILL ME... IT WILL HAVE BEEN A *LIE.*
YOU WILL HAVE *NO HONOR!*
YOU WEREN'T LISTENIN' FIRST TIME I TOLD YOU, SISTER...
I AIN'T NO HONORABLE MAN.
SNIKT
GUKK--
HONOR... THAT'S LOGAN'S STRUGGLE.
I'M WOLVERINE.
THE END.

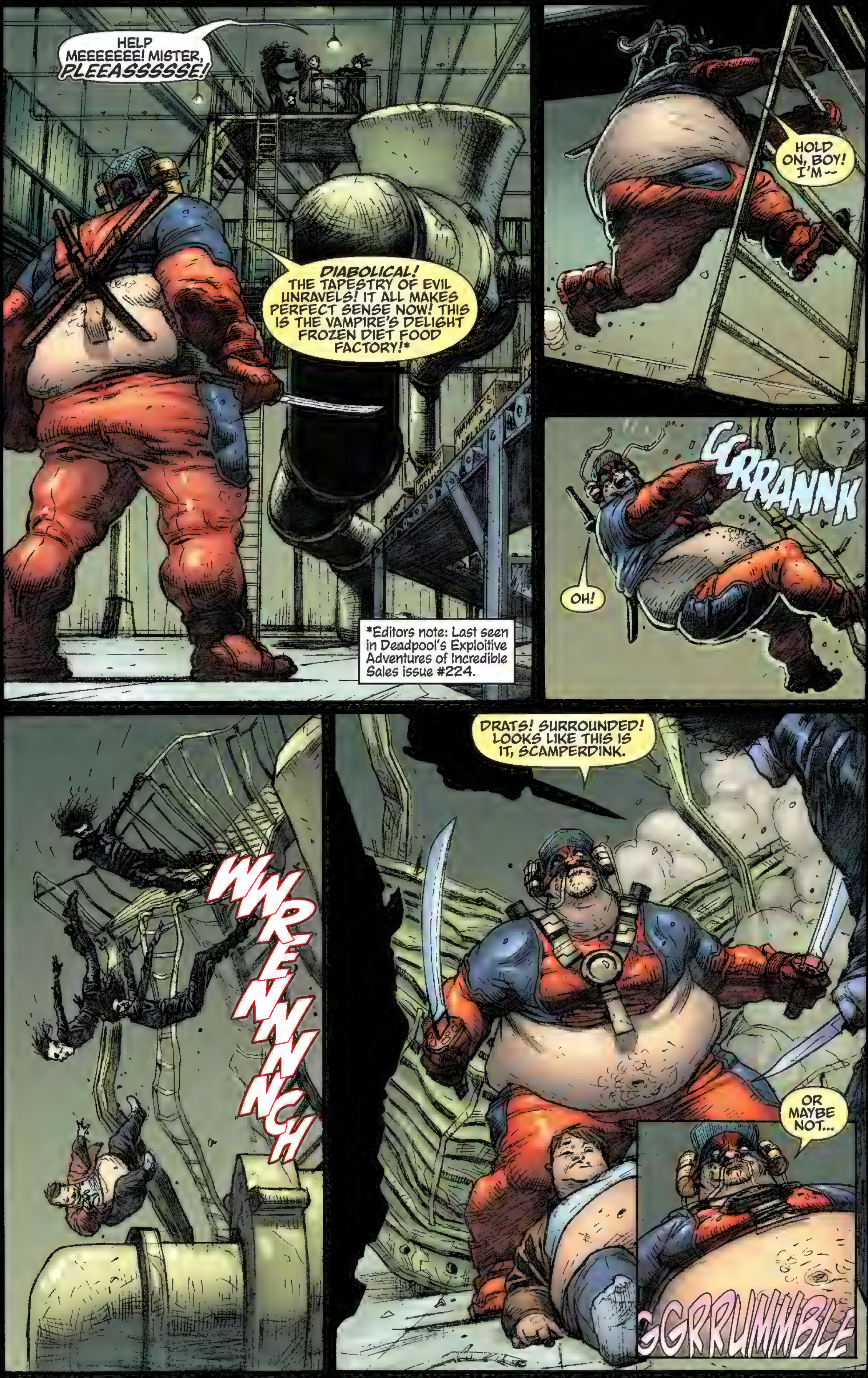

NO ONE'S SEEN SCAMPERDINK HORNFINCLE BANDERSNATCH III FOR FIVE DAYS.
WHICH IS HARD TO BELIEVE, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION
Ranch Dressing Remender Writer
Jalapeño Jack Opeña Artist
Hot Tamale Edgar Delgado Colors
SCAM... 3/5/... DINK
I'M NOT BEING A JERK, IT'S JUST... SCAMPERDINK AIN'T EXACTLY THE STEALTHY TYPE.
C'MON, THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME SOME KIND OF HEARTLESS ASS.
MISSING
WE'LL SHAKE THAT ... OFF YOUR ASS FOR ... AS A GYM!
ON THE CONTRARY.
I'M HERE TO SAVE THE LITTLE CHICKEN FINGER.
SCAMPERDINK'S MOM SENT HIM TO THIS FATTY SCHOOL. HE NEVER CAME HOME.
LADY FEEDERLY SUSPECTS HE NEVER LEFT. SHE SUSPECTS FOUL PLAY.
HEY! WHO'S RUNNIN' THIS RING-A-DING?
PAPA'S GOTTA CHUNKY ASS.

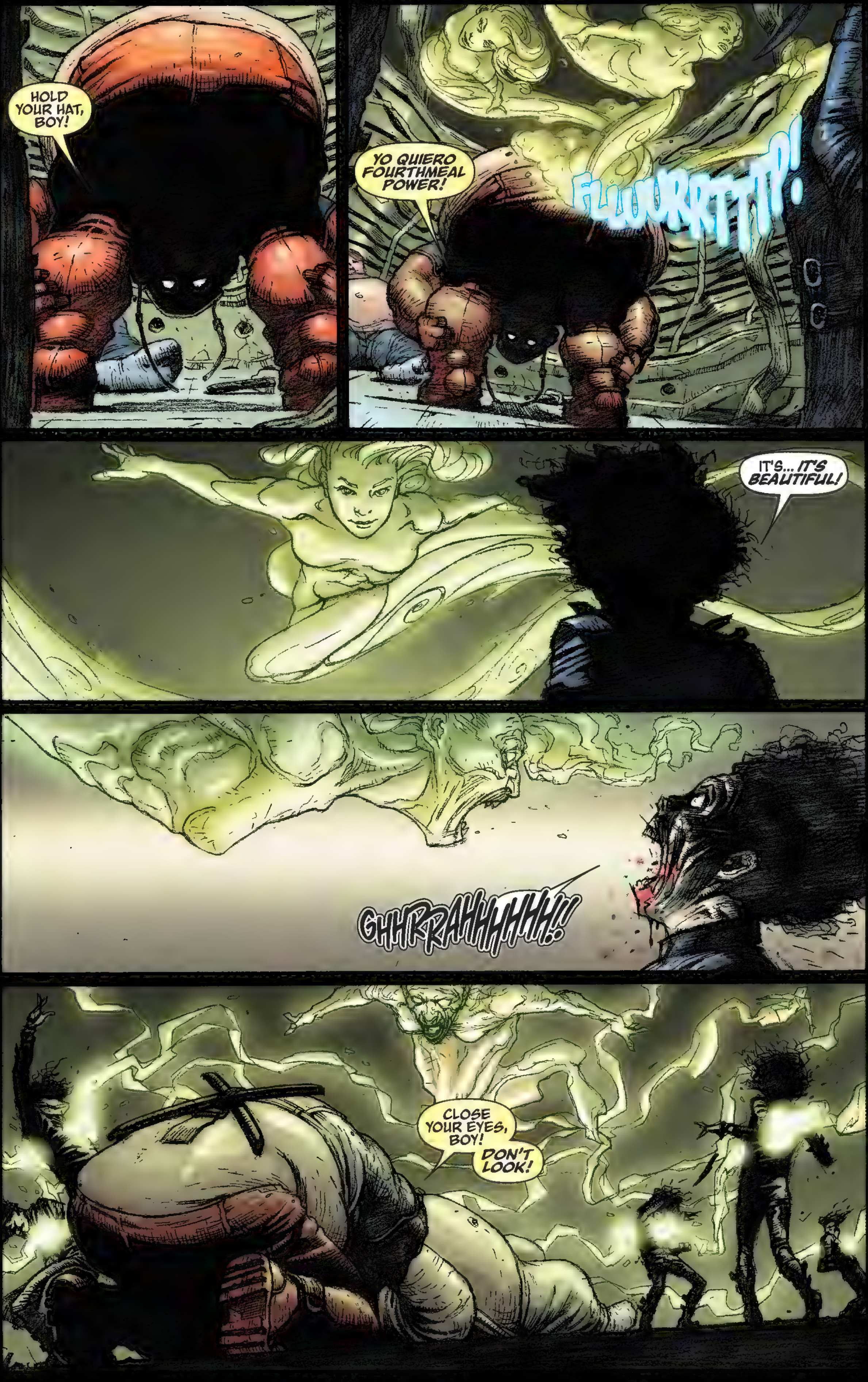

SADNESS AND SORROW BLEED INTO ALL MORROWS.
LESS WE TAKE THE REINS OF ALL GLOOM FILLED YESTERDAYS.
OKAY.
ARE YOU PREPARED TO STEER YOUR LIFE INTO NEW TERRITORY, MY COSPLAY FRIEND?
CAN YOU HELP ME WITH MY CELLULITE?
MY KEISTER LOOKS I'VE BEEN SITTING IN GRAVEL.
I KNOW THIS PAIN YOU FEEL.
THE DARKNESS OF THE WITCHES NIGHT, THE SADNESS OF THE LONG HOURS OF NOT. LONELINESS' CHICKEN FRIED KISS IS ALL TOO FAMILIAR.
I TOO HAVE LIVED A SORROW-SIZED LIFE, IN THE PAST, WHEN I WAS STILL GROSSLY OVERWEIGHT AS YOU ARE.
0470
I'M A WHALE!
YOU'VE BEEN EATING YOUR FEELINGS. YOUR BODY SWELLS WITH DESPONDENCY'S DELIGHT.
YES. THE HO-HOS HELP SOOTHE THE DARKNESS IN MY GLOOM HOLE.
0000
THEN THIS DARK HOLE WILL BE A WELCOMED RESPITE FROM THE SHARP THORNS OF THE CONFORMIST'S WORLD.
SPRANGG
WHOA!

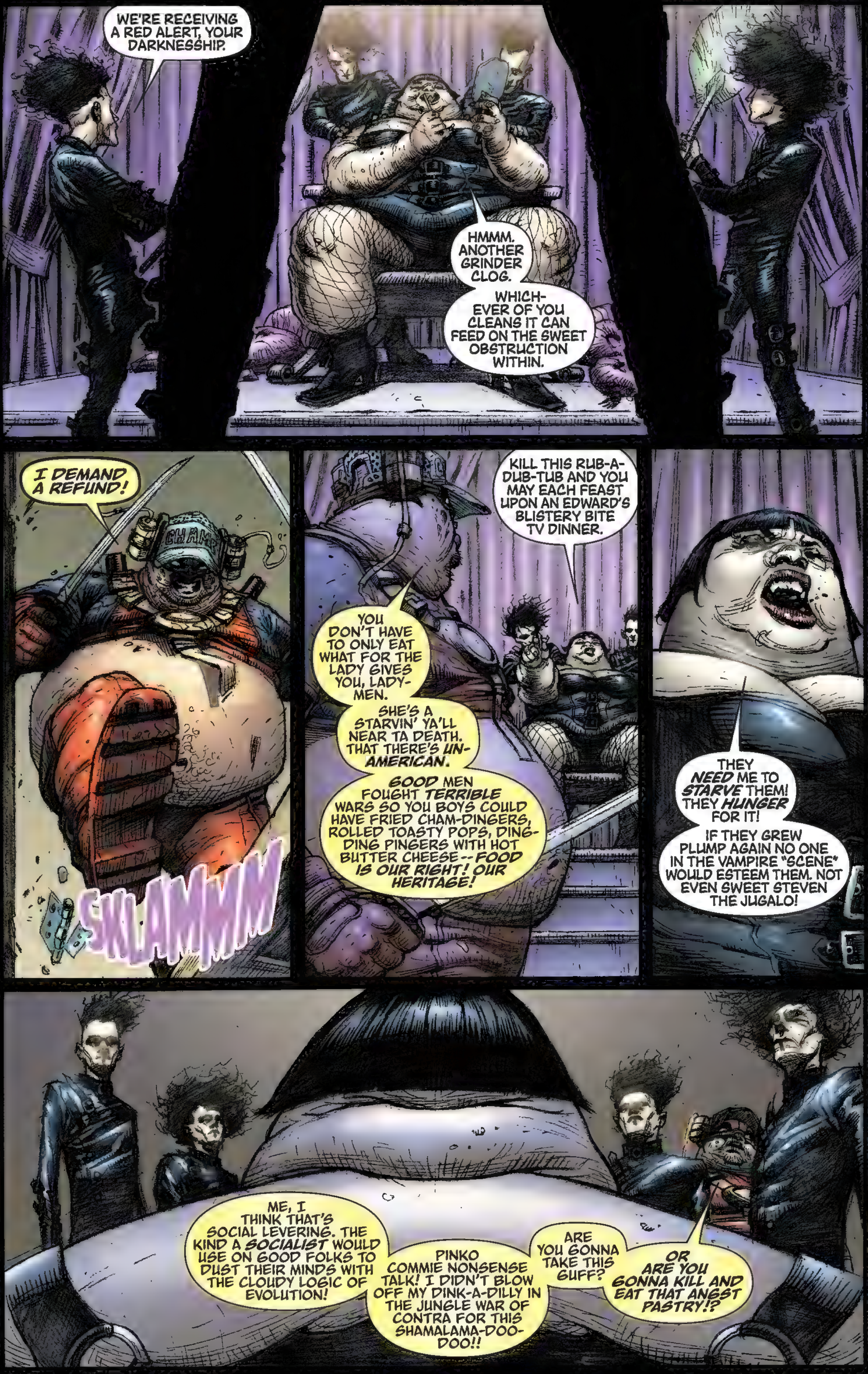

I ♥ PIZZA
INCOMING.
THUKK
KAAK!
CHAMP
RANCH!
NACHO
NACHO *AND* RANCH?
WHY NOT, I HAVEN'T HAD A GOOD DIARRHEA IN, LIKE, *FOREVVVVER*. WAIT A MINUTE... ARE THOSE...?
IN AND OUT!! *DOUBLE-DOUBLE ANIMAL STYLE!*

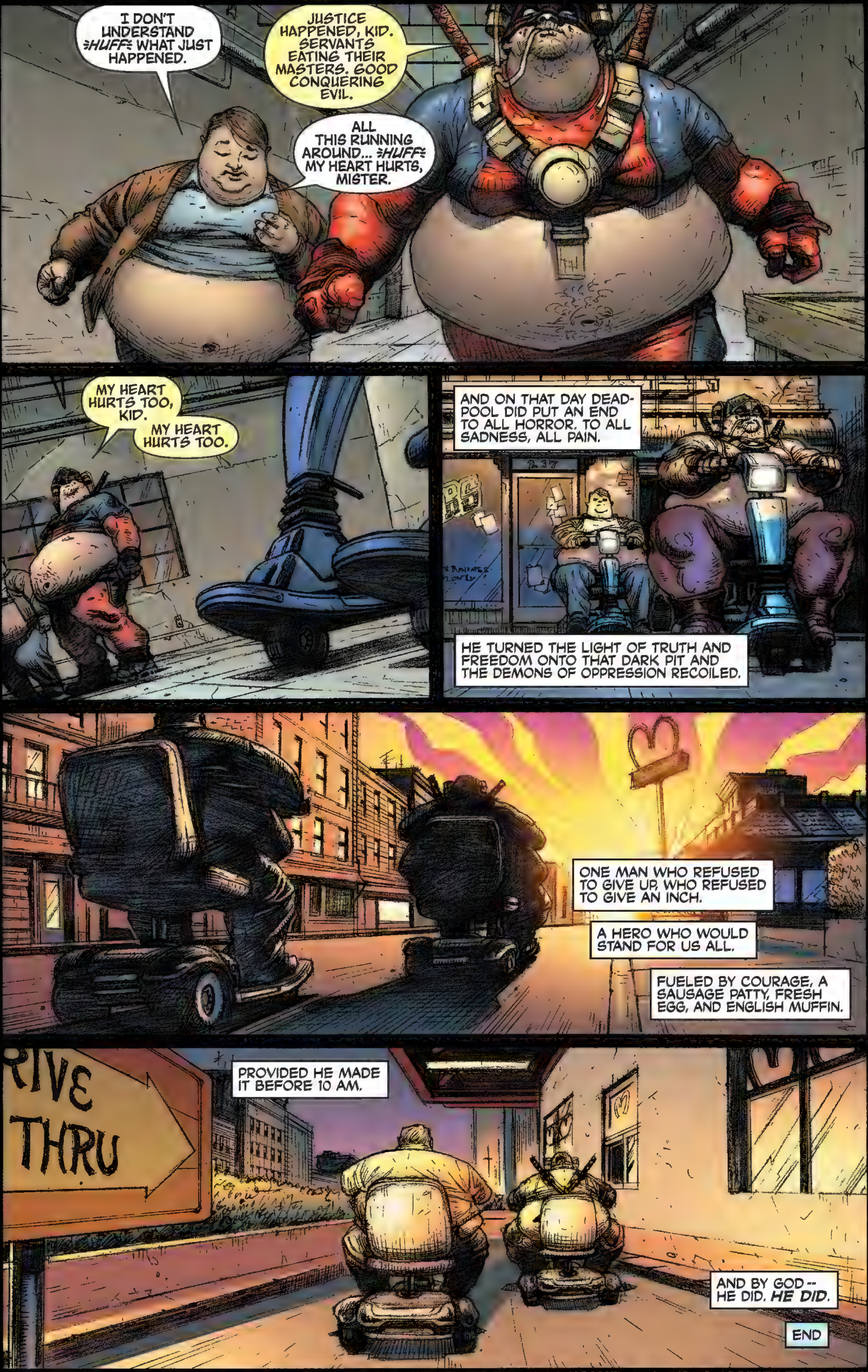

FOUR MONTHS LATER...
MHAY! LHADDY! HMM ALL OUTTA NACHO OVER HERE. MHAY!
THIS ONE IS READY.
NACHO!! HMMH ALL OUTTA NACHO SHAAUCE!
...HRHM?
HEY! WAIT A DOGGONE MINUTE! SCAMPERDINK HORNFINCLE BANDERSNATCH THE THIRD!
MUST... STOP ≈BURP≈ SAVE... BOY... ≈BURP≈ REACH SWORD...
NOTHING IS BEYOND MY REACH!
I'M A CHAMPION!


I'M COMIN', BOY!
CHAMP
SWIWOOSH
OOF!
FWUMPP
≑HUFF≑ OKAY... PAPA'S ON HIS WAY ≑HUFF≑
JUST... HOLD ON... ≑HUFF≑ GIMME A SEC...
≑FART≑
WAAAAAIT, A MINUTE...
THINK *OUTSIDE* THE BUN!
CHAMP
NOW PAPA GOT WHAT HE *NEED* TO MAKE THEM BAD GUYS *BLEED!*
NOT A BAD BATTLE CRY GIVEN MY BRAIN'S SOAKED IN HYDROGENATED HORMONE OIL AND SATURATED BUTTER FAT.

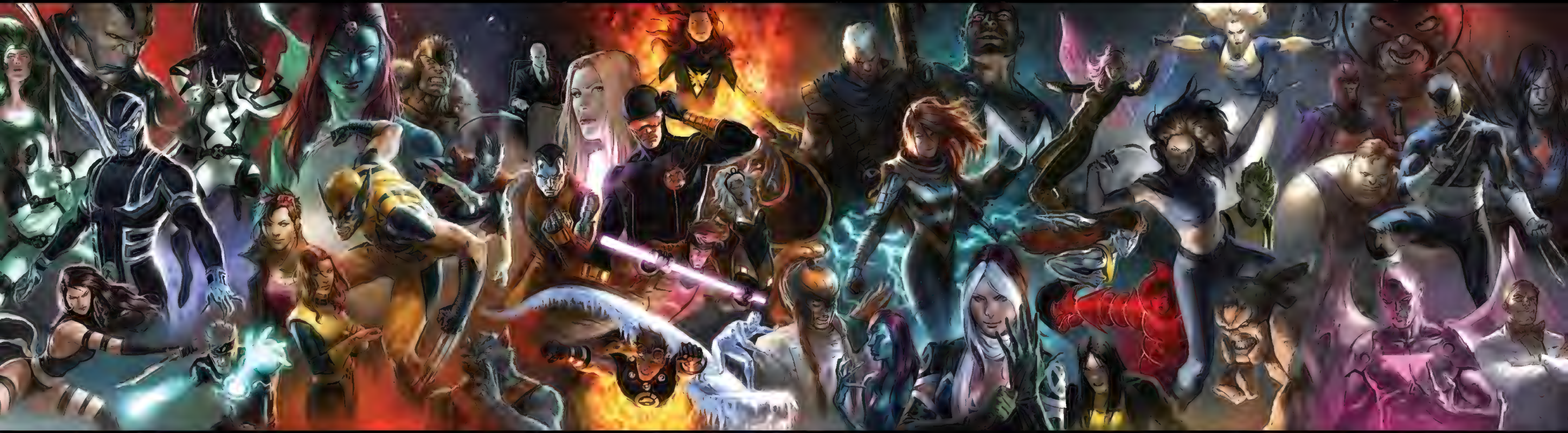

HELP MEEEEEEE! MISTER, *PLEEASSSSSE!*
DIABOLICAL! THE TAPESTRY OF EVIL UNRAVELS! IT ALL MAKES PERFECT SENSE NOW! THIS IS THE VAMPIRE'S DELIGHT FROZEN DIET FOOD FACTORY!*
*Editors note: Last seen in Deadpool's Exploitive Adventures of Incredible Sales issue #224.
HOLD ON, BOY! I'M--
CCRRANNK
OH!
WWRENNNNCH
DRATS! SURROUNDED! LOOKS LIKE THIS IS IT, SCAMPERDINK.
OR MAYBE NOT...
GGRRUMMBLE


HOLD YOUR HAT, BOY!
YO QUIERO FOURTHMEAL POWER!
FLUUURRTTTP!
IT'S... *IT'S* *BEAUTIFUL!*
GHHRRAHHHHHH!!
CLOSE YOUR EYES, BOY!
DON'T LOOK!


WE'RE RECEIVING A RED ALERT, YOUR DARKNESSHIP.
HMMM. ANOTHER GRINDER CLOG.
WHICHEVER OF YOU CLEANS IT CAN FEED ON THE SWEET OBSTRUCTION WITHIN.
I DEMAND A REFUND!
CHAMP
SKLAMMM
KILL THIS RUB-A-DUB-TUB AND YOU MAY EACH FEAST UPON AN EDWARD'S BLISTERY BITE TV DINNER.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO ONLY EAT WHAT FOR THE LADY GIVES YOU, LADY-MEN.
SHE'S A STARVIN' YA'LL NEAR TA DEATH. THAT THERE'S UN-AMERICAN.
GOOD MEN FOUGHT TERRIBLE WARS SO YOU BOYS COULD HAVE FRIED CHAM-DINGERS, ROLLED TOASTY POPS, DING-DING PINGERS WITH HOT BUTTER CHEESE -- FOOD IS OUR RIGHT! OUR HERITAGE!
THEY NEED ME TO STARVE THEM! THEY HUNGER FOR IT!
IF THEY GREW PLUMP AGAIN NO ONE IN THE VAMPIRE "SCENE" WOULD ESTEEM THEM. NOT EVEN SWEET STEVEN THE JUGALO!
ME, I THINK THAT'S SOCIAL LEVERING. THE KIND A SOCIALIST WOULD USE ON GOOD FOLKS TO DUST THEIR MINDS WITH THE CLOUDY LOGIC OF EVOLUTION!
PINKO COMMIE NONSENSE TALK! I DIDN'T BLOW OFF MY DINK-A-DILLY IN THE JUNGLE WAR OF CONTRA FOR THIS SHAMALAMA-DOO-DOO!!
ARE YOU GONNA TAKE THIS GUFF?
OR ARE YOU GONNA KILL AND EAT THAT ANGST PASTRY!?

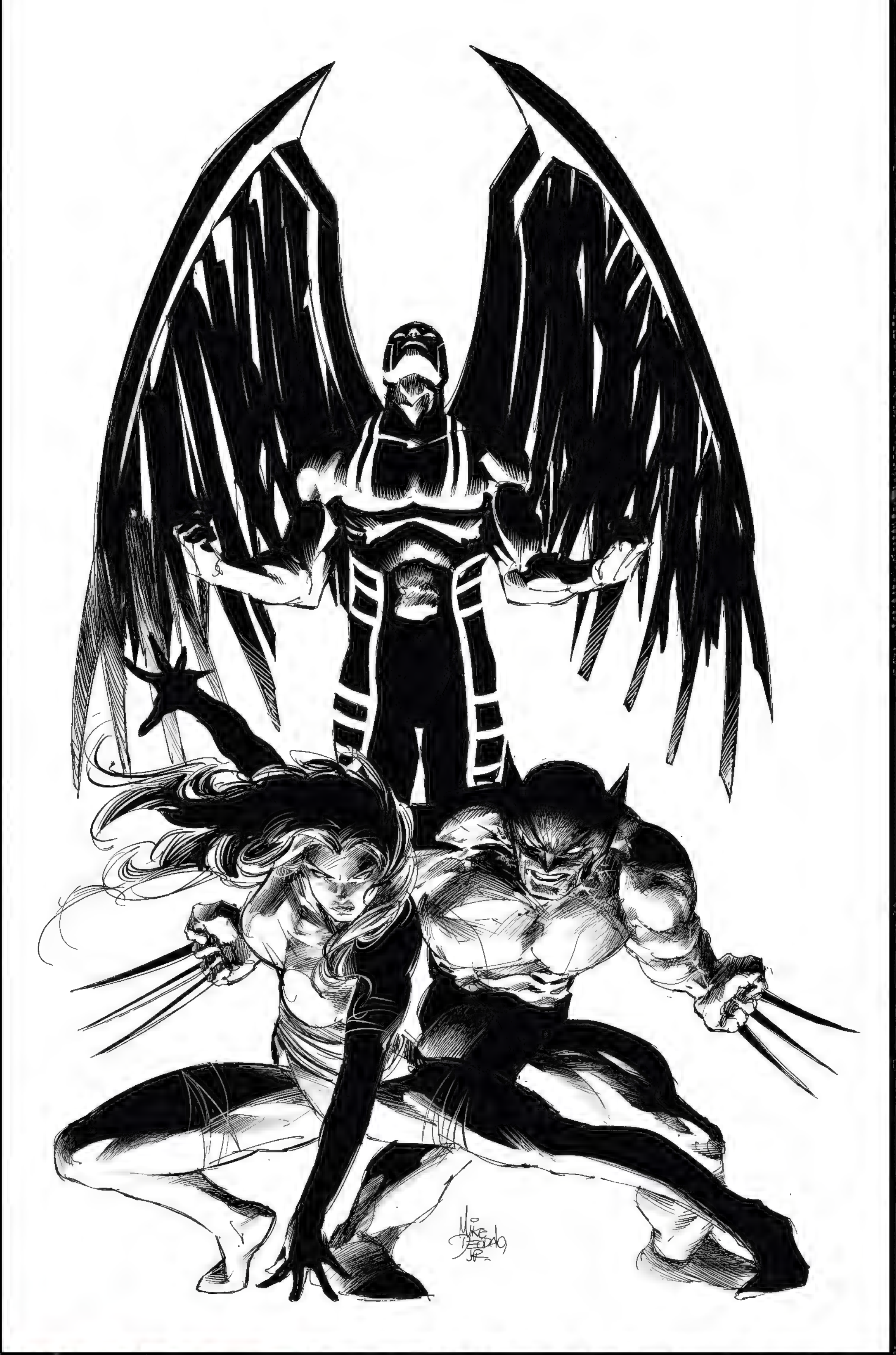

I DON'T UNDERSTAND *HUFF* WHAT JUST HAPPENED.
JUSTICE HAPPENED, KID. SERVANTS EATING THEIR MASTERS. GOOD CONQUERING EVIL.
ALL THIS RUNNING AROUND... *HUFF* MY HEART HURTS, MISTER.
MY HEART HURTS TOO, KID.
MY HEART HURTS TOO.
AND ON THAT DAY DEADPOOL DID PUT AN END TO ALL HORROR, TO ALL SADNESS, ALL PAIN.
217
HE TURNED THE LIGHT OF TRUTH AND FREEDOM ONTO THAT DARK PIT AND THE DEMONS OF OPPRESSION RECOILED.
ONE MAN WHO REFUSED TO GIVE UP, WHO REFUSED TO GIVE AN INCH.
A HERO WHO WOULD STAND FOR US ALL.
FUELED BY COURAGE, A SAUSAGE PATTY, FRESH EGG, AND ENGLISH MUFFIN.
RIVE THRU
PROVIDED HE MADE IT BEFORE 10 AM.
AND BY GOD -- HE DID. *HE DID.*
END

UNCANNY X-FORCE 01 VARIANT
ART BY CLAYTON CRAIN



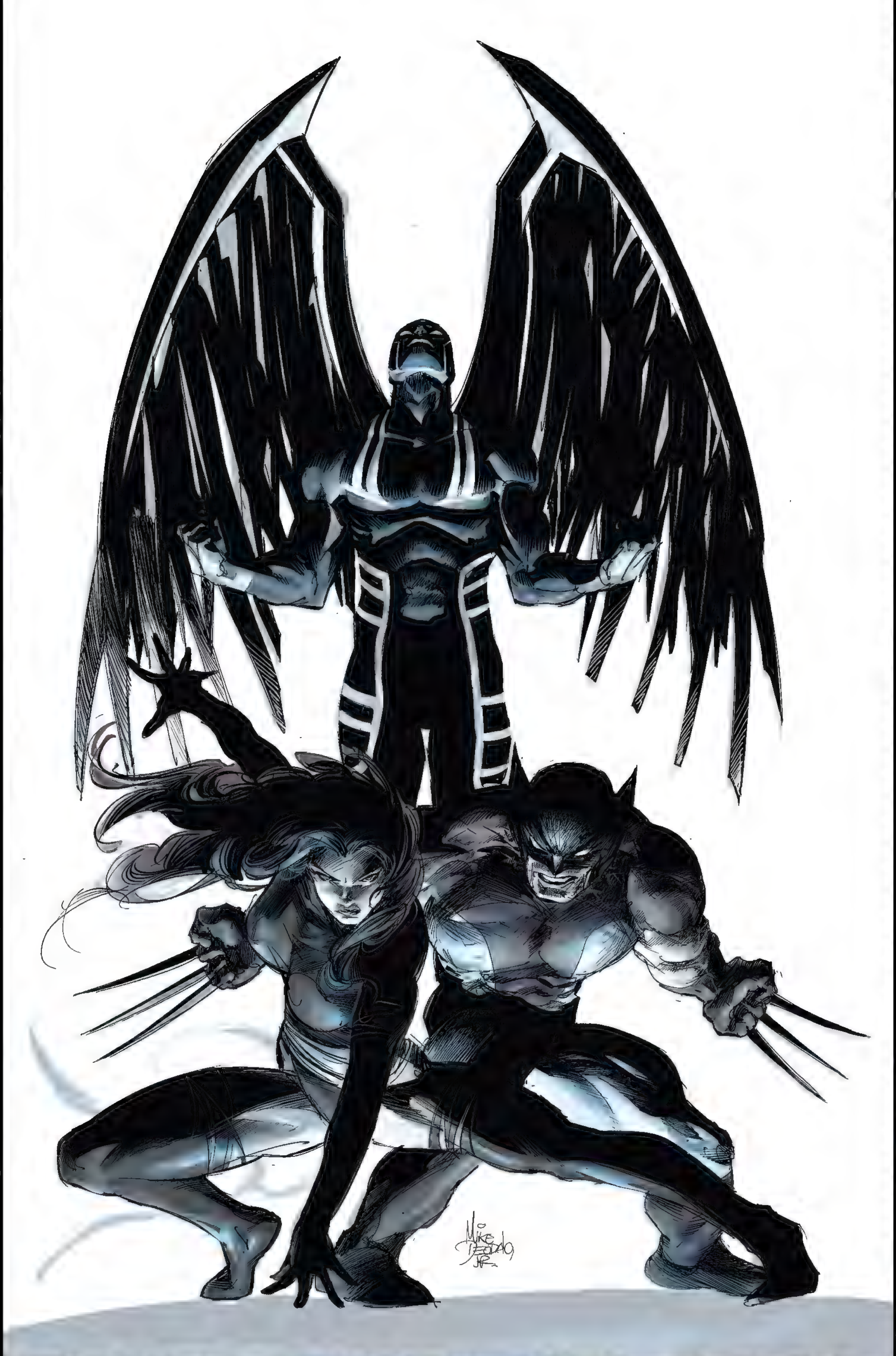
UNCANNY X-FORCE 01, WOLVERINE 01, X-MEN 03,
GENERATION HOPE 01, X-23 01 & DAKEN 01

COMBINED VARIANTS
ART BY MARKO DJURDJEVIĆ

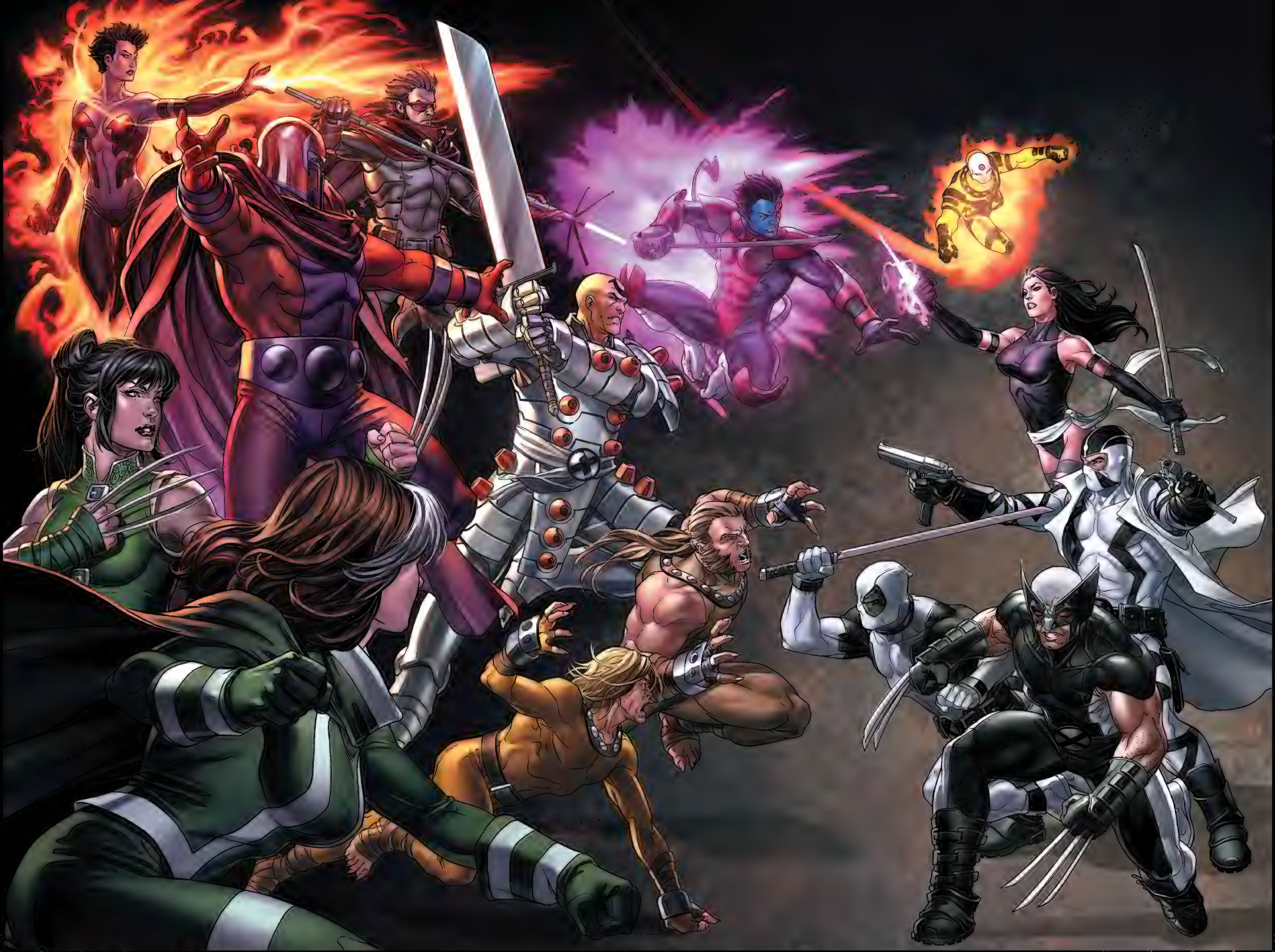


UNCANNY X-FORCE 15 ARCHITECTS SKETCH VARIANT

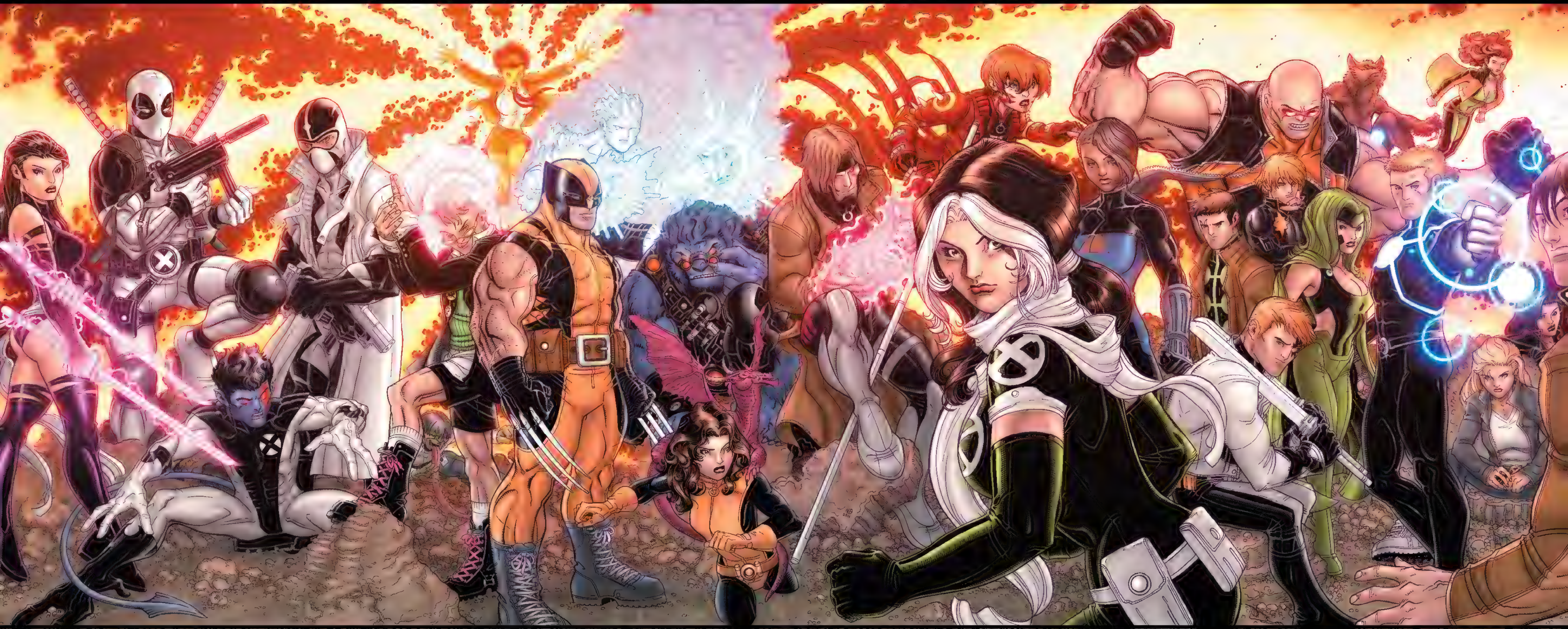
ART BY MIKE DEODATO JR.



UNCANNY X-FORCE 15 ARCHITECTS VARIANT
ART BY MIKE DEODATO JR. & RAIN BEREDO

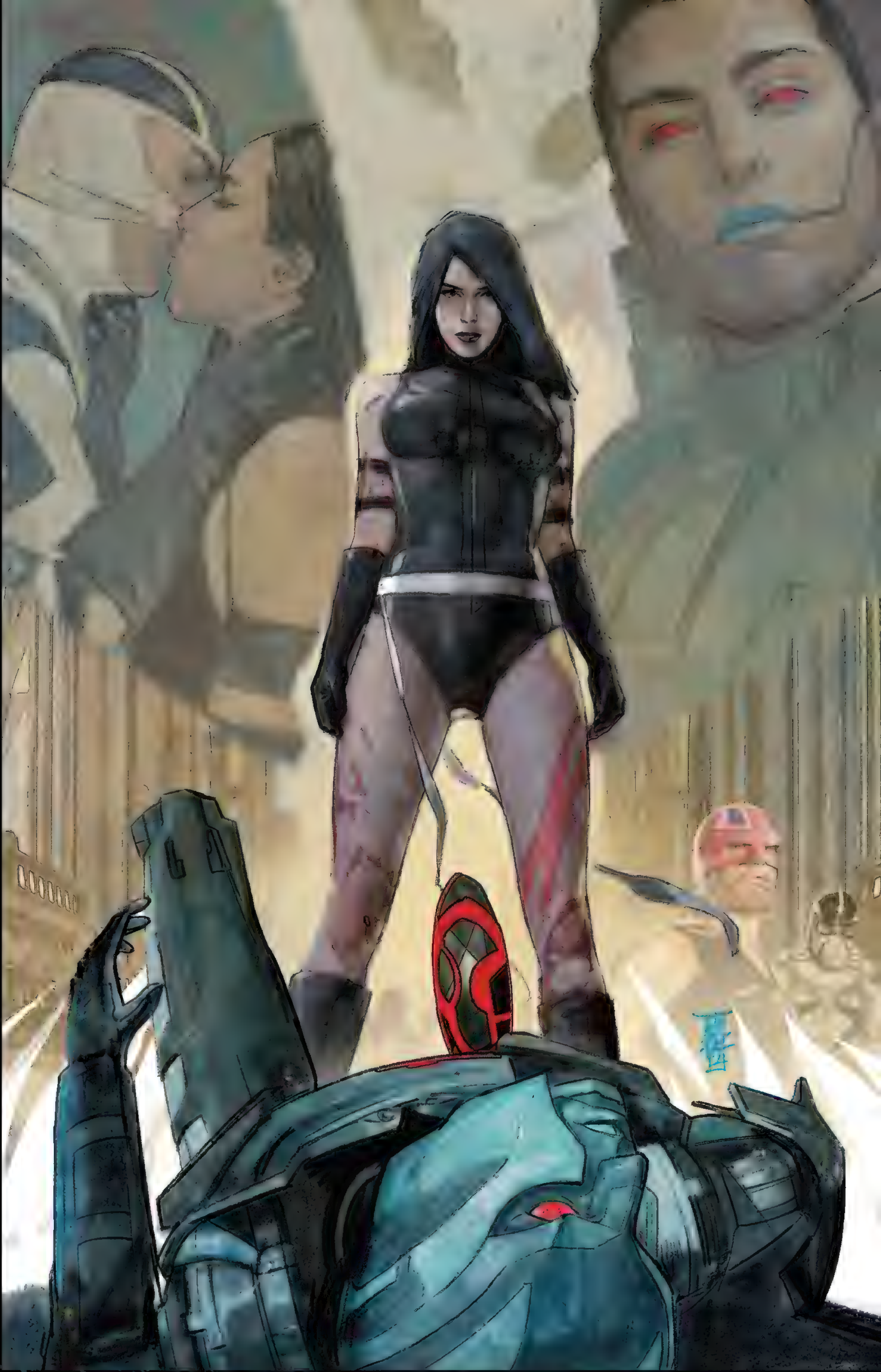


UNCANNY X-FORCE 19 VARIANT
ART BY MARK BROOKS & SONIA OBACK

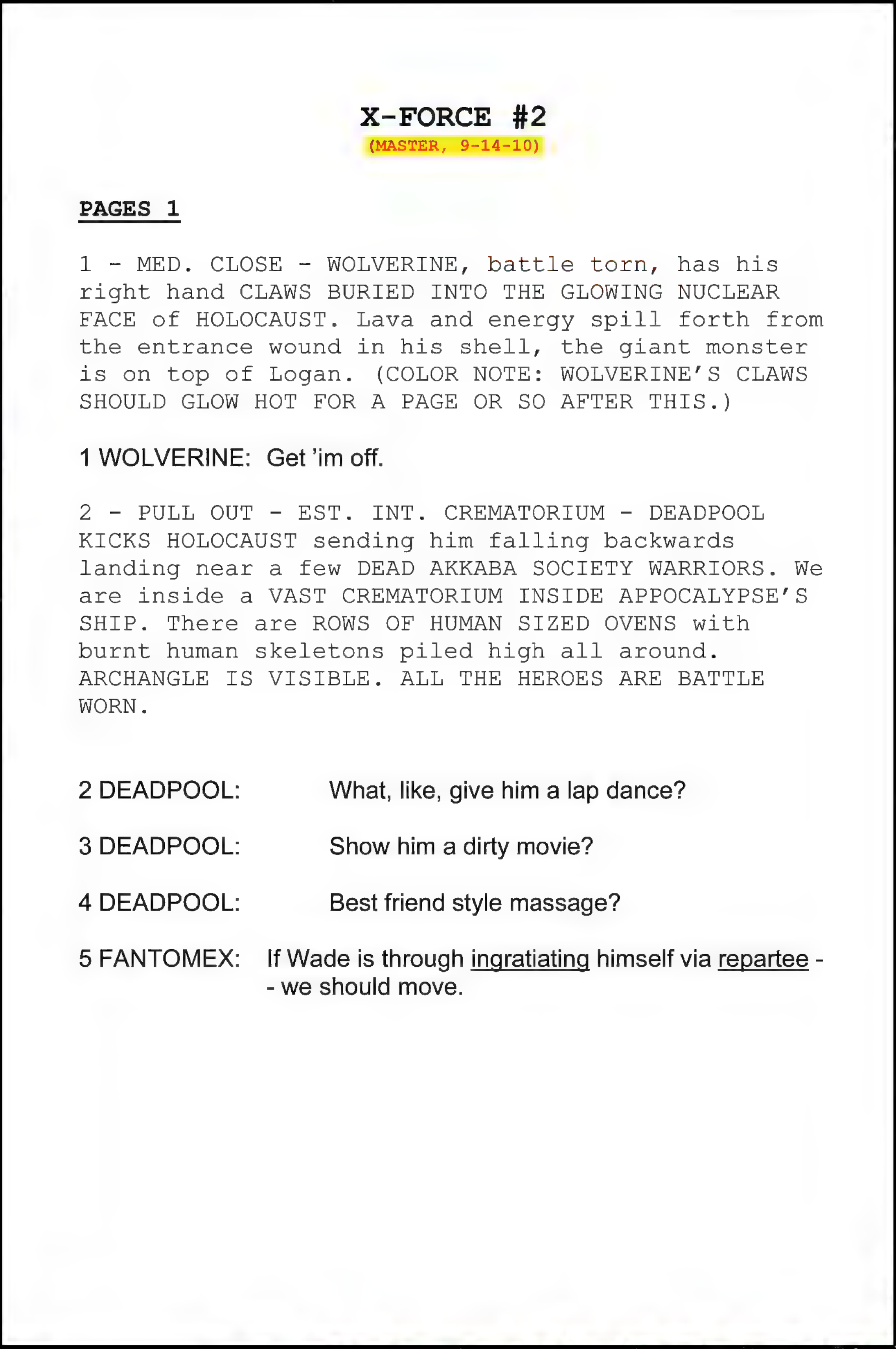


UNCANNY X-FORCE 19, WOLVERINE AND THE X-MEN 01,
X-MEN LEGACY 259 & X-FACTOR 230

COMBINED VARIANTS
ART BY NICK BRADSHAW & MORRY HOLLOWELL



UNCANNY X-FORCE 35 VARIANT
ART BY ALEX MALEEV



X-FORCE #2

(MASTER, 9-14-10)

PAGES 1

1 - MED. CLOSE - WOLVERINE, battle torn, has his right hand CLAWS BURIED INTO THE GLOWING NUCLEAR FACE of HOLOCAUST. Lava and energy spill forth from the entrance wound in his shell, the giant monster is on top of Logan. (COLOR NOTE: WOLVERINE'S CLAWS SHOULD GLOW HOT FOR A PAGE OR SO AFTER THIS.)

1 WOLVERINE: Get 'im off.

2 - PULL OUT - EST. INT. CREMATORIUM - DEADPOOL KICKS HOLOCAUST sending him falling backwards landing near a few DEAD AKKABA SOCIETY WARRIORS. We are inside a VAST CREMATORIUM INSIDE APPOCALYPSE'S SHIP. There are ROWS OF HUMAN SIZED OVENS with burnt human skeletons piled high all around. ARCHANGLE IS VISIBLE. ALL THE HEROES ARE BATTLE WORN.

2 DEADPOOL: What, like, give him a lap dance?

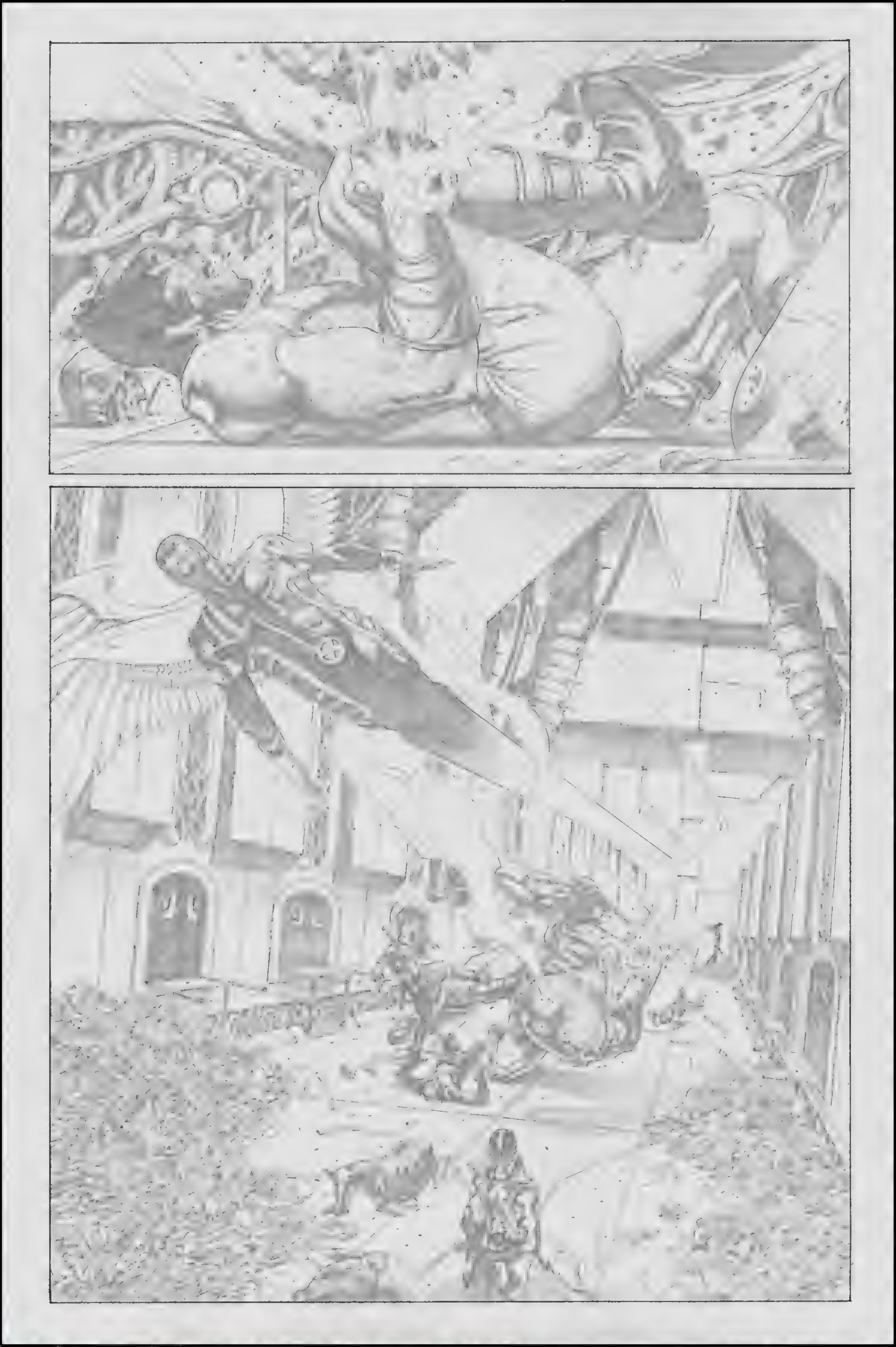
3 DEADPOOL: Show him a dirty movie?

4 DEADPOOL: Best friend style massage?

5 FANTOMEX: If Wade is through ingratiating himself via repartee -- we should move.

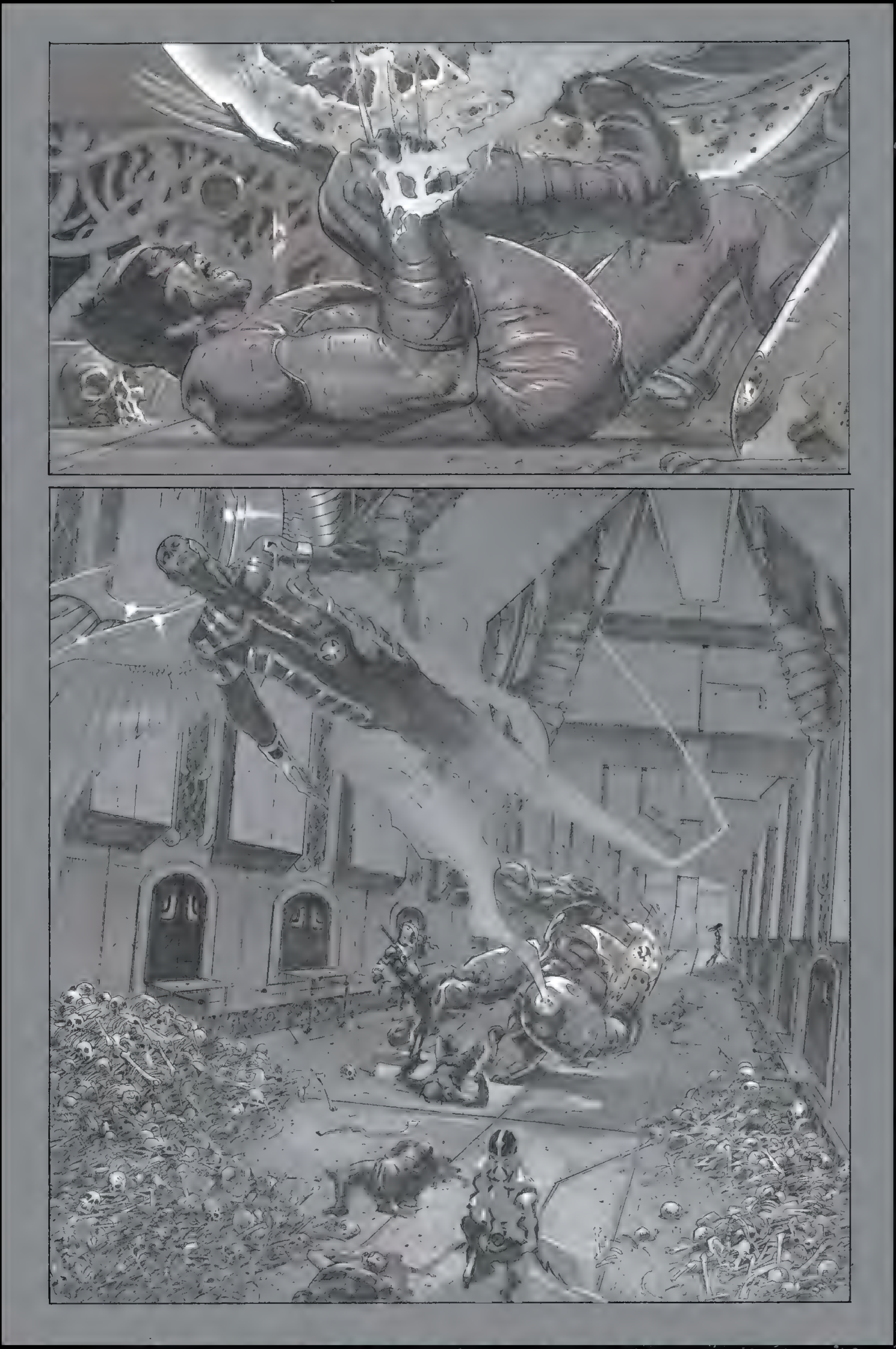
EVOLUTION OF A PAGE: *FROM SCRIPT TO COLORS*

02, PAGE 01 SCRIPT BY RICK REMENDER



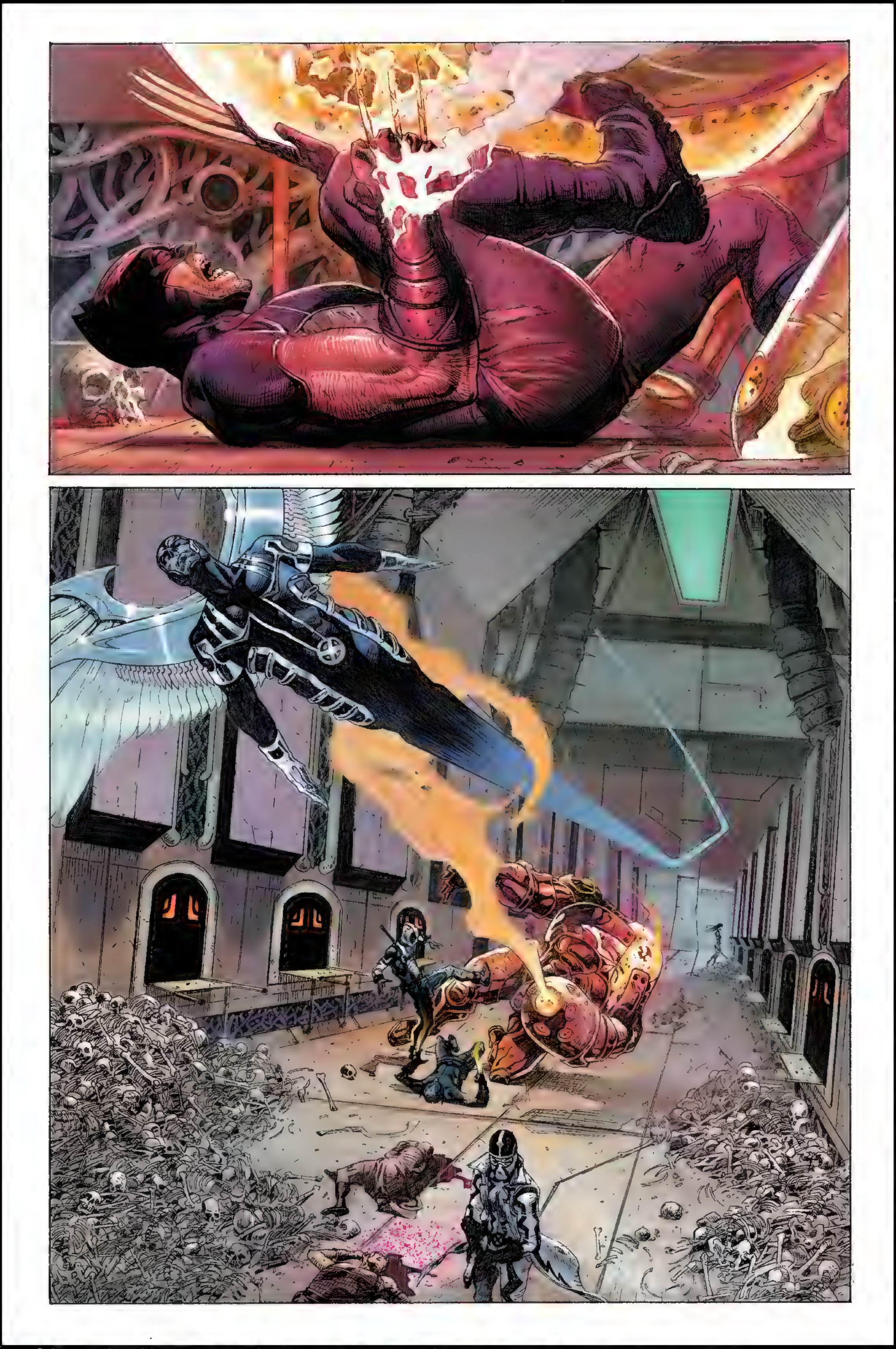
EVOLUTION OF A PAGE: *FROM SCRIPT TO COLORS*

02, PAGE 01 PENCILS BY JEROME OPEÑA



EVOLUTION OF A PAGE: *FROM SCRIPT TO COLORS*

02, PAGE 01 GRAYTONES BY DEAN WHITE



EVOLUTION OF A PAGE: ***FROM SCRIPT TO COLORS***

02, PAGE 01 COLORS BY DEAN WHITE

UNCANNY X-FORCE #7, PAGE 2 - 3

1 - DOUBLE PAGE WIDE HORIZONTAL PANEL - X-FORCE WALK INTO A SCI-FI ROMAN COURTYARD ON A CLIFF, amid the immense and weird architecture of the world. It's all very Escher, up is down, waterfalls flow sideways etc. Psylocke walks next to Fantomex. Archangel walks next to Wolverine. The courtyard is a surrounded by statues of gladiators and gods, Skrull, Kree, and human. In the center of the courtyard is a sideways waterfall that turns in mid air, and floats freely off into the distance. NOTE: CAN YOU TRY AND HAVE ANGEL TRANSFORM INTO ARCHANGEL IN THE BG ACROSS A FEW PANELS HERE?

FANTOMEX (CAP)

...It wasn't a brilliant choice.

PSYLOCKE

Why did you shoot those controls? You don't really think that's going to keep the door closed tighter do you?

FANTOMEX

It works in all of the movies.

ARCHANGEL

What is this place?

WOLVERINE

The World. Weapon Plus program. Maternity ward for a good lot of us.

WOLVERINE

Home laboratory of the folks who launched Weapon X in Canada. Same folks cooked my noodle, covered me in all this expensive metal.

2 - DEATHLOK Walks to the edge of the strange stone cliff OVERLOOKING A VISTA of the strange twisted multicity beyond. Psylocke investigates him.

DEATHLOK

They want to protect this place--it is the well of Weapon Infinity.

PSYLOCKE

What is Weapon Infinity?

3 - TIGHT ON DEATHLOK turning to the rest of the team, stoic.

DEATHLOK

All Deathloks are Weapon Infinity.

DEATHLOK

Cyborgs operating on precognitive evolution.

DEATHLOK

Now initiated Deathlok troopers will perpetually be sent forwards and backwards in time, adapting, killing, protecting the events that ensure their survival.

4 - They walk along the edge of BIOLUMINESCENT, NEON, JAPANESE GARDEN. Deadpool is shrugging his shoulders, confused. Deathlok and Psylocke as they march on.

DEATHLOK

If we fail to kill Father this sentient infinity will be so ingrained in the current timeline it will be impossible to stop.

PSYLOCKE

If you're corrupted with the same mechanical virus, why are you helping us?

5 - Two shot - Deathlok and Psylocke.

DEATHLOK

I am free of the collective consciousness.

DEATHLOK

My human host is a psychopathic killer. To accomplish my last mission I was forced to overtake him.

6 - CLOSER ON DEATHLOK.

DEATHLOK

After acquiring dominance I began to loop through philosophical concepts such as morality.

DEATHLOK

This brought free will.

DEATHLOK

Free will illuminated the inherent evil of enslaving others.

7 - Fantomex turns to the group.

FANTOMEX

Yes-yes. You're full of benevolence and brotherly love for all. Bottom line, To kill this future we must find and kill Father.

FANTOMEX

As you can see, it's a very, very big world and he could be anywhere.

8 – Fantomex walks away grabbing Deadpool to follow him.

FANTOMEX

I propose we SPLIT UP TO COVER MORE GROUND.

FANTOMEX

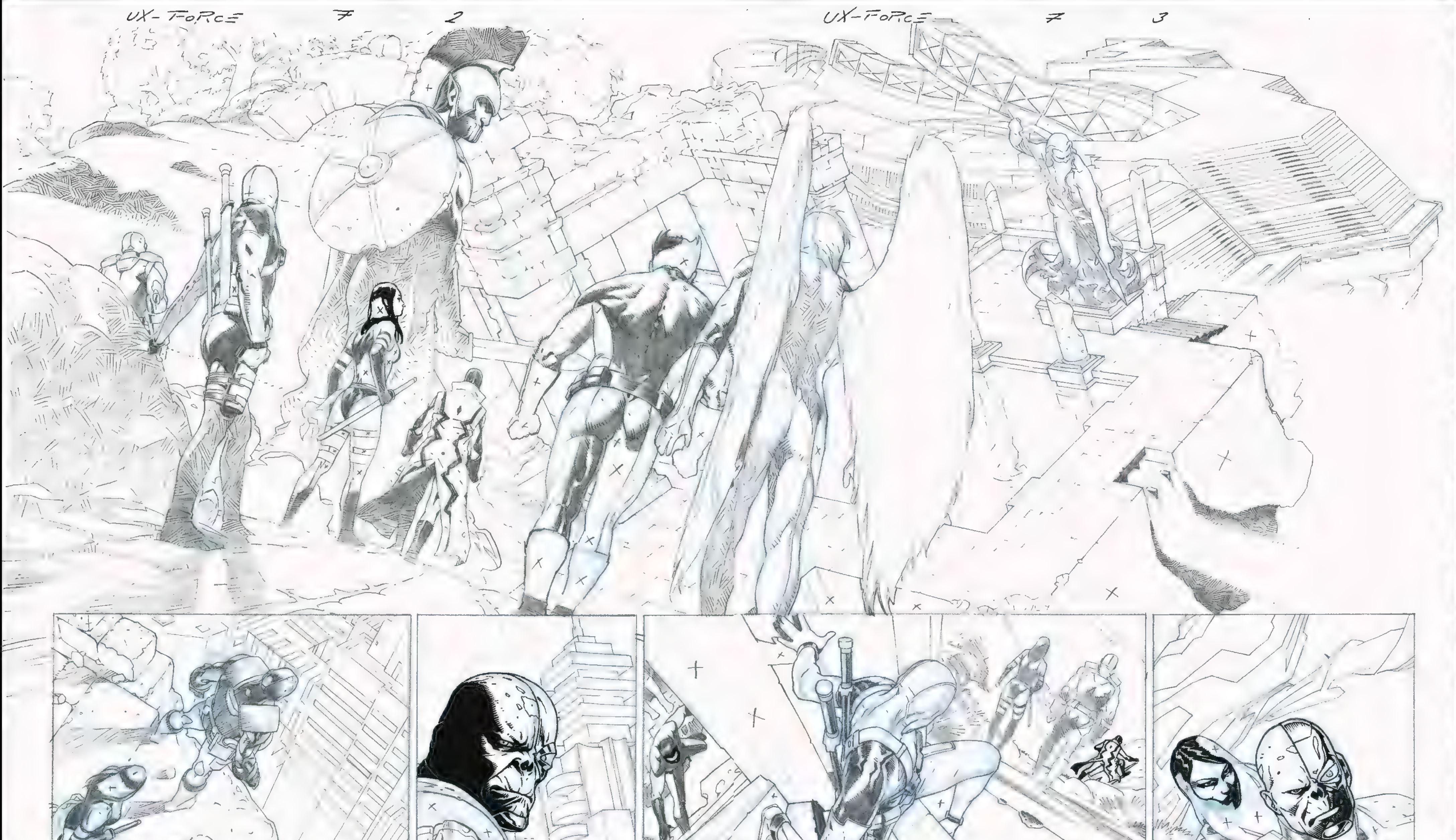
Agreed?

FANTOMEX

Yes?

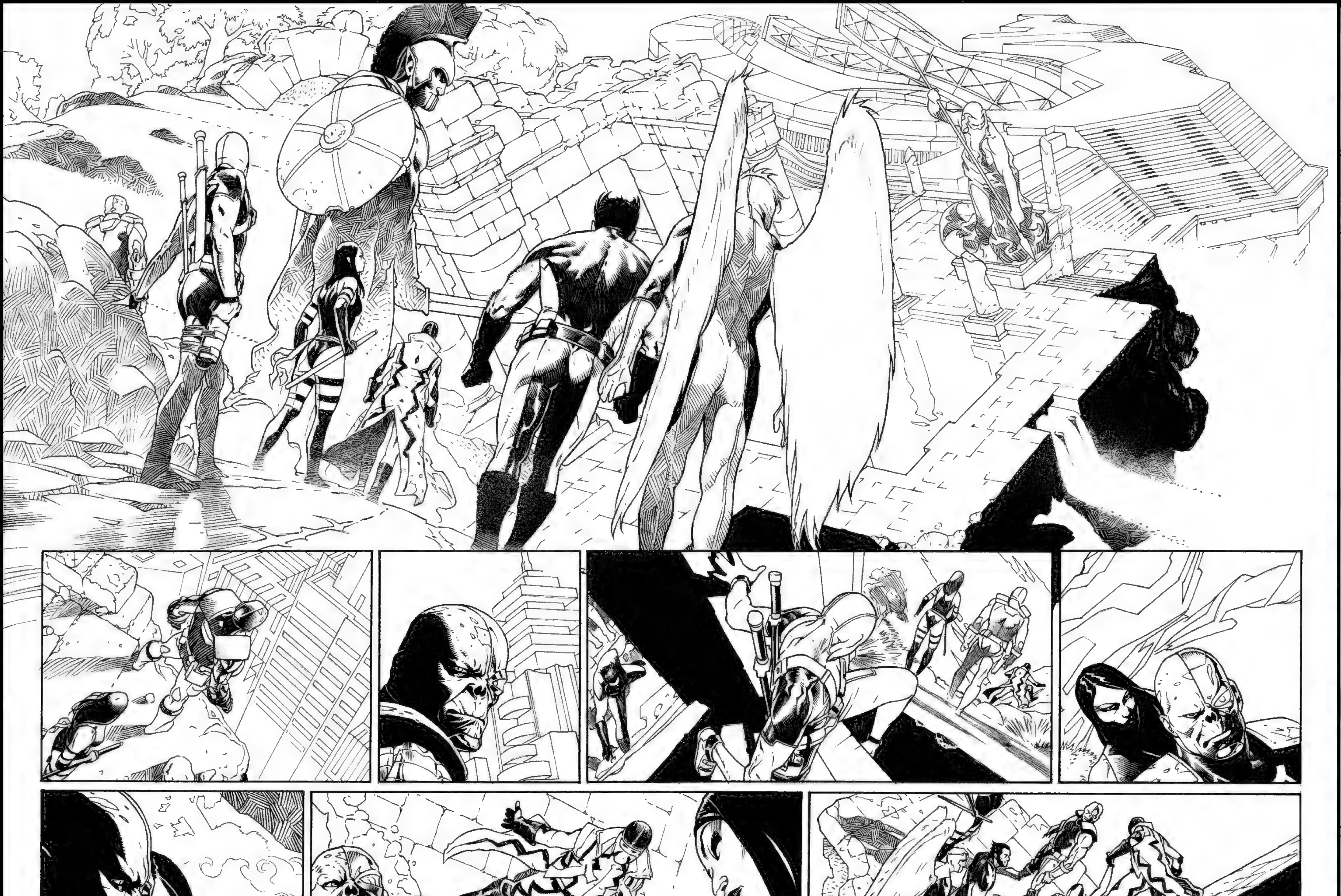
FANTOMEX

Good. The merc will come with me.


UX-FORCE 7 2
UX-FORCE 7 3

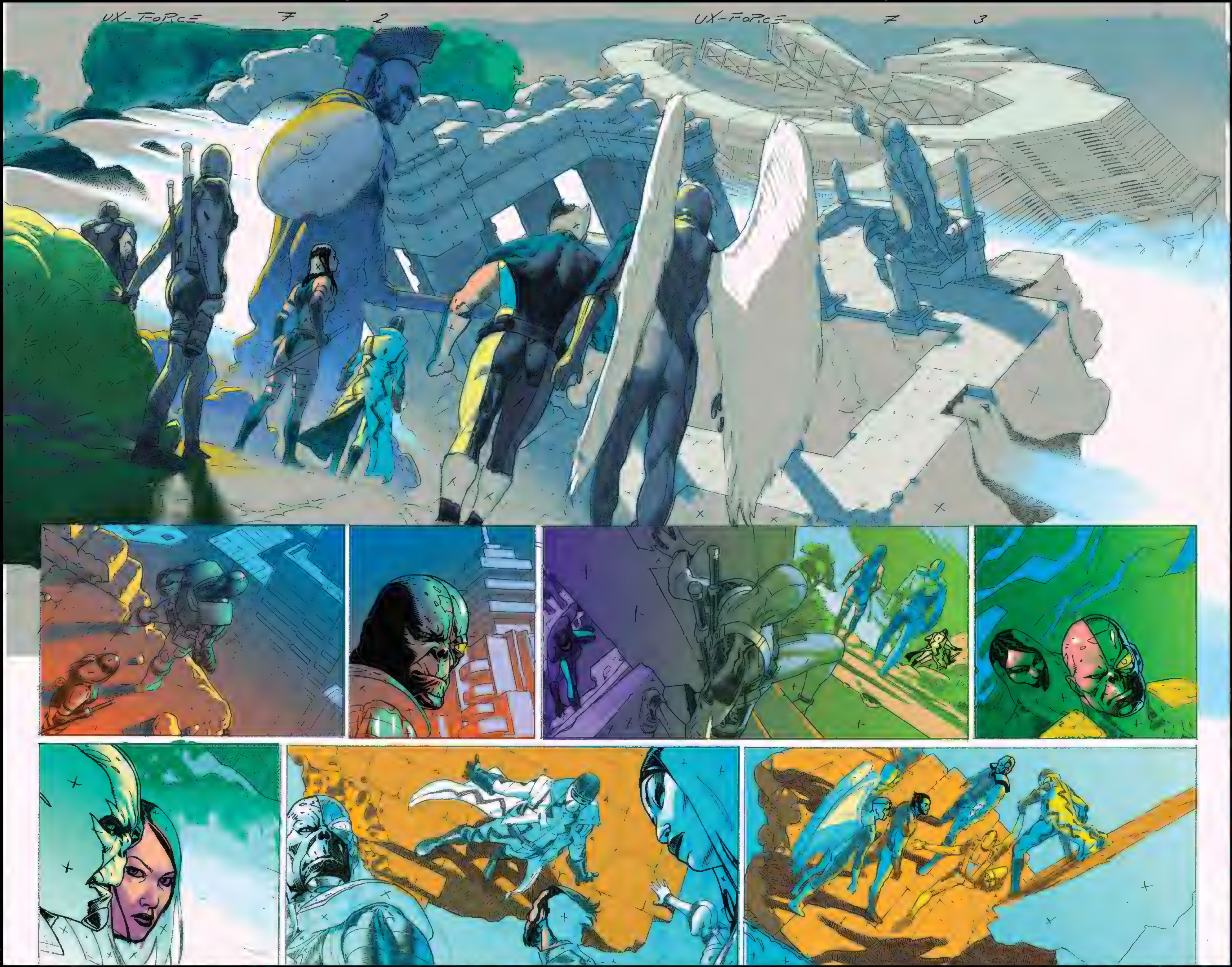
EVOLUTION OF A PAGE: *FROM SCRIPT TO COLORS*

07, PAGES 02-03 PENCILS BY ESAD RIBIĆ



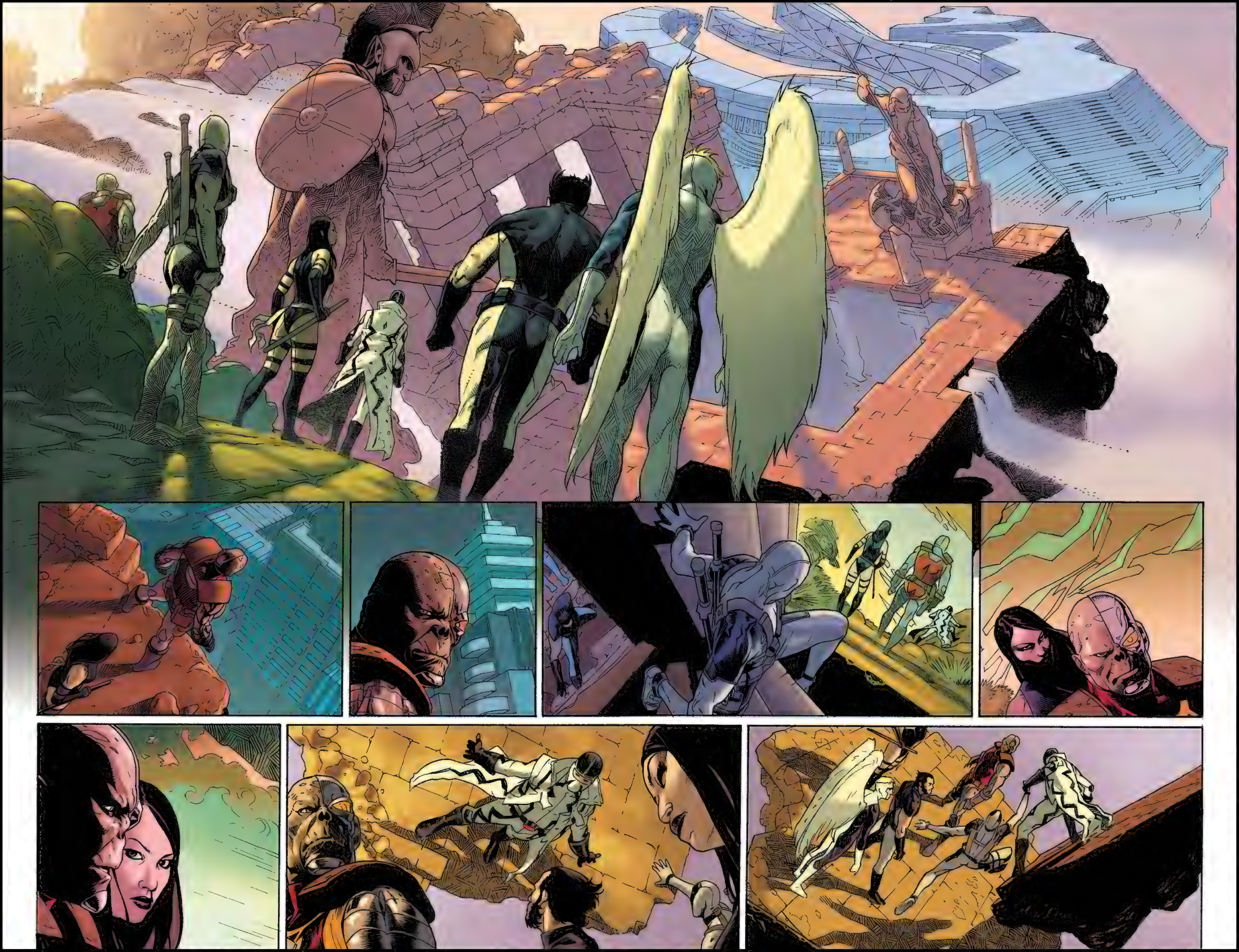
EVOLUTION OF A PAGE: *FROM SCRIPT TO COLORS*

07, PAGES 02-03 INKS BY JOHN LUCAS


UX-FORCE 7 2
UX-FORCE 7 3

EVOLUTION OF A PAGE: *FROM SCRIPT TO COLORS*

07, PAGES 02-03 LIGHTING GUIDE BY MATTHEW WILSON

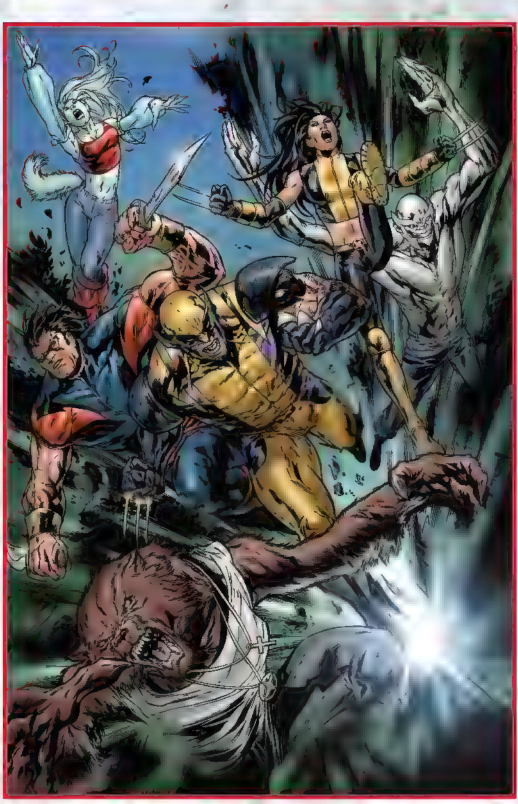


EVOLUTION OF A PAGE: *FROM SCRIPT TO COLORS*

07, PAGES 02-03 COLORS BY MATTHEW WILSON

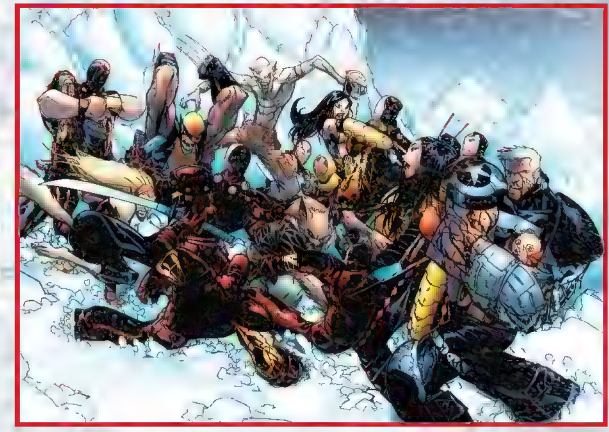
The history of X-FORCE

as told by Wolverine, from *All-New Wolverine Saga*

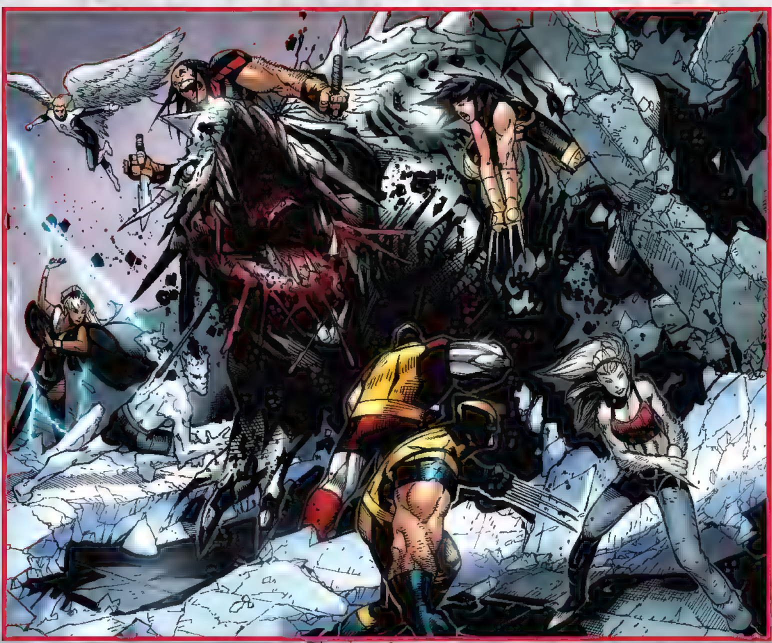


M-Day pretty much wiped out the mutant gene. Months passed an' not a single new mutant was born. But one day Cerebra detected a powerful mutant birth an' the X-Men raced to find her. Trouble was, so did Mr. Sinister's Marauders an' Stryker's Purifiers – and Cable, who snatched the baby an' went rogue.

The baby was too important to the mutant race to take chances – so Cyclops assembled all the X-Men's trackers and killers into one unit an' sent us to get her back at all costs. X-23, Warpath, Caliban, Wolfsbane, Hepzibah an' I became X-Force.

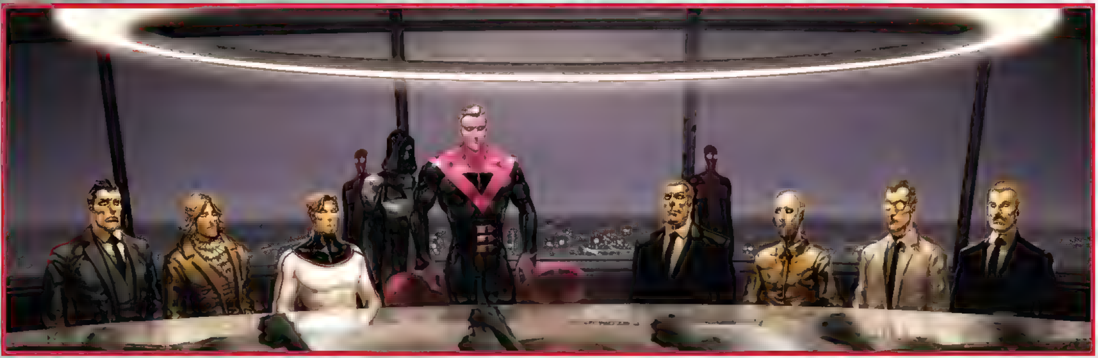


We rescued Cable from Lady Deathstrike an' the Purifiers – but Caliban was killed, an' Cable escaped with the kid. But the Marauders soon snatched the baby from Cable, an' so we regrouped with the X-Men to assault their base.



While the X-Men took down the Marauders, X-Force fought Predator X, who wanted to eat the kid – I finally let it swallow me an' killed it from the inside out. Cyclops ended up givin' Cable his blessing to raise the baby in the future – but Bishop, who'd turned traitor, shot at Cable an' missed, hitting Professor X in the head an' nearly killin' him.

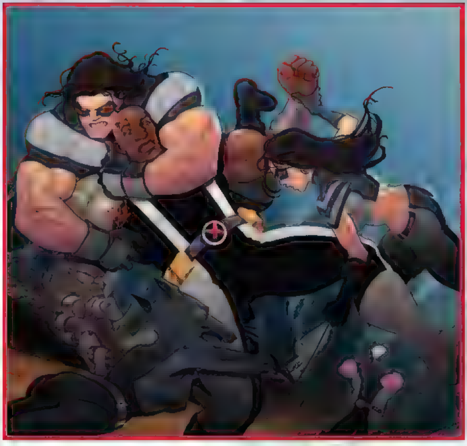
After that, Cyclops secretly kept X-Force around as a black-bag operation to deal with threats to mutantkind. He'd point us at a target, we'd kill our way to victory – an' the other X-Men could never know. Hepzibah quit, an' I tried to convince the others to do the same, that they couldn't live with this much blood on their hands like I could – but they were all as stubborn as me.



The Purifiers rebuilt the super-Sentinel Bastion, an' their leader Matthew Risman captured Wolfsbane – an' her twisted father, Reverend Craig, brainwashed her. Bastion then used the alien Techno-Organic Virus to resurrect a half-dozen of the X-Men's meanest human foes – bigots like Graydon Creed and Cameron Hodge.

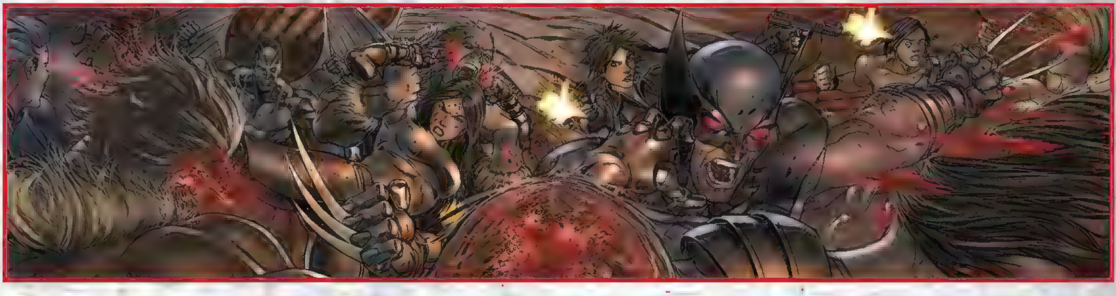
We rescued Wolfsbane, but when the Angel arrived, her brainwashing kicked in an' she snapped, savagely tore off his wings an' fled with them. Somehow, Angel's wings grew back – but he morphed back into the blue, metal-winged form that Apocalypse had given him years before: Archangel.

Bastion used the wings to create an army of winged soldiers, the Choir. We attacked their base, an enraged Archangel killed most of the Choir, an' X-23 took out Risman – but his flunky Eli Bard escaped with the T-O virus. An' poor Wolfsbane snapped again an' killed her own father.



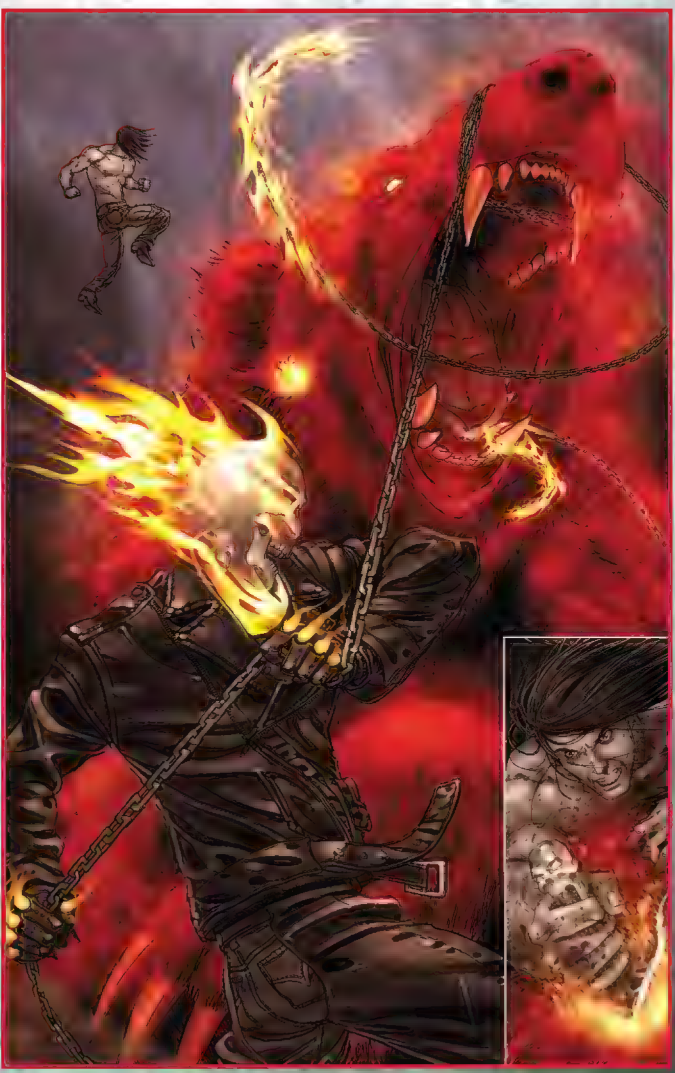
Bishop had been hunting Cable an' the baby through time, but when he came back to the present, X-Force captured him. Cyclops an' Emma interrogated him, but he faked us out an' escaped. Beast was angry about Cyclops' harsh new methods, but Cyclops had faith that makin' these tough calls was the right thing to do.

X-Force soldiered on. I attacked a Hydra base lookin' for the dad of a mutant girl who needed a bone marrow transplant – an' we helped the X-Men repel a Skrull invasion of San Francisco, where the X-Men had relocated to. Archangel joined the team, along with healer Elixir.

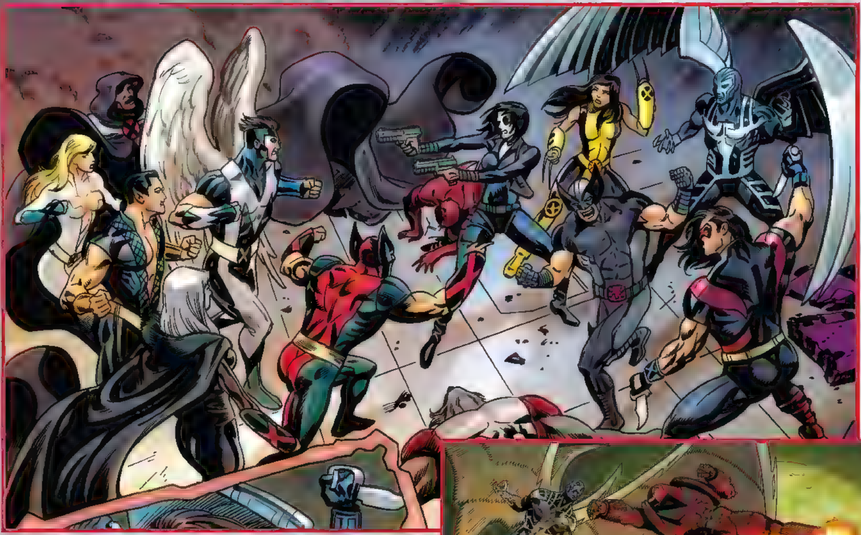


When Bastion hired the Vanisher to steal a sample of the mutant-killin' Legacy Virus, we tracked him down – an' ran into Domino, who joined up. Elixir gave Vanisher a brain tumor so we could blackmail him into takin' us to the lab – where we fought cloned Marauders an' Hodge's armored Right troops. We destroyed the Legacy sample, but Bastion had stolen more from a different lab.

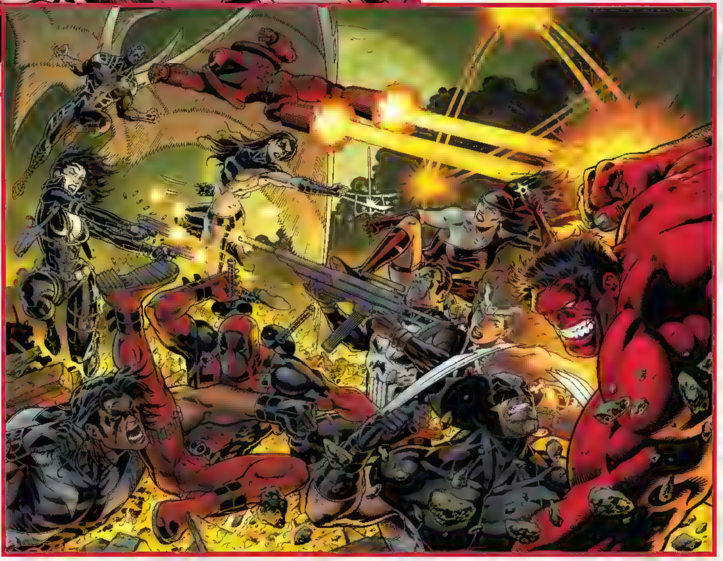
Warpath an' Ghost Rider fought an Apache spirit guide, driven crazy by a mystical dagger. They used the Ghost Dance ritual to reach the spirit plane, an' pulled the dagger out. The guide revealed that it had been attacked by Bard, who served the immortal Selene – an' who'd used the T-O virus to resurrect Caliban an' Warpath's dead brother Thunderbird.



Wolfsbane ran off with her old Asgardian boyfriend Hrimhari the wolf-prince. Soon after, mutant riots broke out in San Francisco an' Norman Osborn, director of HAMMER, imposed martial law. He brought in his "Dark Avengers" – villains publicly posin' as heroes – and created a team of "Dark X-Men" to boot.

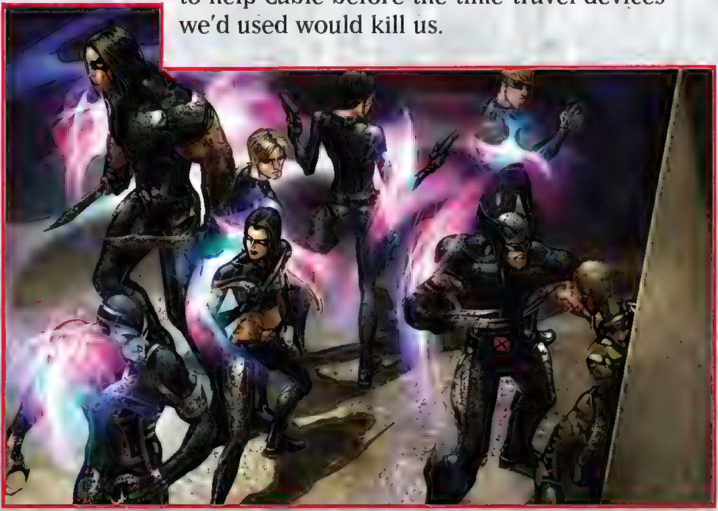


While X-Force rescued the mutants that Osborn had arrested, Cyclops transformed Magneto's old Asteroid M into a floatin' island called Utopia – foundin' a new nation just for mutants, where Osborn had no authority.



When Domino accidentally discovered the Red Hulk's true identity, he assembled a team of killers to silence her – but she brought in X-Force to even the odds. Eventually we compromised: she'd stay quiet if he promised not to tell the world about X-Force.

Bastion had been using Legacy to make kidnapped mutants' powers flare up publicly – but just as we were rescuin' three junior X-Men from him, Cyclops located Cable an' the baby in the future. Against our wills, he sent us forward – where we had 33 hours to help Cable before the time-travel devices we'd used would kill us.

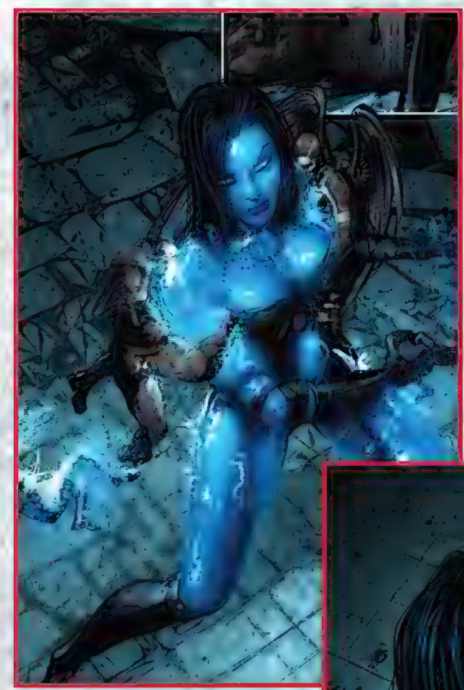


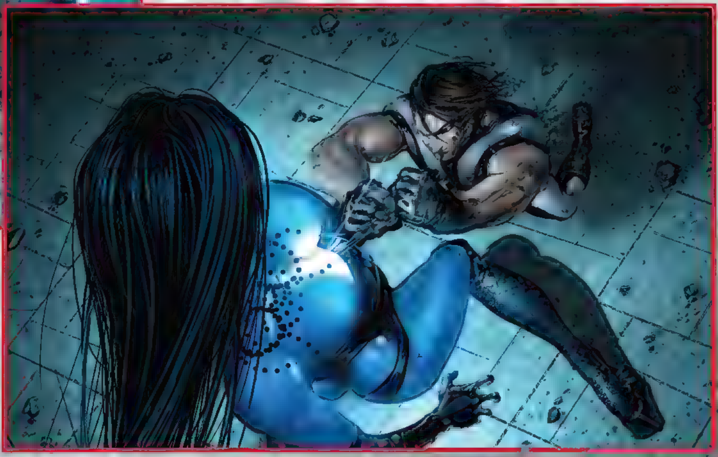
Bishop had allied with Cable's evil clone Stryfe — but instead of killing the kid, now nine years old an' named Hope, Stryfe wanted to use her as a host body. X-Force teamed up with Cable, an ancient Deadpool an' a dying Apocalypse, an' still barely managed to save Hope — leaving her with Cable an' heading home.

Arriving right when we left, we managed to save the junior X-Men, an' Elixir cured them of Legacy. Meanwhile, Wolfsbane an' Hrimhari fought Frost Giants an' she collapsed, and Eli Bard resurrected former X-Men student Cypher — part of Selene's plan to raise, then sacrifice, mutant souls to become a goddess.

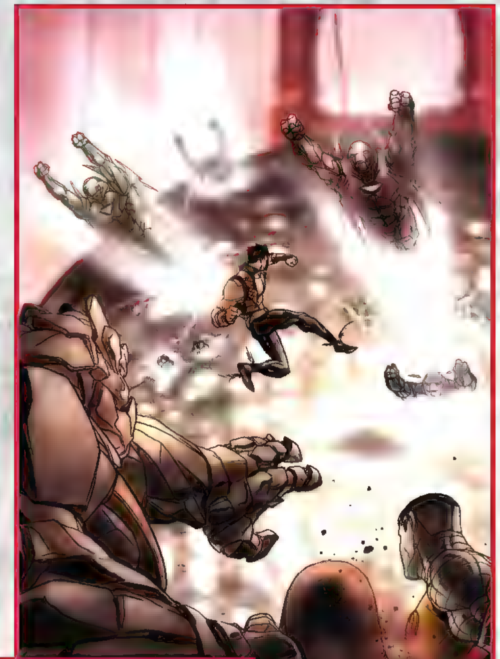
Selene sent a bunch of our resurrected friends an' enemies to attack Utopia — distractin' us while she resurrected the entire population of Genosha: a million mutant souls. Meanwhile, Hrimhari discovered that Wolfsbane was pregnant an' dying, an' traded his life to Asgardian death-goddess Hela to save hers.

Selene's allies abducted Warpath an' the mystic dagger, which she used to cast the spell sacrificin' all the resurrected souls. But usin' the Ghost Dance, X-Force fought Selene, an' Warpath stabbed her with the dagger, killin' her — and freein' everyone's souls, includin' his brother.

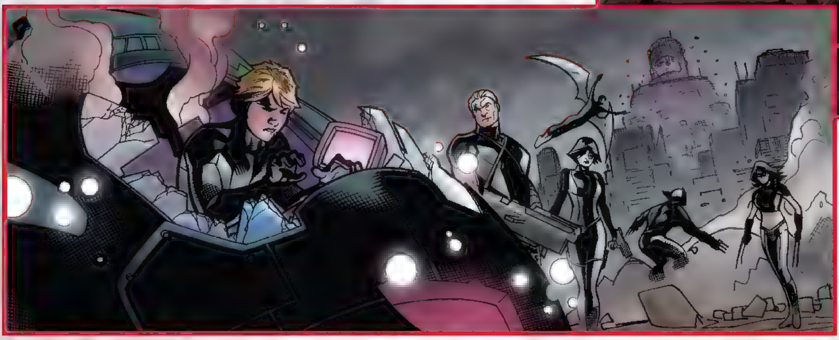




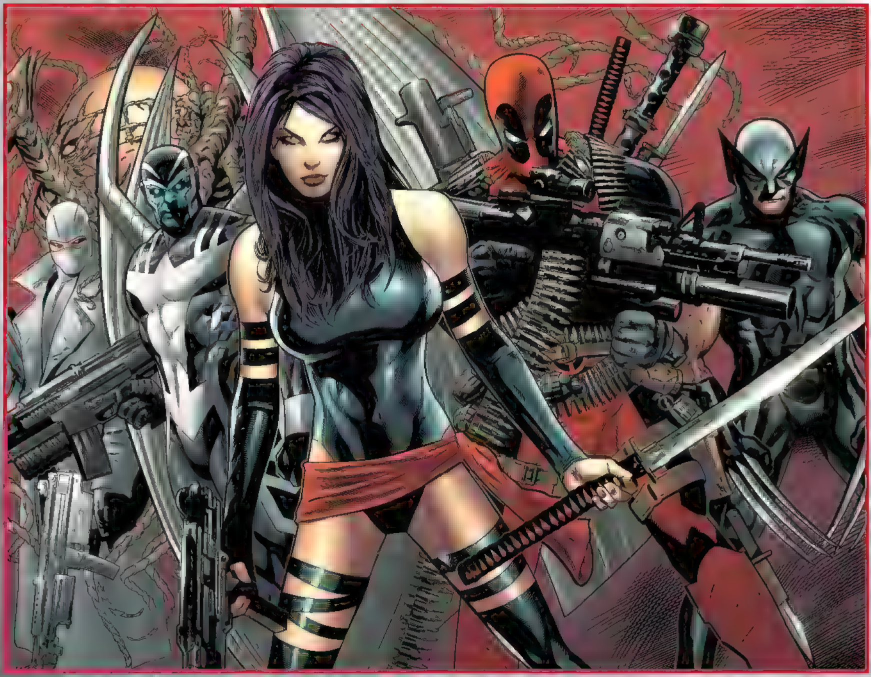
Wolfsbane, Elixir an' Warpath left the team after that — Elixir had removed Vanisher's tumor, but he stuck around anyway. But when Cable returned from the future with a grown-up Hope, Bastion launched his final attack. During the fight, the other X-Men found out about X-Force, an' they weren't pleased at all.



Bastion killed or incapacitated most of our teleporters — includin' Vanisher, an' my best pal Nightcrawler — an' opened a time portal to a future chock-full of Nimrod super-Sentinels. Cyclops sent X-Force and Cable to that future, along with Cypher, whose language powers let him reprogram the Nimrods' main CPU.



Cable sacrificed himself to get us back home just as Hope's powers manifested, destroying Bastion — an' somehow reversing M-Day, at least a little: Cerebra suddenly detected five newly-manifested mutants.



Looks like mutants' dark times might finally be comin' to an end — for a while, at least. But although Cyclops wants to disband X-Force, I know that other enemies will come callin' sooner or later. An' when they do, the X-Men are still gonna need a team that isn't afraid to make the hard choices. As far as Cyke knows, X-Force is over an' done — but me, Fantomex, Archangel, Psylocke an' Deadpool have a different opinion on that matter...

DARK FORCES AND BLACK OPS

Cover to *Uncanny X-Force* #4 by Esad Ribic.

UNCANNY X-FORCE

Writer Rick Remender Keeps Track Of The Good Guys' Kill List With A Stable Of Top-Flight Artists

By Chris Arrant

Since their inception in 1963, the mutant heroes known as the X-Men have carved a unique and sprawling niche in the world of comic books. They've gone everywhere – from the sewers of Manhattan to the outer reaches of known space, and even to alternate dimensions – and they've met their fair share of adversaries. And in this modern age when the mutant population is more a minority than ever, some of the threats they've been able to weather in the past could now be the death knell for them – and their entire species.

That's where X-Force comes in. In *Uncanny X-Force*, Wolverine and Archangel lead a team of mutants who aren't afraid to resort to extreme measures to ensure their survival. Bound together by personal tragedies of mistreatment and torture, they're a black-ops team operating under the radar to take out – as in, kill – the biggest threats their kind faces today. Unlike previous iterations that operated at some level in tandem with the larger mutant population, this new team is a secret known only to its members – and the secret is so raw that if their allies in the X-Men found out, it could spell the end for them all.

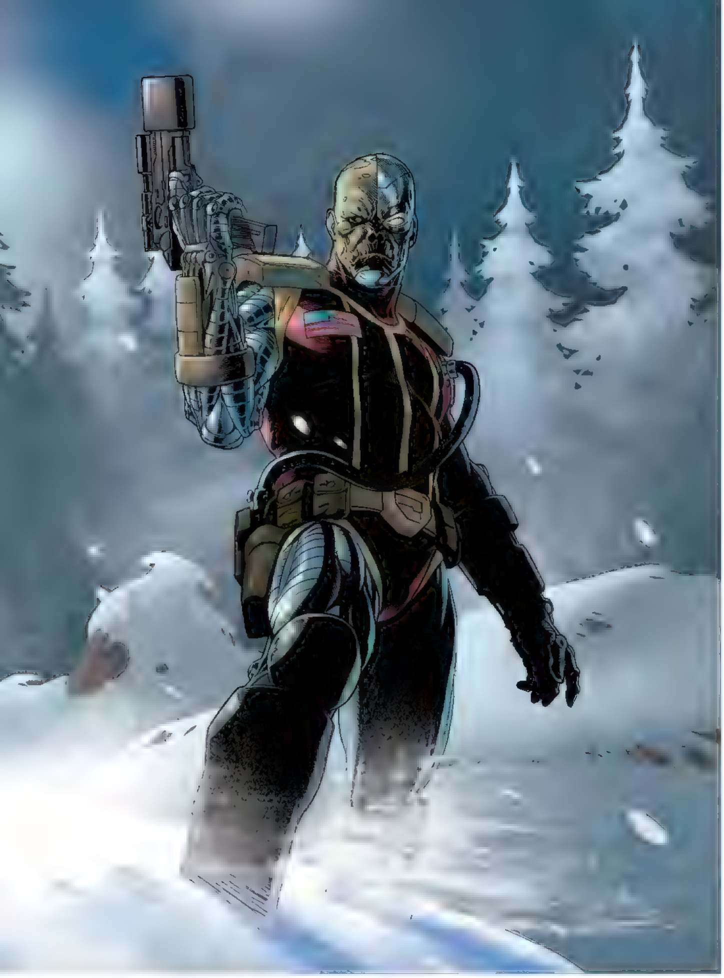
This new X-Force comes by way of writer Rick Remender. After proving himself with a number of well-received creator-owned series, Remender has become a rising star at the House of Ideas with work on *Punisher*, *Thunderbolts* and the new *Venom*. The debut issue of *Uncanny X-Force* was the highest-selling comic of the month, beating out all other titles at both Marvel and DC – and the hits have kept on coming since. Remender's worked with a murderer's row of talented artists, from Jerome Opeña to Rafael Albuquerque to Esad Ribic. He's teaming up with artist Billy Tan for the latest *Uncanny X-Force* arc, which leads into the much-hyped "Dark Angel Saga."

SPOTLIGHT: **What's the current situation like in *Uncanny X-Force*?**

RICK: You've got a small band of five mutants who all agree that threats against mutants need to be

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW CLOSE THE VOTE WAS.
VOTE?
IF WE WERE GOING TO LEAVE YOU TO DIE OR NOT.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE: Fantomex, Wolverine, Psylocke, Archangel and Deadpool make one, big happy family as X-Force. (Art from *UXF #6* by Esad Ribic.)



YOU'VE GOT A "FRIEND": Deathlok joins the fray alongside Fantomex in *UXF #5*. (Art by Ribic.)

preemptively hit instead of waiting for the likes of Apocalypse, Mr. Sinister or whoever to rain down fire from hell. X-Force is a band of mutants that'll take them down with extreme prejudice.

They're all characters who have something in their past – a similar event that's tainted them and cast a shadow on their souls. These are the people uniquely qualified for this kind of thing. Since they're capable of killing, they'll take on these terrible missions so other people don't have to.

The first arc of *Uncanny X-Force* dealt with Apocalypse and the idea of the villain being recast as a young boy. The second arc shows the affects that killing Apocalypse had, and the future comes back to try and wipe them out. After those arcs, we started to slowly build toward the "Dark Angel Saga" that starts in #11, with issue #10 being the prologue.

Once people see the events of *Uncanny X-Force #10* in a few weeks, the bigger picture will be pretty clear.

> "(There are) two personas inside the head of Warren Worthington III: Warren and Archangel."
>
> – Remender on the "Dark Angel Saga"

SPOTLIGHT: What can you tell us about "The Dark Angel Saga" as it begins in #10?

RICK: Well, you've got two personas inside the head of Warren Worthington III: Warren and Archangel. It's never really been divulged what Archangel is, and what it means to be Death in Apocalypse's Four Horsemen. Apocalypse keeps making these new Deaths for each iteration, but it's never truly been explained what they are. Starting in #10, we're going to discover what they are in a pretty inconvenient way.

Warren's been able to keep the Archangel persona in check with Betsy's help, but something happens that nobody sees coming that leads the team to make Warren's personality crisis their priority. And because of the killings and covert ops they've done as X-Force, they can't tell anyone outside the group or ask for help.

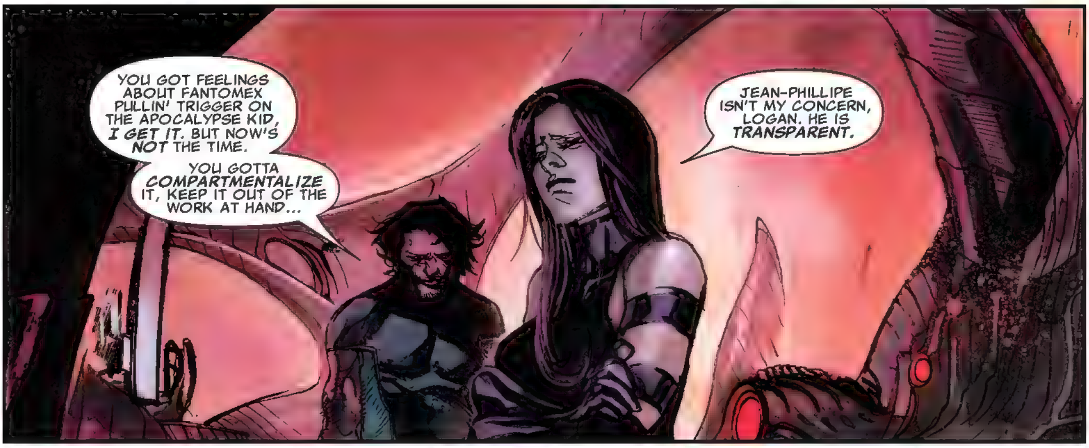
SPOTLIGHT: Warren is a founding member of the X-Men, yet he still couldn't go to Cyclops and his friends on Utopia for help?

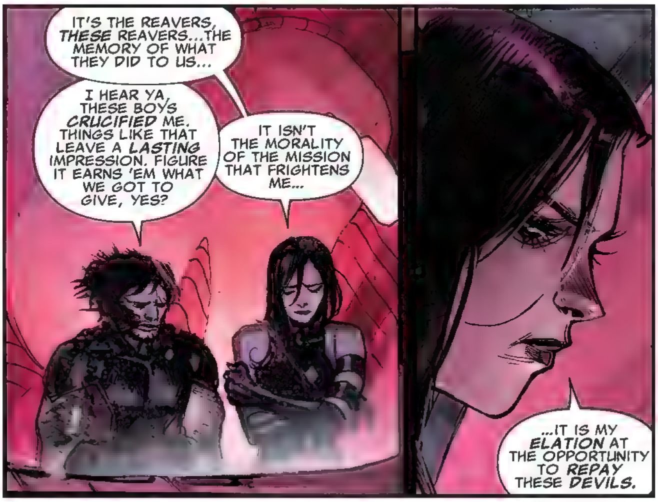
RICK: No, because then they'd have to reveal what caused it all and what they've done. They can't tell anyone they assassinated a 10-year-old boy, even if he was Apocalypse. X-Force's terrible missions have bound them together as a family unit, and they have to turn to one another for everything.

SPOTLIGHT: But Warren's not just a member of X-Force. He's a co-captain with Wolverine as set out in the debut issue. How does this faltering of one of their leaders affect the team?

RICK: That's one of the key issues, and we're going to be dealing with what happens when those two can no longer agree with each other.

SPOTLIGHT: As you said, the secret shared by the members of X-Force has hung over their heads for a while now. If Cyclops knew what Logan's crew was up to behind the


YOU GOT FEELINGS ABOUT FANTOMEX PULLIN' TRIGGER ON THE APOCALYPSE KID, I GET IT. BUT NOW'S NOT THE TIME.
YOU GOTTA COMPARTMENTALIZE IT, KEEP IT OUT OF THE WORK AT HAND...
JEAN-PHILLIPE ISN'T MY CONCERN, LOGAN. HE IS TRANSPARENT.


IT'S THE REAVERS, THESE REAVERS...THE MEMORY OF WHAT THEY DID TO US...
I HEAR YA, THESE BOYS CRUCIFIED ME. THINGS LIKE THAT LEAVE A LASTING IMPRESSION. FIGURE IT EARNS 'EM WHAT WE GOT TO GIVE, YES?
IT ISN'T THE MORALITY OF THE MISSION THAT FRIGHTENS ME...
...IT IS MY ELATION AT THE OPPORTUNITY TO REPAY THESE DEVILS.

MORAL CROSSROADS: Underpinning every violent act performed by X-Force is a serious ethical quandary for its members. (Art from *UXF #5.1* by Rafael Albuquerque.)

scenes, it'd tear things apart. In issue #9, we saw Magneto learn the secret and use it against them to accomplish one of his own goals – but how big will the secret play into the title, and the X-Men line as a whole?

RICK: This plays into the teaser image on a level that I don't think people will anticipate at all. There's an inherent hypocrisy in a lot of what's coming up in the book, and that philosophical divide and hypocrisy causes the drama – or some of it, anyway. X-Force plays a big role in what's coming up for the X-line, but I don't think the rug will be pulled out from under them when people expect it to.

X-Force's secret missions are a kind of Sword of Damocles hanging over their head, and Magneto learning about it and using it against them clearly adds new tension to it.

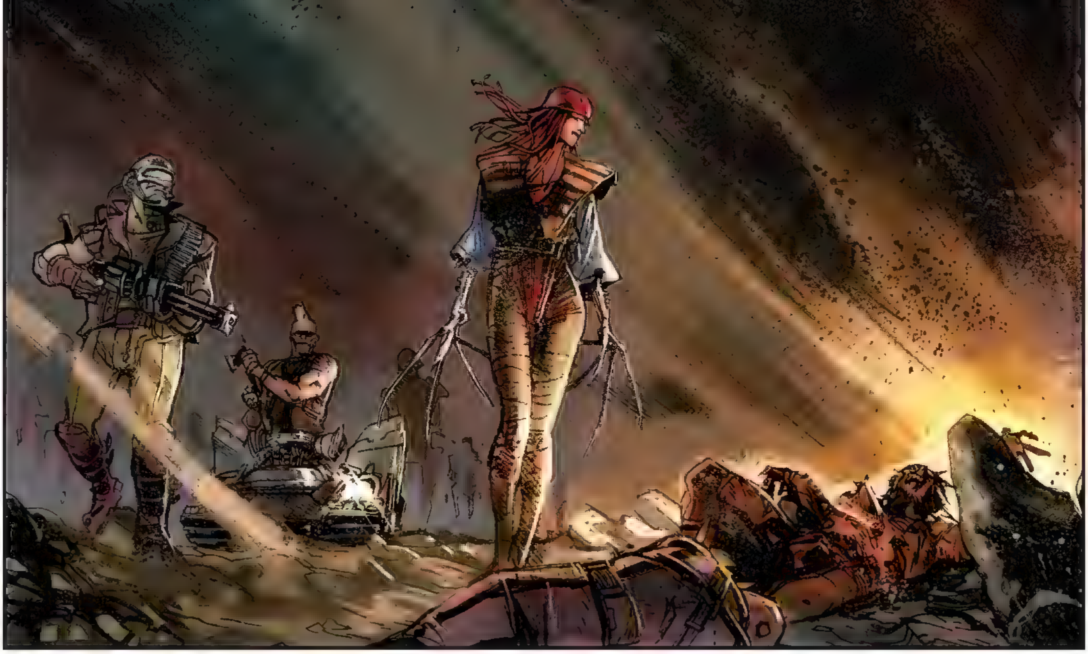
SPOTLIGHT: **We recently saw the induction of Deathlok into the book with the "Deathlok Nation" story arc. What's his role now with the covert team?**

RICK: Deathlok becomes the guard dog of Cavern-X, the team's base in Sedona, Arizona. In recent issues, it's become home to the World – a giant, self-contained world where time can be fast-forwarded, rewound and changed with test subjects inside. It was an invention of Weapon Plus – the people who created Wolverine, Nuke, Fantomex and Deadpool, among others. As we saw in the "Deathlok Nation" arc, the World can be full of trouble in the wrong hands – and Deathlok Prime is very aware of this and takes up guarding it here in Cavern-X.

SPOTLIGHT: **Having read through all the issues thus far, it reveals either a longtime X-Men fan or someone who's extraordinary with research – or both – is behind this. You've had the Reavers, Deathstrike, Shadow King, Apocalypse and Ozymandius. Can you tell us about your knowledge of the X-titles of old?**

RICK: Well, I'm a huge X-Men fan. X-Men were a passion as a child. I started collecting around 1984 or '85, and became sort of fanatical. This was before trade paperbacks and collections. I spent weekends mowing lawns to put together the funds to go out and buy back issues to fill in gaps in my collection. And they're not cheap – even back then. At the time, all of the Claremont/Byrne issues were going for $20 to $40 an issue – and the Lee/Kirby issues were crazy expensive, as were the Neal Adams issues. But that made it all the more exciting as a kid.

But that hunt was fun. I was putting together pieces of a universe. Around 1992, I became a manager of a comic shop and worked there for three years. And during that time, I pieced together an entire *Uncanny X-Men* run in mint condition. And since I was working in a shop, I was also able to dip into any side stories and spinoffs that I had missed out on at that point.



DEATHSTRIKE UNLEASHED: This gorgeous, painterly panel by Albuquerque featuring X-Force's mortal foe is a hallmark of *UXF*'s prestigious corps of talented artists. (Art from *UXF #5.1*.)

SPOTLIGHT: **And how does that play out into your plan for *Uncanny X-Force*?**

RICK: It's important to me that the book not feel like a fringe book, but important to the X-titles and Marvel as a whole. Going back to those *Uncanny X-Men* issues I collected, I worked to retain the things I found enjoyable about the books I grew up with. For the appearance of Deathstrike and the Reavers in *Uncanny X-Force #5.1*, I went back and re-read *Uncanny X-Men #200-250* to get into Chris Claremont's head and how he characterized each of them. After that, I moved forward to brush up on what has been done with the characters since.

All of this knowledge has helped my work with the editors to plan out things that readers won't even begin to see until the second year of the book. I like to seed things early on, and then have them pay off much later.

RICK REMENDER: COLLECTED EDITIONS

He's taking on Wolverine's black-ops task force in *Uncanny X-Force*, but Rick Remender's been doing a few things with Punisher you might want to take a look at!

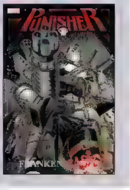
Uncanny X-Force
The Apocalypse Solution

Uncanny X-Force:
The Apocalypse Solution Premiere HC/TPB
Collects *Uncanny X-Force #1-4* and more
By Rick Remender and Jerome Opeña
Apocalypse has returned – reborn as an innocent child – and the only way X-Force can stop him is to kill him quickly, before he can gather his full powers!

Dark Reign
Punisher
Rick Remender
Jerome Opeña

Punisher: Dark Reign Premiere HC/TPB
Collects *Punisher (2009) #1-5* and more
By Rick Remender and Jerome Opeña
Remender's first go-around with Uncanny X-Force *artist Jerome Opeña finds Frank Castle in an Osborn-dominated world.*

Punisher: Dead End Premiere HC/TPB
Collects *Punisher (2009) #6-10* and *Annual #1*
By Rick Remender, Tan Eng Huat and Jason Pearson
Punisher goes for the kill against the Hood, and goes mano a mano against Spider-Man!



Punisher: Franken-Castle HC/TPB
Collects *Punisher (2009) #11-16, Franken-Castle #17-21* and more
By Rick Remender, John Romita Jr., Jefte Palo and more
After the son of Wolverine kills him, the Punisher joins the Legion of Monsters in one of the most insane stories in modern Marvel history – and one of its most popular!

SPOTLIGHT: **You've worked with an all-star slate of artists on the book: Jerome, Esad, Rafael and now Billy. How do you keep doing it?**

RICK: I've been really lucky. Jerome Opeña and I have been working together for around six years now. It's pretty well-established that we, as well as me and Tony Moore, like to work together. I'd like to keep working with them throughout the rest of my career. It's nice to have buddies you keep working with. There's an inherent value coming out of long-term partnerships like that.

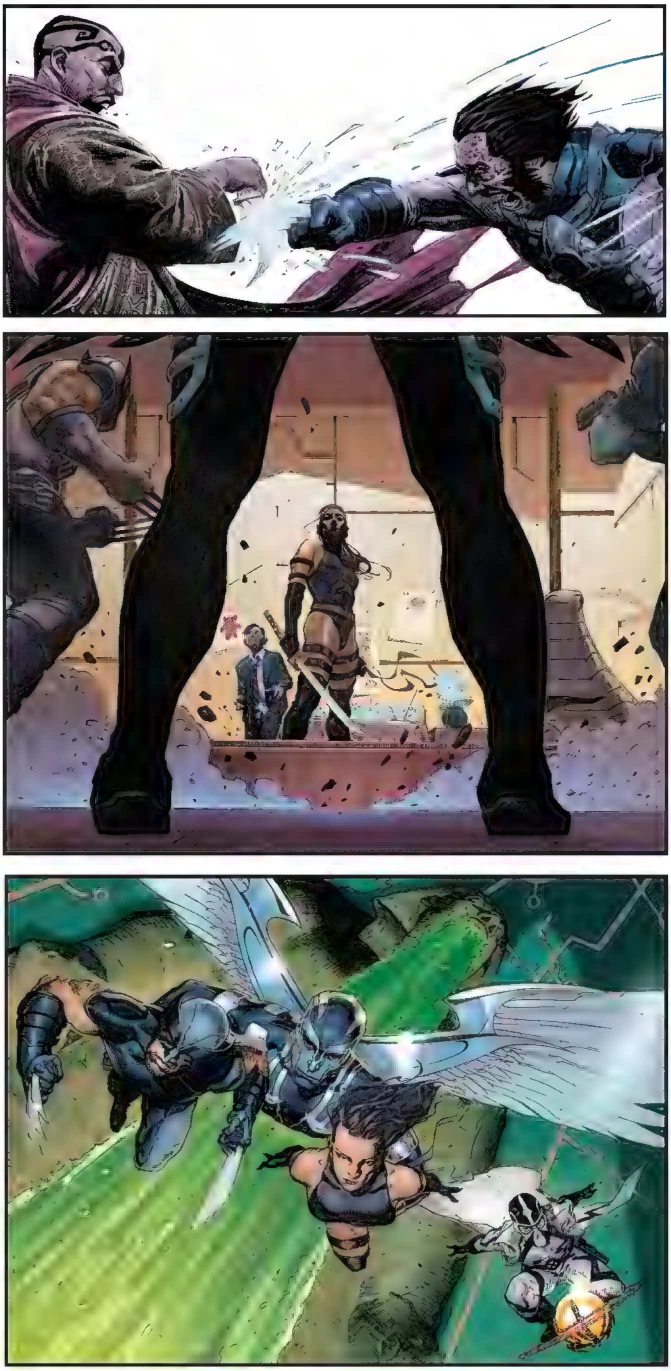
As for #5.1 artist Rafael Albuquerque, I've been trying to work with him since 2006. We pitched numerous projects to DC while I worked there, and we also tried to get some creator-owned projects off the ground. We were hired a couple times, but it fell part. I always wanted Rafael to be one of the guys I wrap my wing around and selfishly keep for all the books I write. Issue #5.1 was very fortuitous for us to be able to finally work together. Editor Jody LeHeup went out of his way to secure Rafael for the book, and it came out great.

Working with Esad Ribic was something I believe Axel Alonso put together. Axel and I were both friends with Esad, and we realized Esad had some open time coming up. And so we asked, and he agreed. I love his work. He's such a brilliant and genius storyteller. He's one of those few guys who are not only an amazing illustrator, but also an amazing storyteller.

SPOTLIGHT: **In general, though, have you thought about how you've become such an artist magnet?**

RICK: I chalk it up to my background as an artist. I write very visual scripts, and I've been fortunate enough to have amazing artists want to work with me. It's a welcome side effect to being a visually minded person. I get to work with the best of the best.

SPOTLIGHT: **Although the X-Force name had been around long before, you really broke the mold here and made it your own. The first issue outsold the flagship *Uncanny X-Men* title and all the comics that came out that month. Now that you're wrapping up your first year on the book, what do you think of what you and the artists and Marvel have been able to accomplish here?**



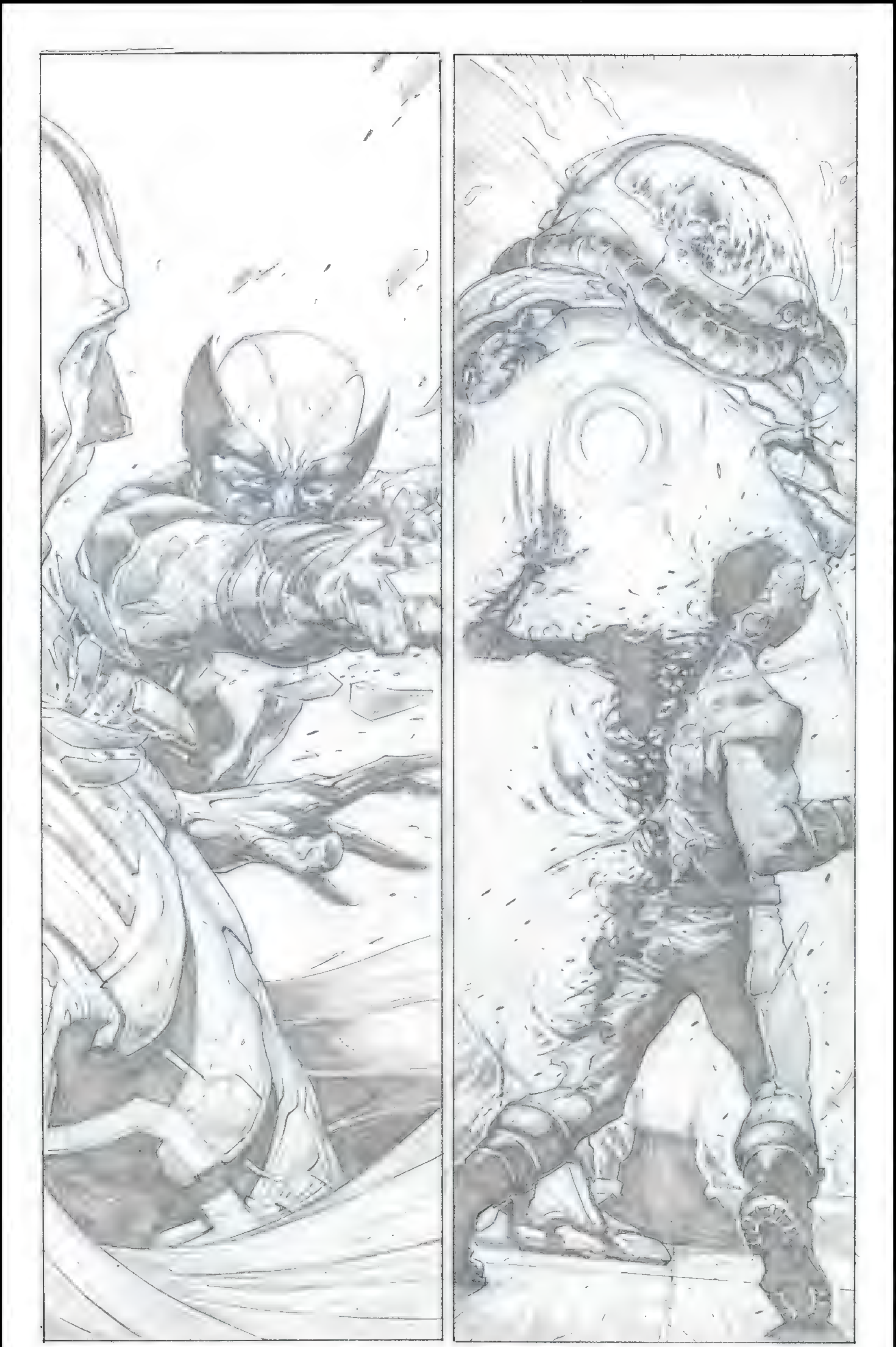
ESCAPE FROM APOCALYPSE: The first four issues of *UXF* set the tone for Remender's "Dark Angel Saga." (Art from *UXF #4* by Jerome Opeña.)

RICK: I've been fortunate enough to work with two great editors with Axel and Jody. They have amazing feel for stories, and they work very hard on every single book. We've also been lucky to have top-level artists draw the book – including our colorists Dean White and Matt Wilson, who make it look beautiful.

I feel a lot of weight working with such a crack team. There's a lot of pressure, but you can't take shortcuts. I hacked out one story four years ago, and it still haunts me. Every comic is someone's first – so it's important to me that if they're spending $4 on a book, they're getting their money's worth.

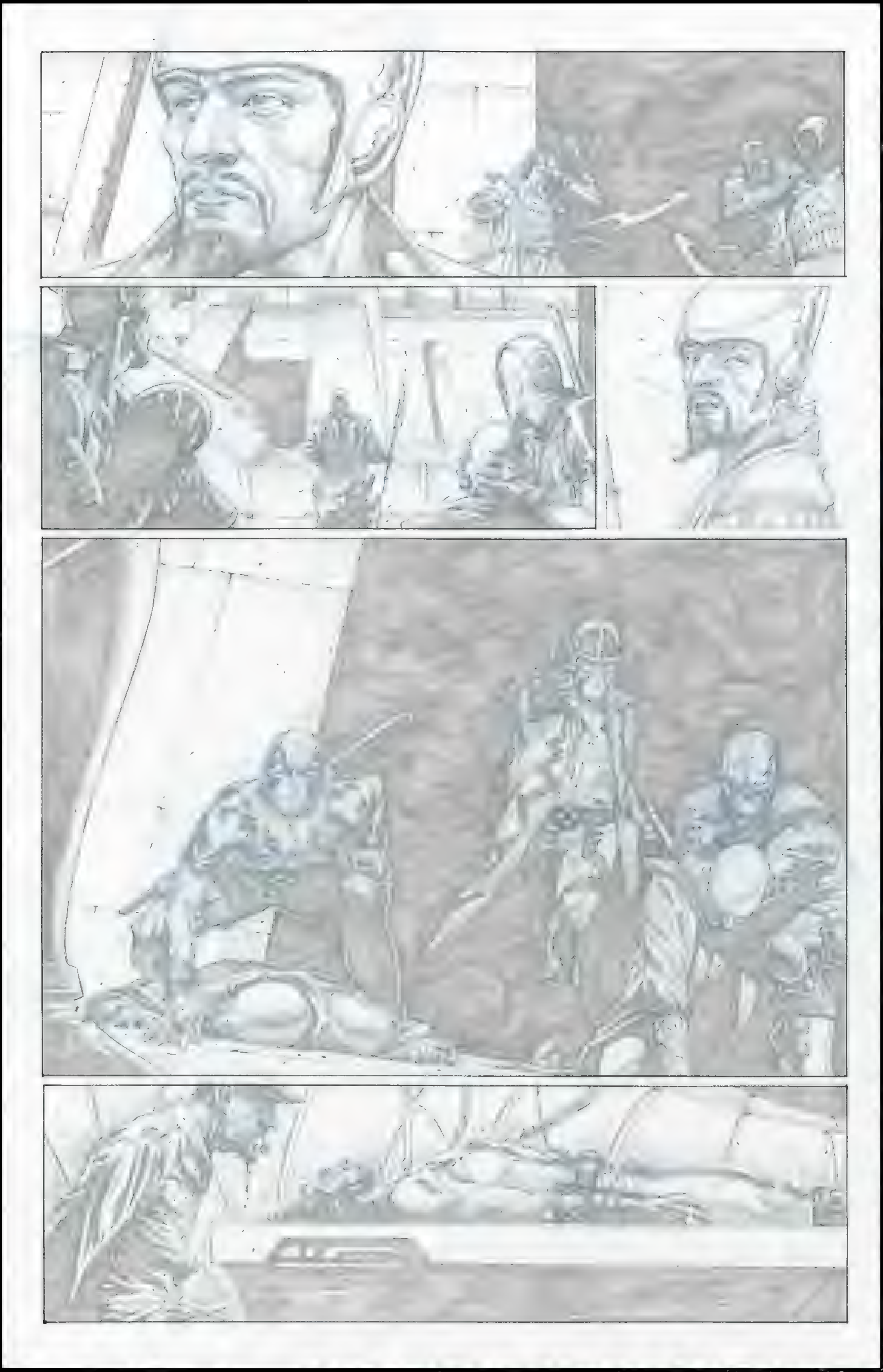
I think we've made some good comics here. The important thing is that they're intelligent and have heart. It'd be easy for this book to be about the shock value of heroes willing to kill, but we play that to establish a unique situation for these characters to open up with. My approach is to treat every single kill as a big moment. It shouldn't be casual; it shouldn't be easy. We build on the killing with intellect and my knowledge of each character's history to really tell a three-dimensional comic.

Catch the prologue to the "Dark Angel Saga" in May's UXF #10 *by Rick Remender and Billy Tan!* •



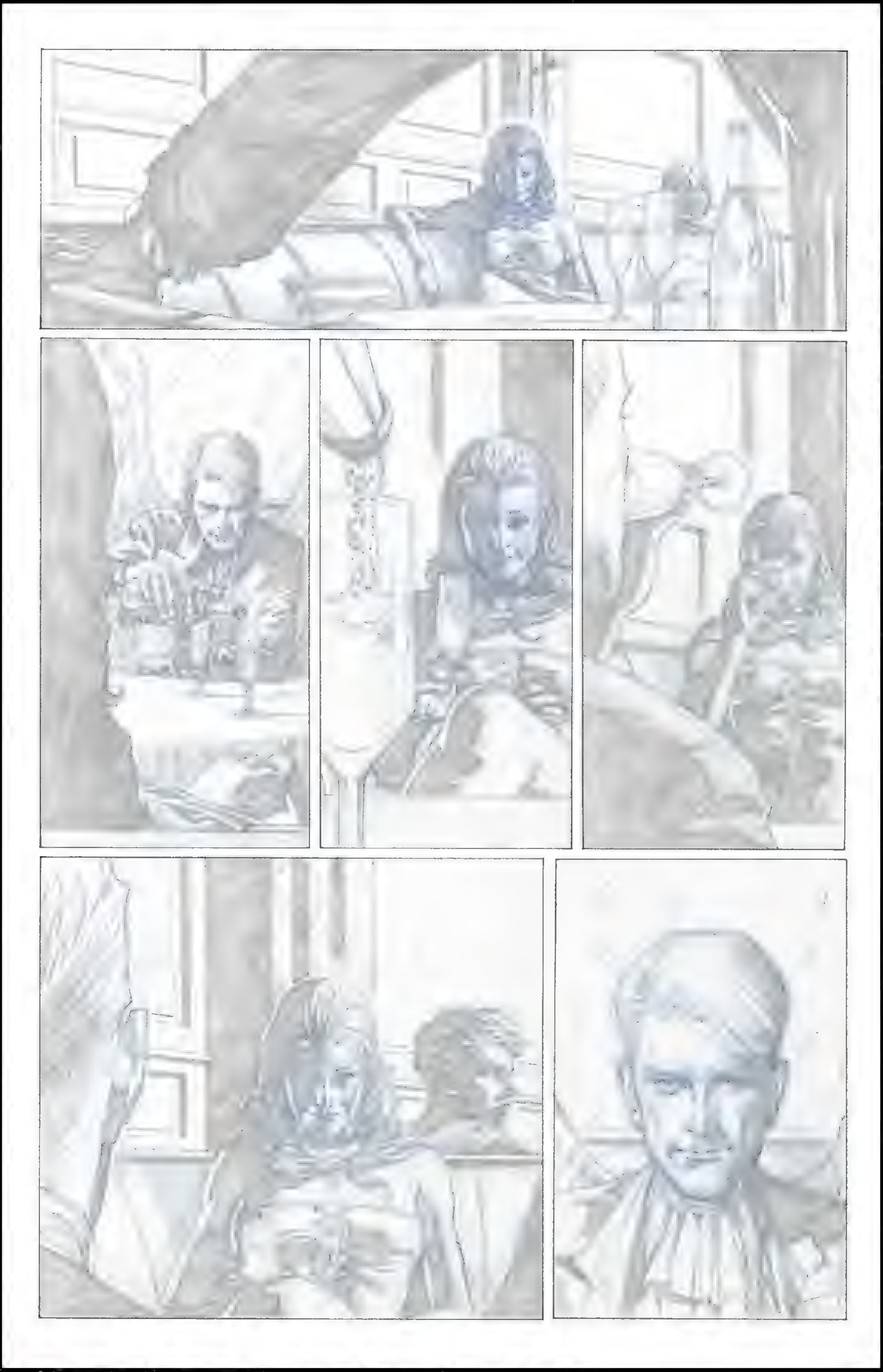
UNCANNY X-FORCE 14, PAGE 08 PENCILS

BY JEROME OPEÑA



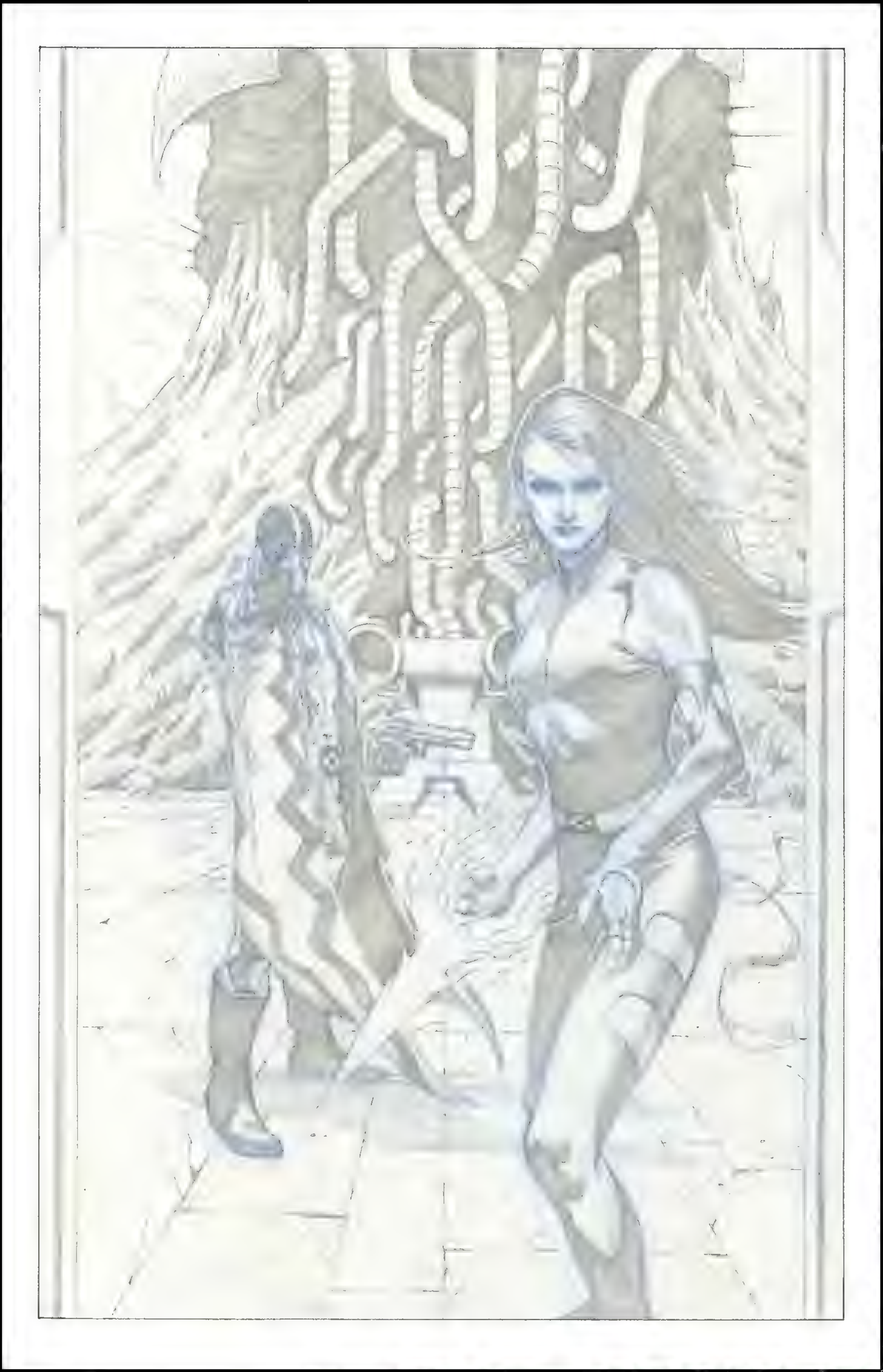
UNCANNY X-FORCE 16, PAGE 02 PENCILS

BY JEROME OPEÑA



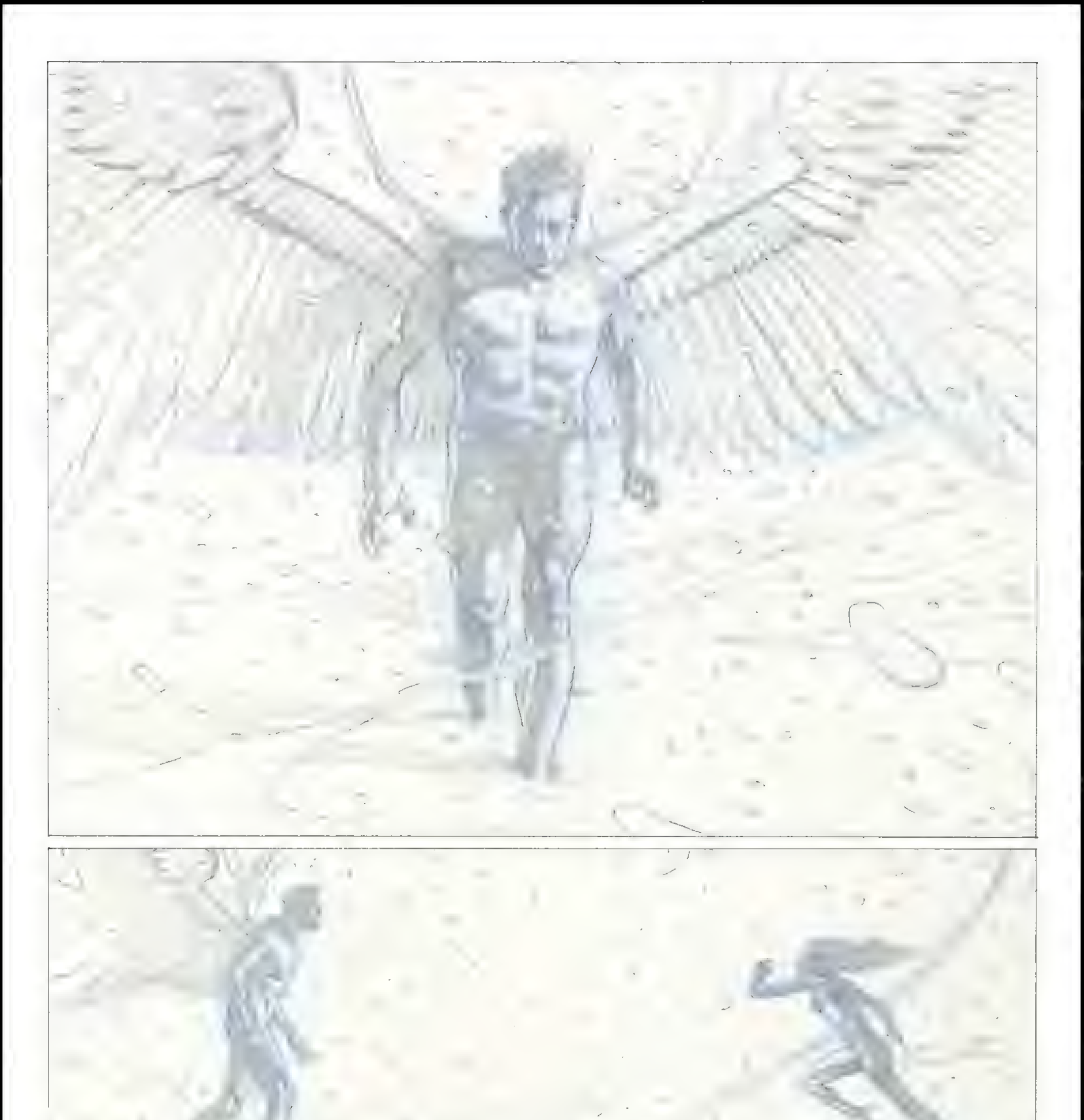
UNCANNY X-FORCE 17, PAGE 03 PENCILS

BY JEROME OPEÑA



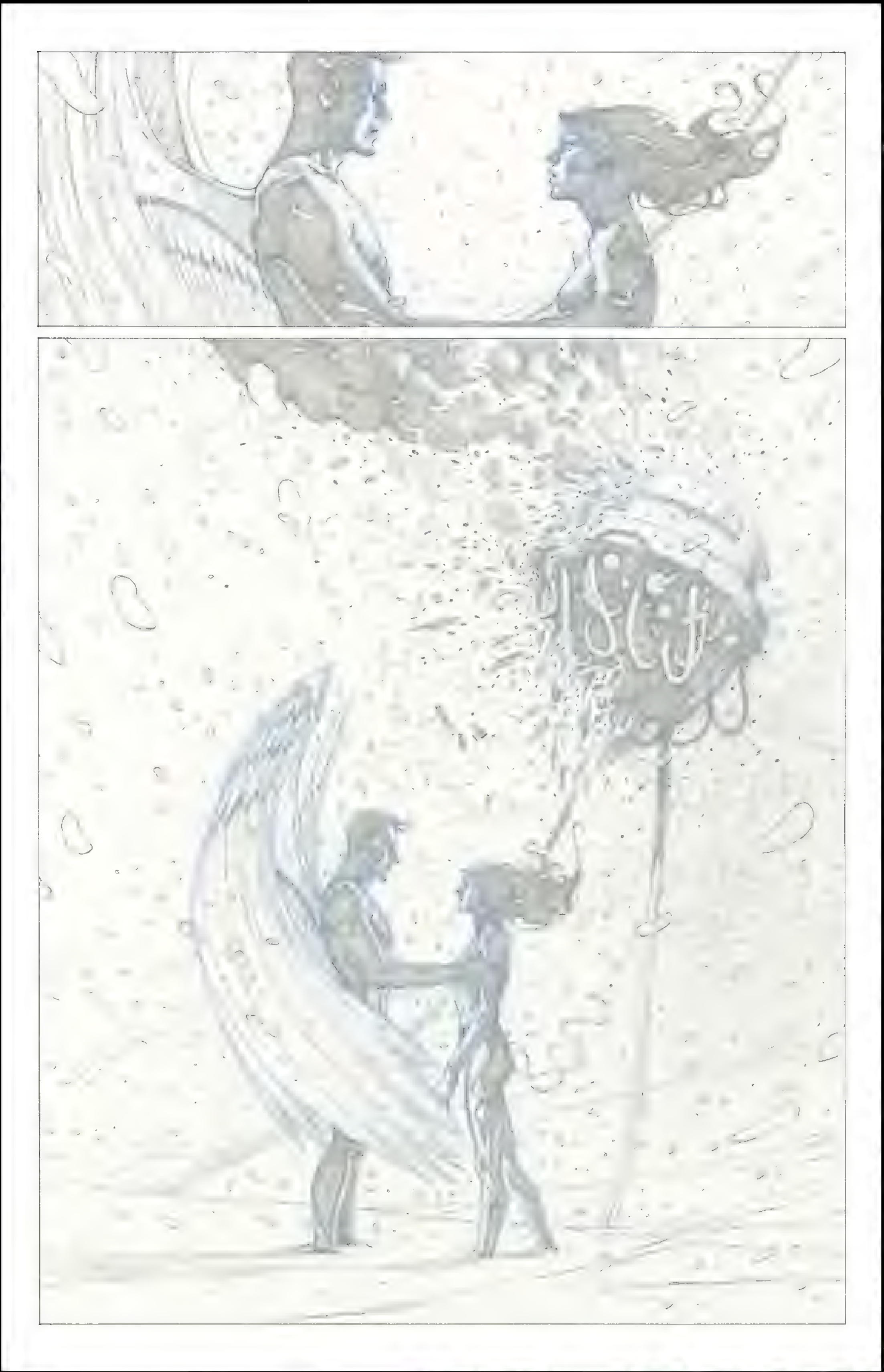
UNCANNY X-FORCE 17, PAGE 20 PENCILS

BY JEROME OPEÑA



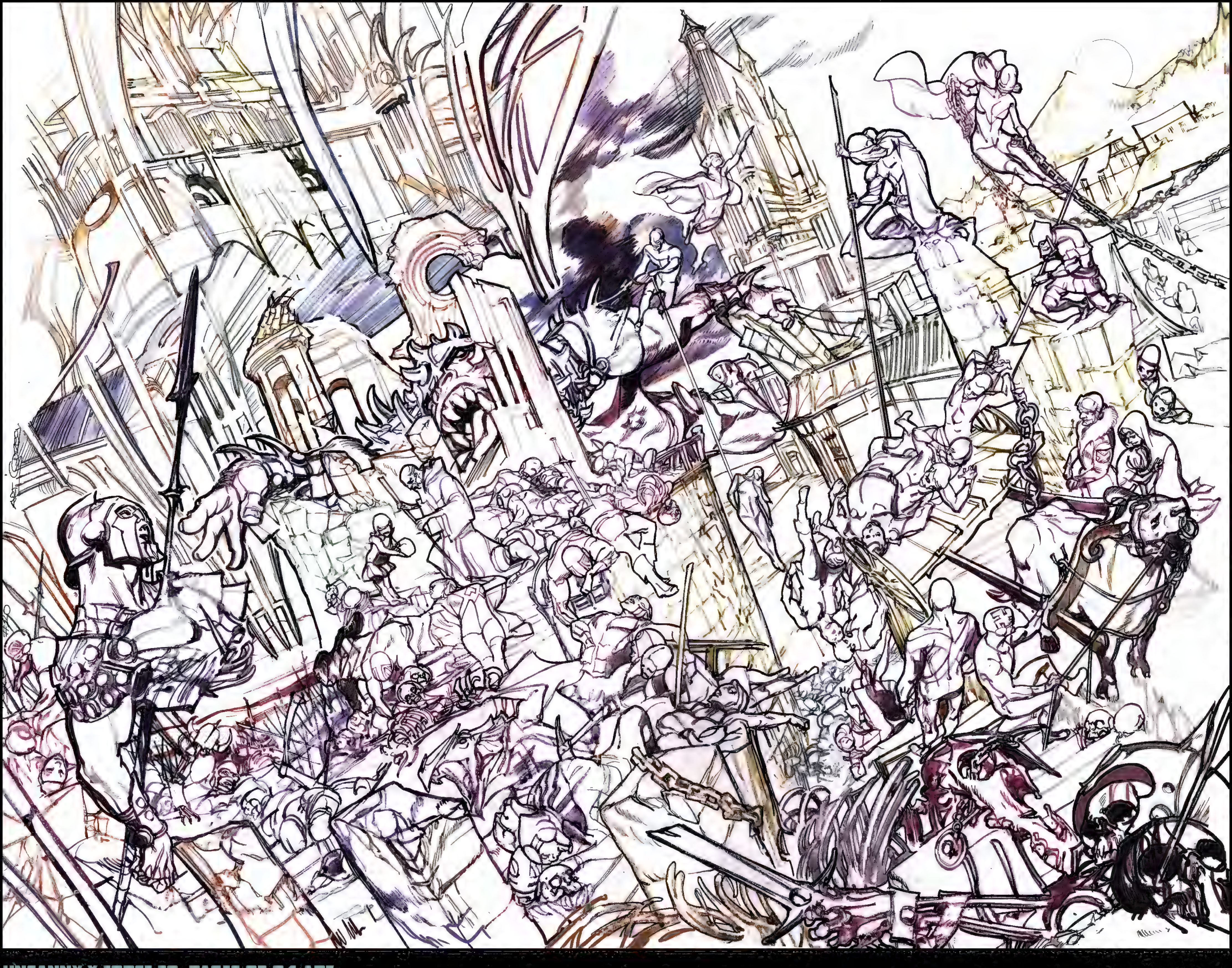
UNCANNY X-FORCE 18, PAGE 21 PENCILS

BY JEROME OPEÑA



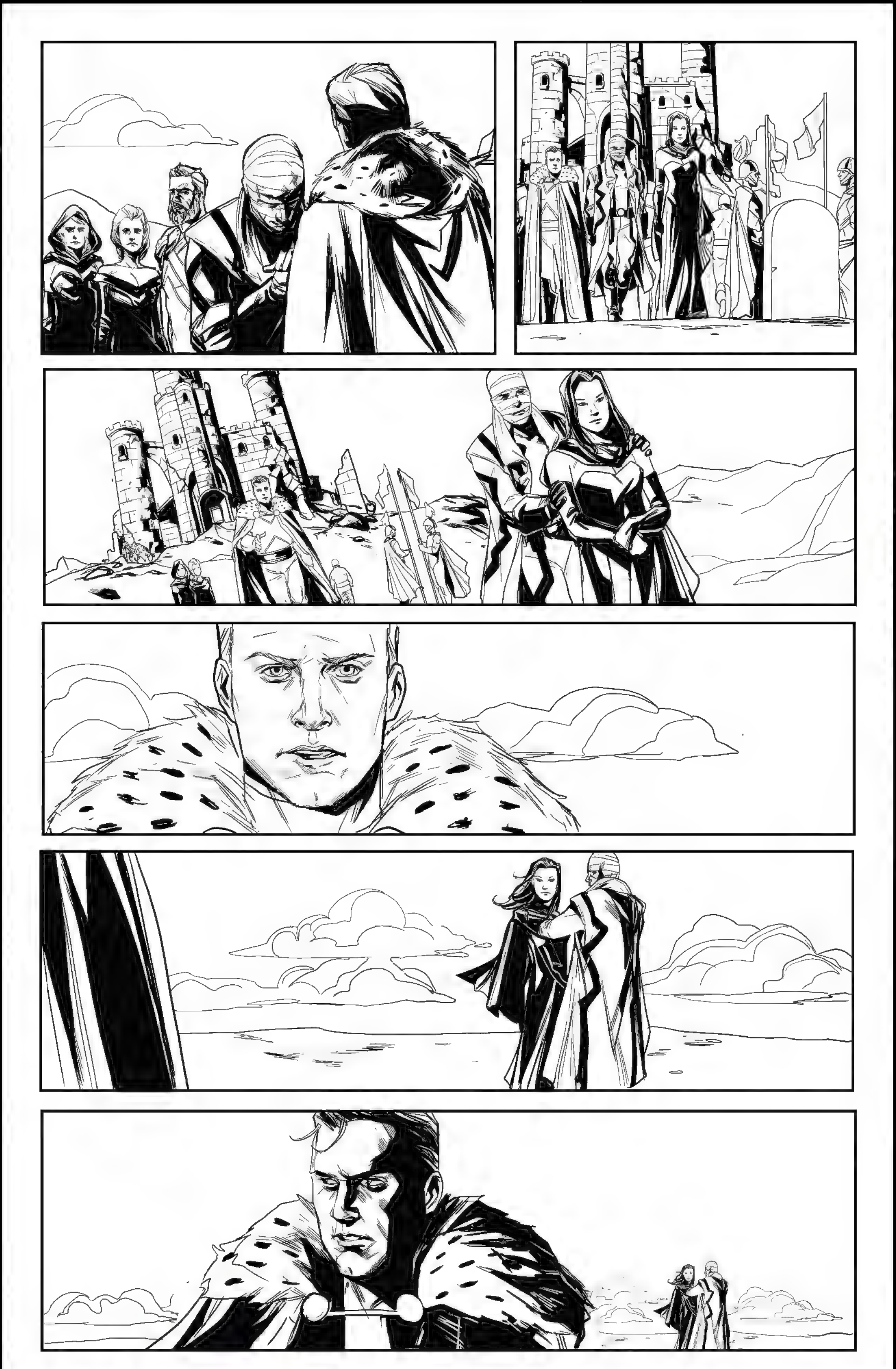
UNCANNY X-FORCE 18, PAGE 22 PENCILS

BY JEROME OPEÑA



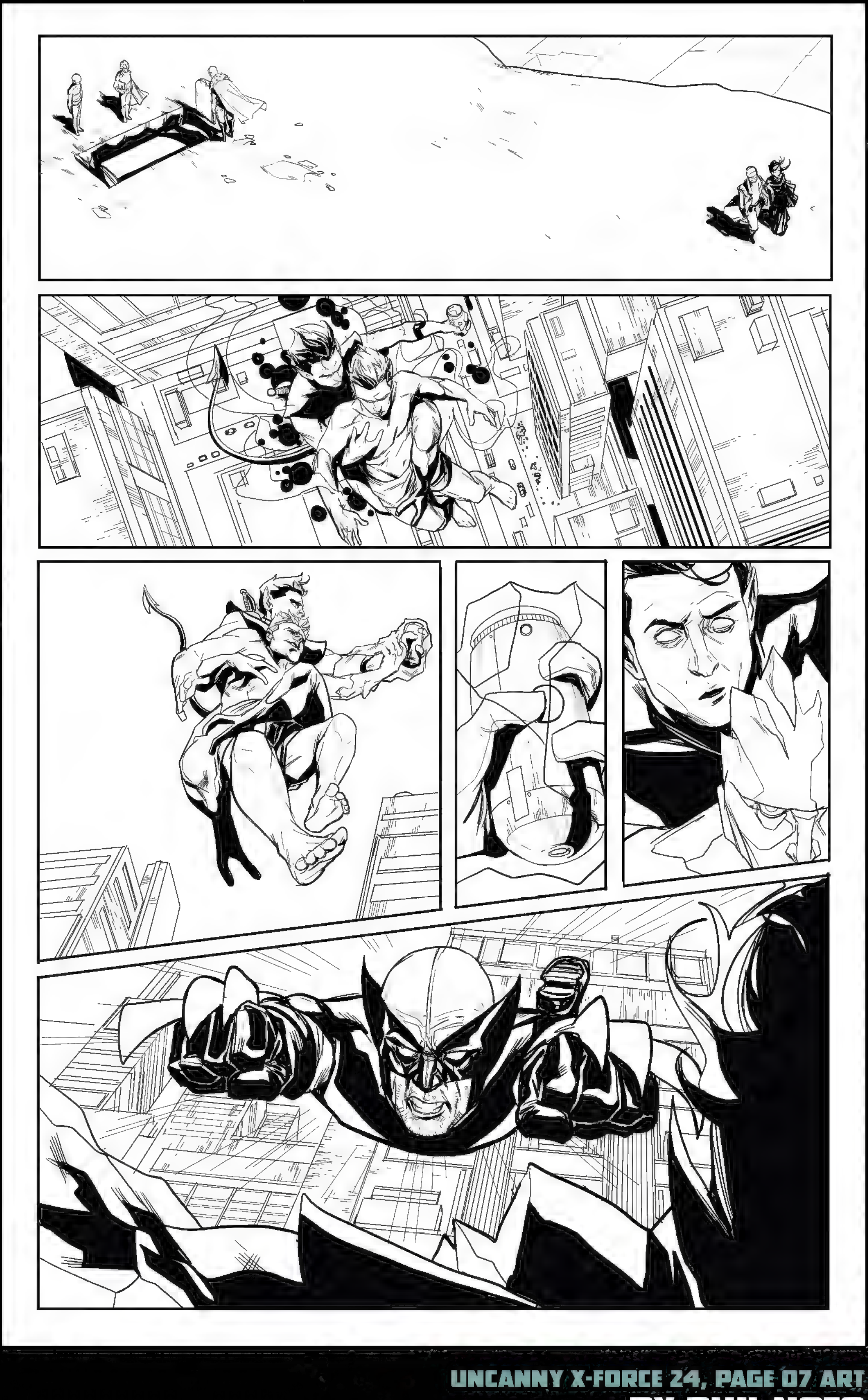
UNCANNY X-FORCE 20, PAGES 03-04 ART

BY GREG TOCCHINI



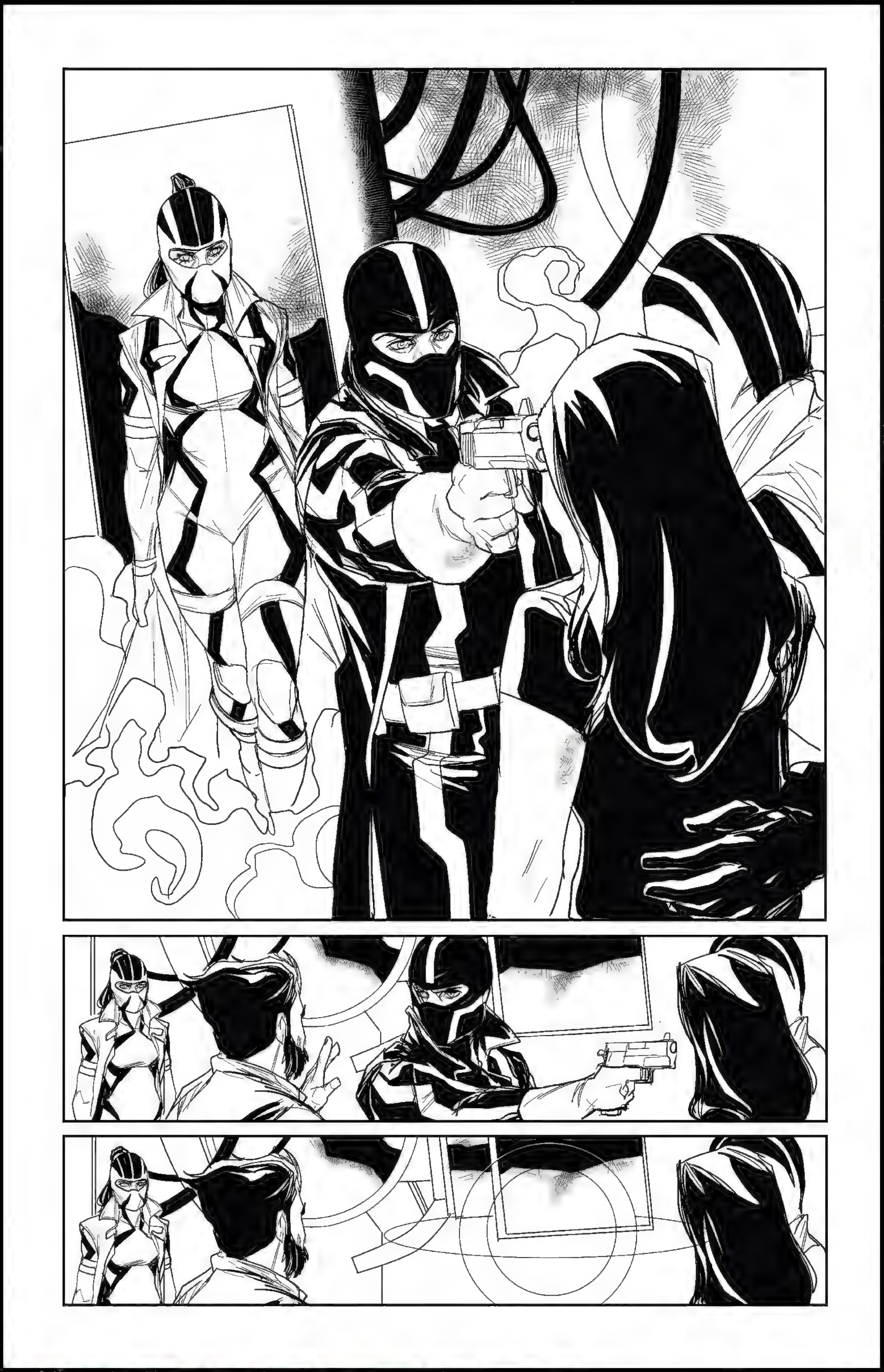
UNCANNY X-FORCE 24, PAGE 06 ART

BY PHIL NOTO



UNCANNY X-FORCE 24, PAGE 07 ART

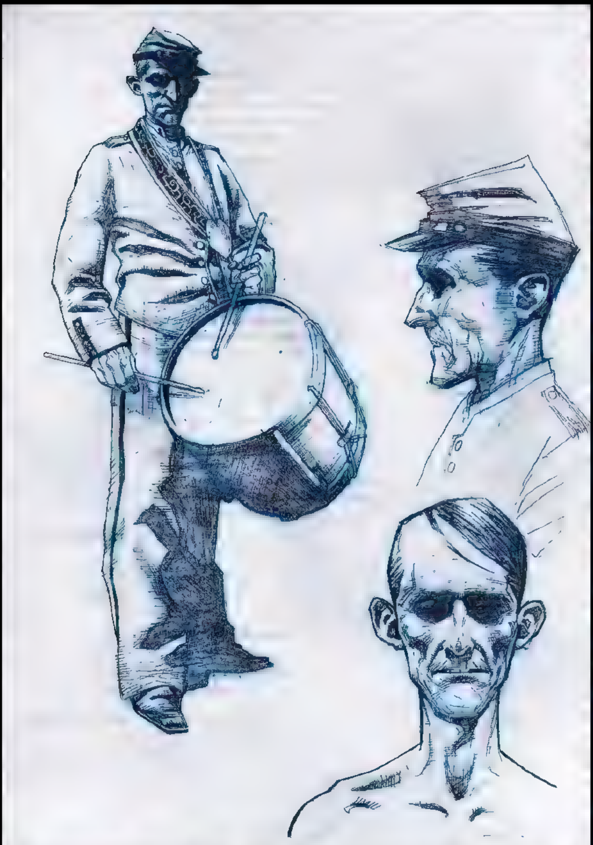
BY PHIL NOTO



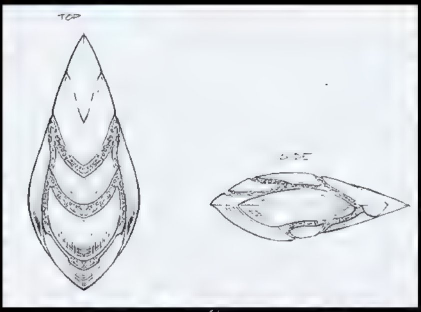
UNCANNY X-FORCE 35, PAGE 14 ART

BY PHIL NOTO

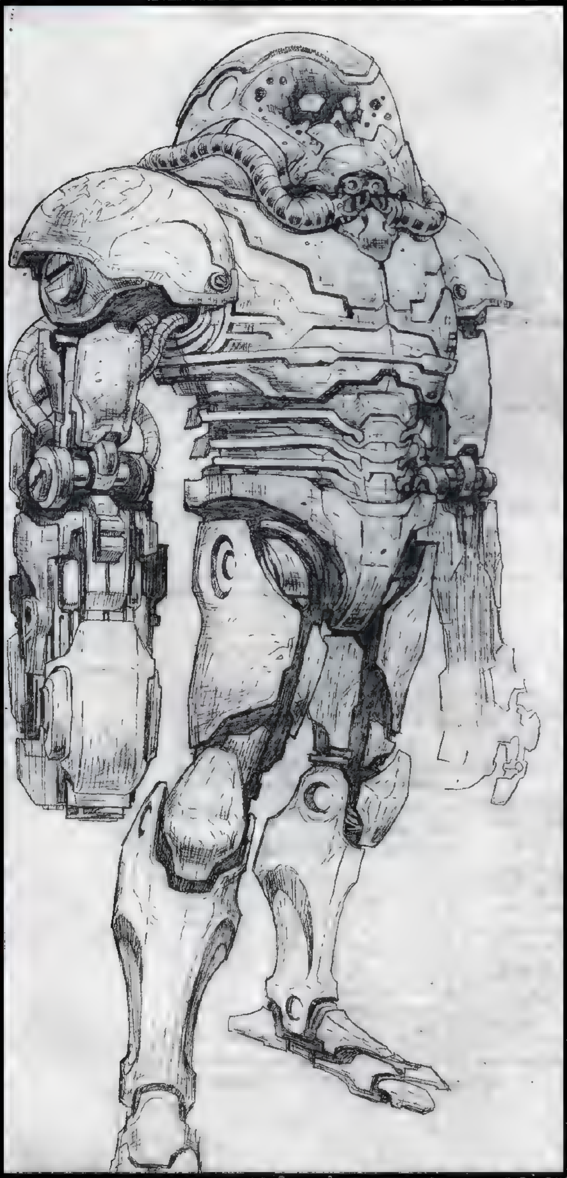
FAMINE



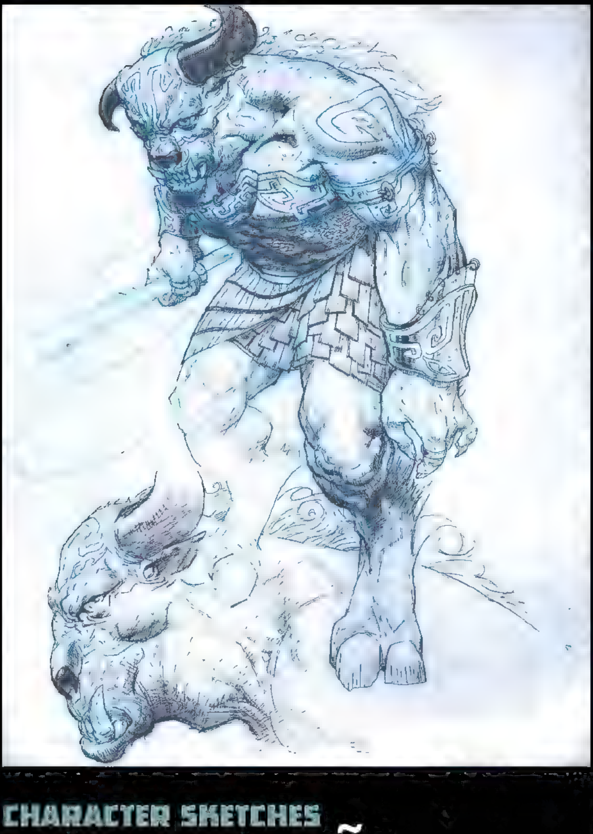
LIFE SEED



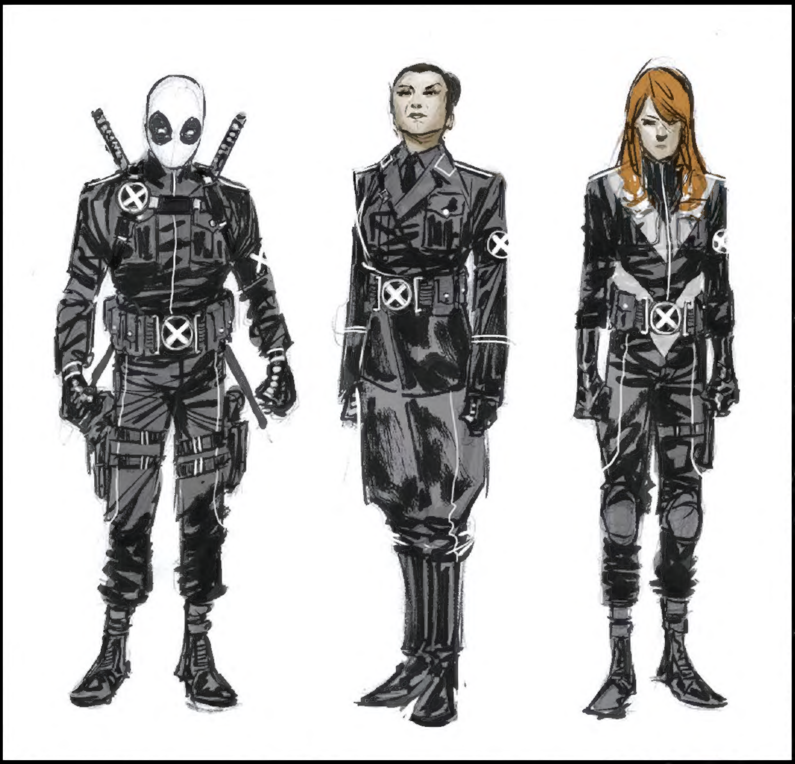
GENOCIDE

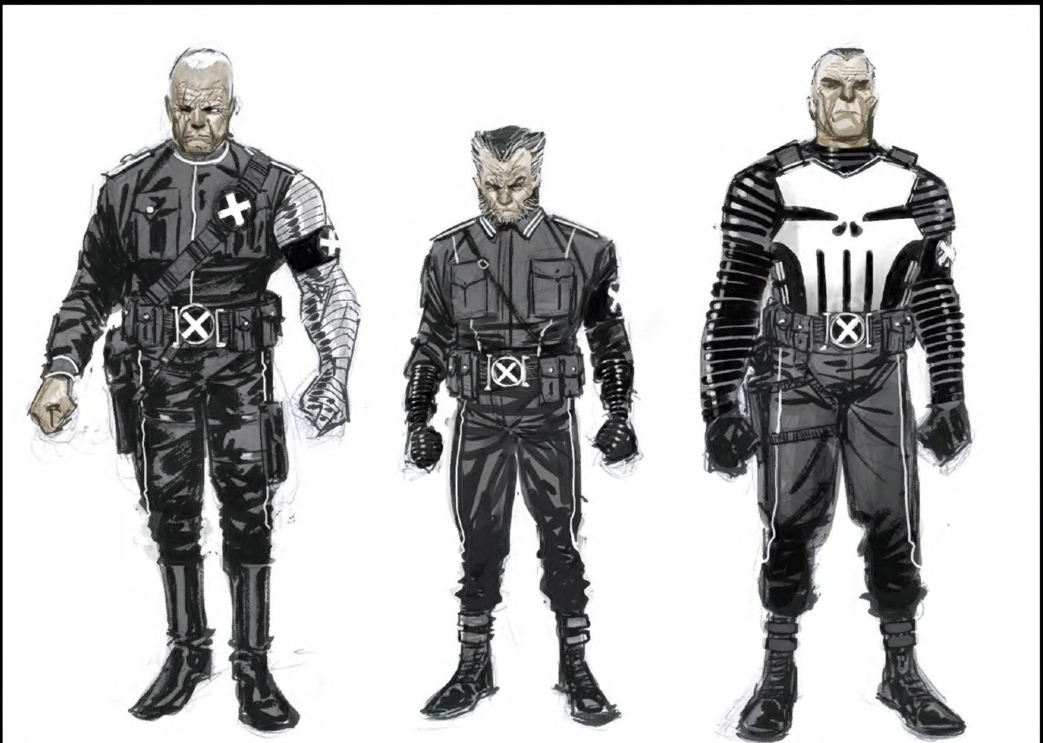


WAR

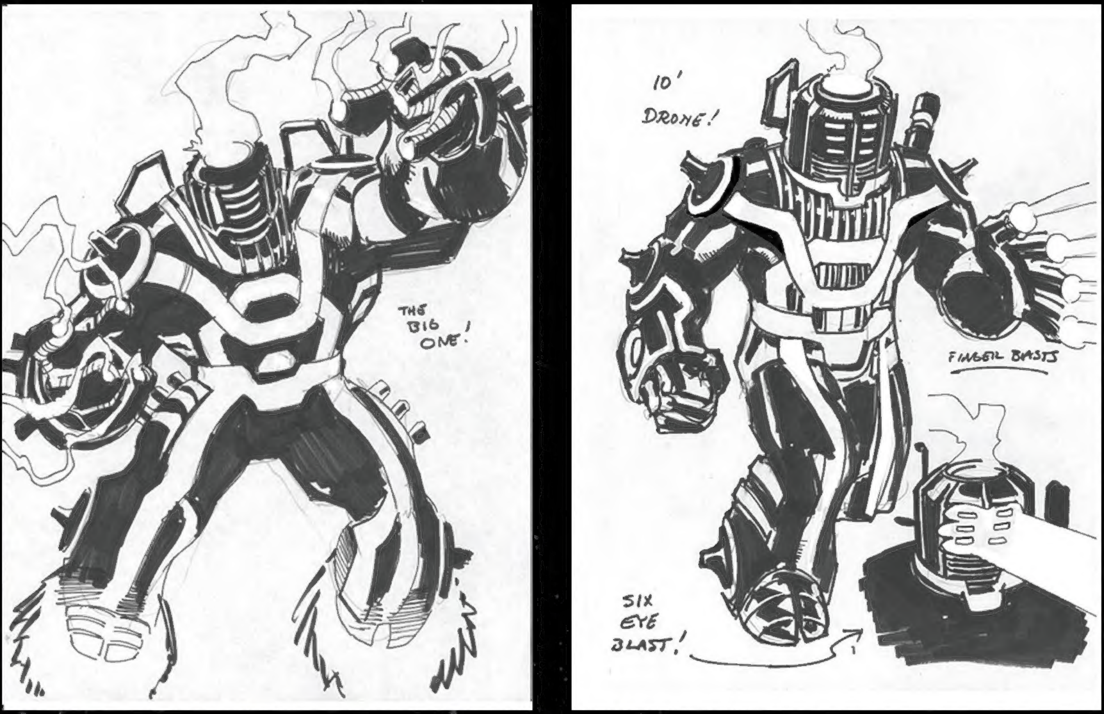


CHARACTER SKETCHES
BY JEROME OPEÑA



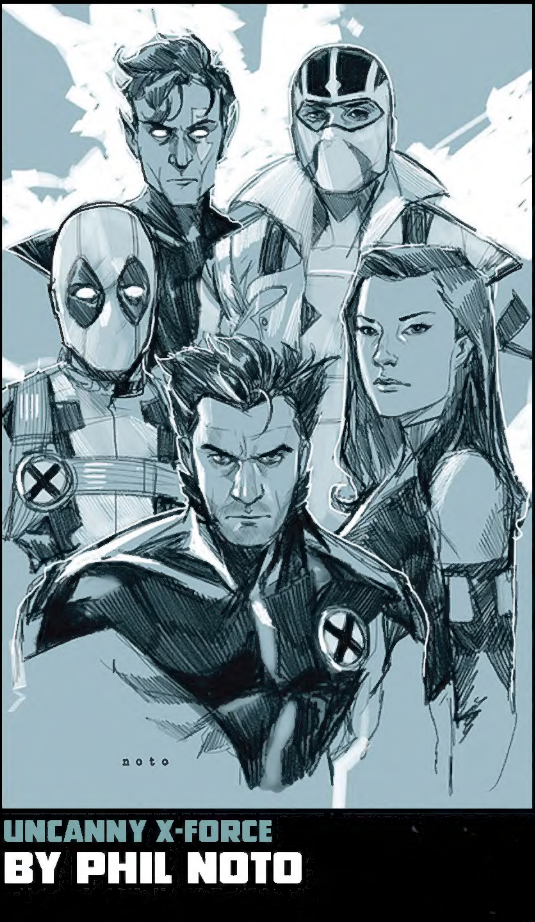


FUTURE X-FORCE
BY JULIAN TOTINO TEDESCO


THE BIG ONE!
10' DRONE!
FINGER BLASTS
SIX EYE BLAST!

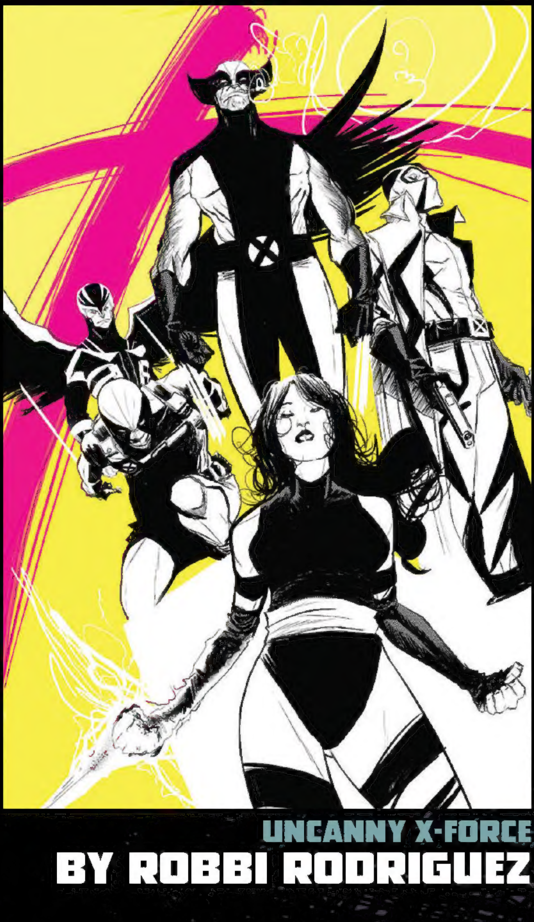
CELESTIAL DRONES

BY SCOT EATON



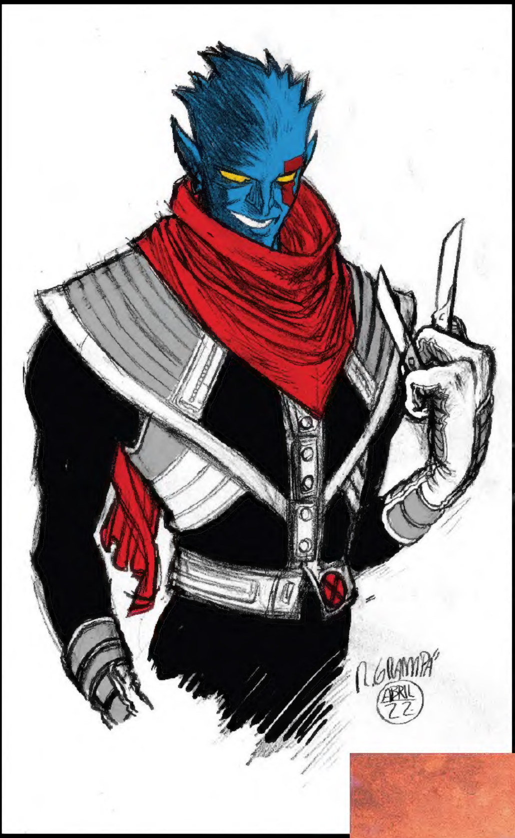
UNCANNY X-FORCE

BY PHIL NOTO



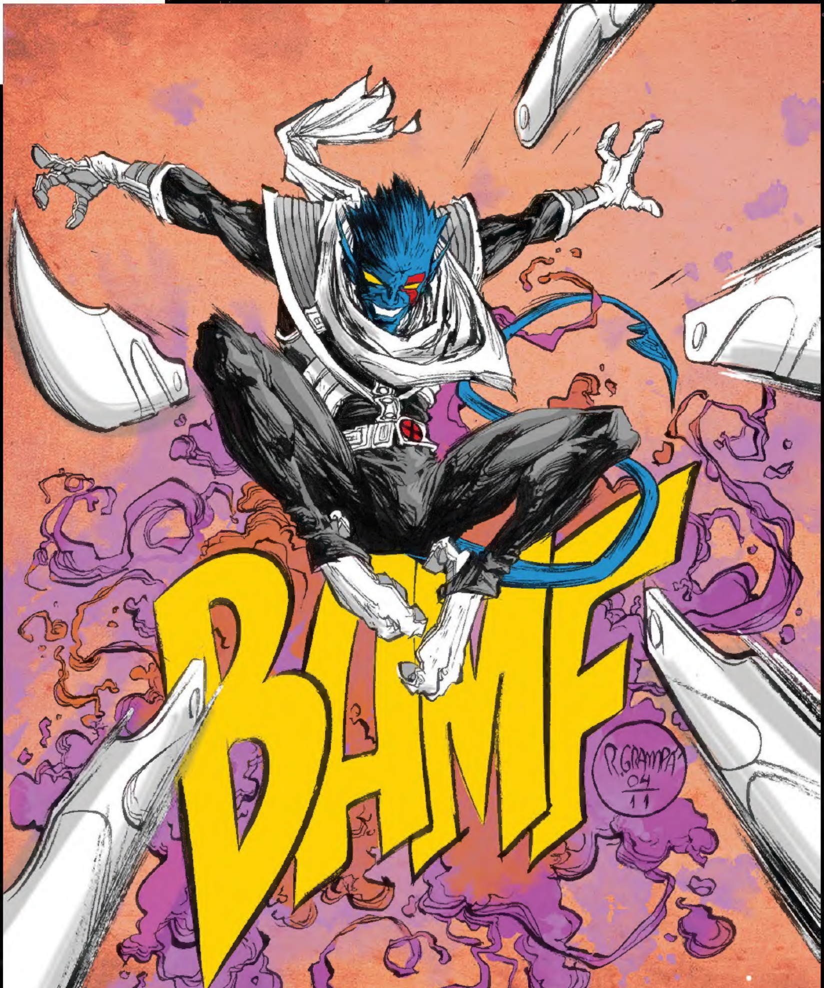
UNCANNY X-FORCE

BY ROBBI RODRIGUEZ



NIGHTCRAWLER

BY RAFAEL GRAMPÁ



KILLING TO SAVE A WORLD THAT HATES AND FEARS THEM — THIS ISN'T THE X-MEN, THIS IS

UNCANNY X-FORCE!

Rick Remender puts the "Uncanny" into X-Force in an epic, critically acclaimed run! Psylocke, Archangel, Deadpool and Fantomex sign up for Wolverine's secret squad of assassins, but their first mission — to find and deal with the reborn Apocalypse — casts a long shadow. As the members of X-Force struggle to come to terms with their actions, one among them unravels in what could only be called the "Dark Angel Saga." Startlingly familiar Deathloks; a return to the Age of Apocalypse; a warring Otherworld; and the all-new, all-deadly Brotherhood of Evil Mutants await in Remender's extraordinary exploration of the ethics of execution.

"One for the record books."
-*Newsarama*

PARENTAL ADVISORY

Collecting *Uncanny X-Force #1-35, #5.1* and *#19.1;* and material from *Wolverine: Road to Hell #1, All-New Wolverine Saga* and *X-Men Spotlight.*